



**PP4 & 5**  
Three new Rectors for Gippsland



**P14**  
Tracing attitudes from 1904 to the Voice



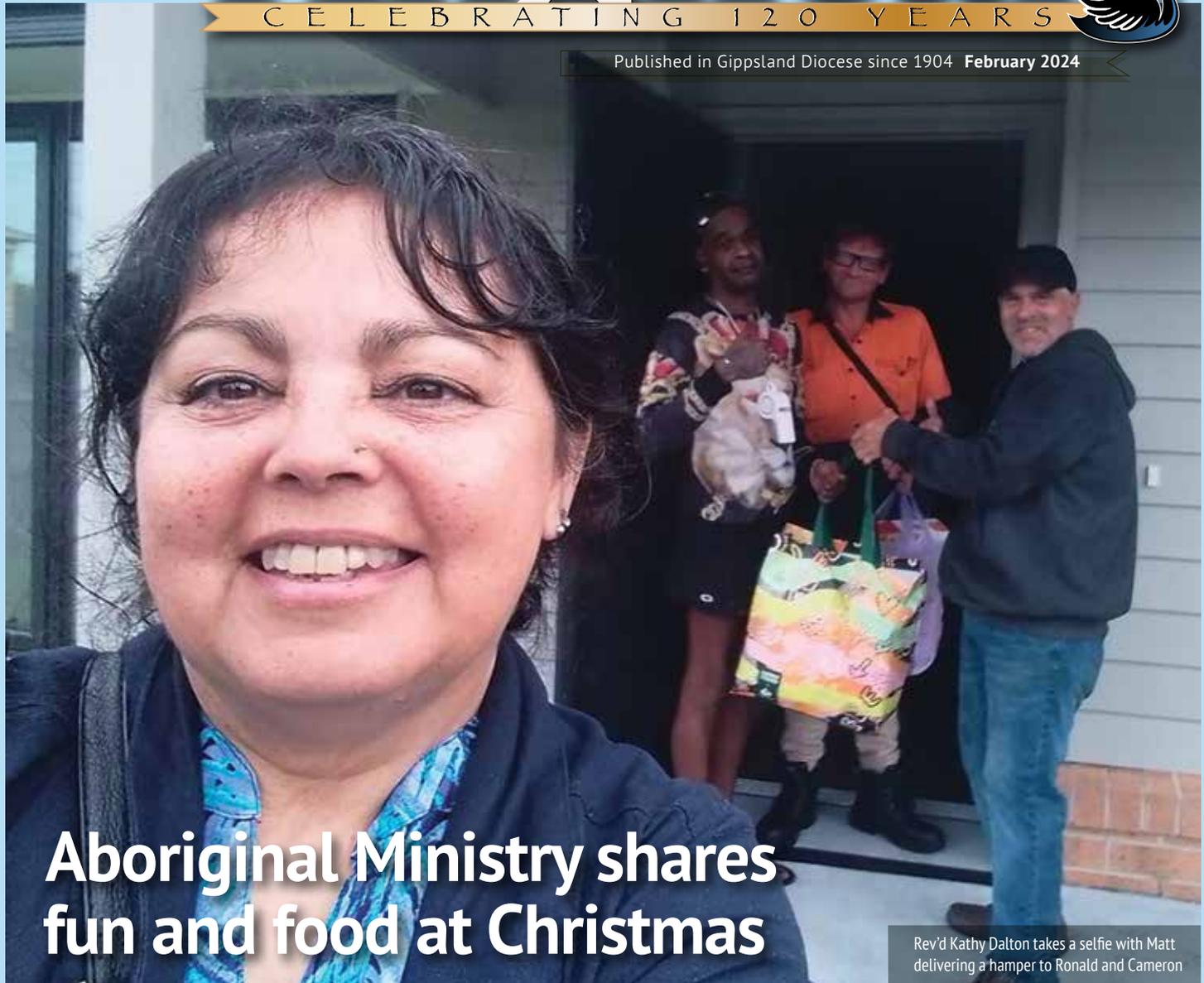
**P18**  
Where did the new year's resolution come from?

# The Gippsland Anglican

CELEBRATING 120 YEARS



Published in Gippsland Diocese since 1904 February 2024



## Aboriginal Ministry shares fun and food at Christmas

Rev'd Kathy Dalton takes a selfie with Matt delivering a hamper to Ronald and Cameron

■ Libby Willems

Christmas joy and generosity were shared widely with families in Central and East Gippsland when food hampers were delivered to local households to stock up fridges and pantries.

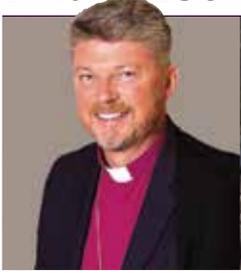
Visiting house to house, The Rev'd Kathy Dalton and The Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy, with their helpers, delivered around 40 hampers in the weeks before Christmas to ease the pressure on Indigenous families experiencing financial strain.

"The Christmas hampers help us a lot for Christmas," said Ronald Edwards Pepper. "We appreciated it because we

didn't have nothing much and ... the hamper was what we needed and we thank Kathy and Matt and the Church."

Aboriginal Ministry also helped to deliver a carols gathering with the community of Lake Tyers Trust on 17 December. Aunty Phyllis said, "We came together, had a BBQ tea, exchanged some goods and joined in the carols. Afterwards, we shared the food hampers. I am grateful for the help of two very special people, Robyn and John Murray, who came up with the idea for the gathering and helped make it happen. They are both very much admired by the people of Lake Tyers community."

Continued on page 3



# Looking back to look forward



A crisp Saturday morning in Jackson, Mississippi, on the national mid-January holiday weekend in honour of The Rev'd Dr Martin Luther King Jr. We're visiting family in this US state's capital. I park along an ordinary-looking suburban street and we walk the short distance to a humble and proudly kept house that World War 2 veteran Medgar Evers, his wife Myrlie, and their three children Darrell, Reena and James – not much younger than our two – had made their home since Medgar was appointed Field Secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1955.

Just after midnight on 12 June 1963, Medgar Evers arrives at that home from a long NAACP meeting and steps out of his car with practised vigilance, using the passenger-side door. It's a permanent state of wariness built into the children's beds, which sit well below the height of the window sills. But before he can bend down – lower than most fathers must – to kiss their sleeping heads he has to get some T-shirts out of the trunk.

While he stands there in his driveway, Byron De La Beckwith, a member of the Citizen's Council and the Ku Klux Klan, hides in the shadows behind a tree across the street, hunting rifle raised in aim at his target's back. The bullet passes clean through Evers' body, the window of the living room, and the interior kitchen wall, halted only by the refrigerator door, which still bears the metallic scar.

Thousands attend Evers' funeral and vigils around the country, giving President John F Kennedy the momentum he needs to initiate what would become the 1964 *Civil Rights Act*. By the time this eventually made it through Congress, Kennedy was to have suffered the same fate in nearby Dallas, Texas – a solemn site where we also paid quiet tribute.

The President met with Evers and other NAACP leaders at the White House

in 1961, as he did with Martin Luther King Jr on 28 August 1963, just a few hours after Dr King gave his famous "I have a dream" speech in Washington, DC, and just three months before Kennedy was assassinated. Posters marking the 60th anniversary of this event in Dallas quote his prescient words from earlier that same year: "A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on."

Our tour guide at Evers' house explains that many more than mourned him came out in support of Beckwith, who – after his arrest – was defended by Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett's law firm. Beckwith was tried twice and acquitted both times by all-white male juries, before eventually being brought to justice in 1994, more than 30 years after the fact, and sentenced to life in prison, where he died in 2001.

Elsewhere in Jackson in that mid-June of 1963, as news of Evers' murder breaks, Pulitzer Prize winning author Eudora Welty sits up all night and writes a telling short story from the distorted mindset of the (as yet unknown) shooter.

Fiction editor of *The New Yorker* expresses concerns for Welty's safety if the first draft is published. She changes a few details, though not out of fear. Having anticipated that the perpetrator would enjoy the Governor's support, and on advice that foreshadowing this might prejudice any trial to the defendant's advantage, she omits that part. 'Jackson' is re-named 'Thermopylae' (literally, 'hot gates') – a town in central Greece that was the site of an ancient battle between the Greeks and the Persians, and in Greek mythology an entrance to Hades. A prominent KKK leader is evoked by a street name added to the assassin's imagined route. With these and some other revisions, the story appeared under the title 'Where Is the Voice Coming From?' on 6 July of that year.

The title is ambiguous – deliberately so, some literary critics would argue – clearly referring to the inner monologue of the

unnamed protagonist, and also perhaps to the narratives of the wider culture in which such thoughts are even thinkable, as captured in the story's opening lines:

I says to my wife, "You can reach and turn it off. You don't have to set and look at a black [ ] face no longer than you want to, or listen to what you don't want to hear. It's still a free country." I reckon that's how I gave myself the idea.

What structural injustices, systemic disadvantages and forms of socially legitimated violence (physical and otherwise) are perpetuated in our own culture – wittingly or unwittingly – and where do the voices come from that enable us to normalise these?

Later the same day we go to Welty's lifelong home, also a place of cultural significance, where we read of her abiding love for Mississippi – a love she shared by all accounts with Evers, both of whom were born and raised there. When asked once in an interview if writing a story about Beckwith reminds everyone of Mississippi's grim past, she replied, "Just be glad it also does produce a Medgar Evers." As fellow writer Milan Kundera said, the struggle of humanity against tyranny is the struggle of memory against forgetting.

From a nail on the wall above the bed that Medgar and Myrlie Evers shared hangs a simple crucifix. It is a reminder – as is every Ash Wednesday, indeed every Eucharist – of the price of freedom, which is never 'free', but rather won – once for all and yet daily – with costly grace (to borrow the phrase of another who made the ultimate sacrifice in that constant struggle of memory against forgetting, Dietrich Bonhoeffer).

In church the next morning the processional hymn is *In Christ There Is No East or West*, sung poignantly to an African American spiritual tune (*McKee*, arranged by HT Burleigh).



Myrlie Evers-Williams carried the torch of the Civil Rights movement after her husband's death. She delivered the invocation at President Obama's second inauguration on 21 January 2013, 50 years after Medgar's murder and 50 years on from King's famous address, given barely two miles away at the Lincoln Memorial.

She was the first woman and the first lay person to be invited to do so, and the text of her prayer included these words, echoing Dr King and reminiscent of JFK:

As we sing the words ... "This is my country," let us act upon the meaning that everyone is included. May the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of every woman, man, boy and girl be honored. May all your people, especially the least of these, flourish in our blessed nation.

... We ask too, Almighty, that where our paths seem blanketed by ... oppression and riddled by pangs of despair ... for your guidance toward the light of deliverance. And that the vision of those that came before us and dreamed of this day ... still inspire us.

January, a month named for the Roman deity Janus, the god of thresholds and transitions, pictured as 'double-faced', looking forwards and backwards (see p. 18). So it is that in a new year of grace, 2024, even as we look to the future, posterity is already looking back at us, in this moment.

In this 120th year of TGA's continuous publication may we attend well to the lessons of history – local and global, cautionary and salutary.

May the vision of those who came before that inspires us, the idea that lives on in us, be always the costly and glorious freedom of that polity Jesus called the kingdom of God. And, as we turn again toward the cross this Lent, may the voice we hear clearly above all others be his.



## Prayer for Diocesan Vision 2021–2024

O God,  
your Son taught us to pray  
that your Kingdom would come,  
and your will be done on earth:  
kindle in our hearts  
that just and gentle rule;  
stir up in our churches  
the courage to proclaim your love;  
renew in us the same mind that was in him,  
who emptied himself,  
taking the form of a servant.

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

# Aboriginal Ministry shares fun and food at Christmas

Continued from page 1

Aboriginal Ministry was strongly supported in 2023 by the financial gifts from individuals and parishes of Gippsland, and also by the three-year grant awarded via City To City Australia in late 2022 to support the expansion of this ministry. These much-needed donations create discretionary funds that support outreach to people and families of the Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal Ministry in Gippsland is blessed and enriched by the work of proud Minang and Wotjobaluk woman The Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy and proud Taungurong and GunaiKurnai woman The Rev'd Kathy Dalton. Their ministry happens in homes and diverse places like shops, down the street or in the park. They care for people and Community during Sorry business (funerals) and are widely respected in Community.

"We make ministry significant in our cultural way," says Aunty Phyllis.

Aboriginal Ministry supports First Nations people in Gippsland through pastoral and material care. More broadly, the ministry is available to all 30 parishes to support all people through Reconciliation activities, particularly around significant dates like Aboriginal Sunday (the Sunday before 26 January), Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June)

and NAIDOC Week (early July).

The ministry relies on fundraising and donations to operate effectively and sustainably. In 2023, Gippsland Anglicans gave generously to Aboriginal Ministry, gifting over \$20,000. The annual fundraising target is \$100,000.

How can Gippsland Anglicans help? People are invited to donate online to

the Gippsland Anglicans Indigenous Ministry Fund at [gippslandanglicans.org.au/donate](http://gippslandanglicans.org.au/donate).



To read more about Aboriginal Ministry in the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland, visit [gippslandanglicans.org.au/aboriginalministry](http://gippslandanglicans.org.au/aboriginalministry)



The Lake Tyers Trust Community Carols held last December

## Rev'd Daniel Gebert appointed Rector of Warragul

The Rev'd Daniel Gebert has been appointed as Rector of Warragul, and local and diocesan representatives alike are confident he will make a valuable contribution to the life of our wider Gippsland Anglican household.

Daniel grew up in Melbourne attending a Lutheran church with his family. In high school he became involved in Bible studies and young adults ministry. This continued while studying Software and Music at Melbourne University. Through friends at the University Christian Union he began attending St Jude's Carlton, and made Anglicanism his spiritual home. At St Jude's he had the profound experience of serving and reaching out to the multicultural communities of Carlton's housing estates.

After a few years working for a software business, Daniel began studying theology, gaining a particular interest in biblical interpretation. During this time he discerned and tested a call to ordination, and was ordained deacon and priest in 2015. Daniel served a curacy at St Luke's South Melbourne, and then for five years as Vicar of St Aidan's Parkdale. Most recently he has been the Locum Priest at St Matthew's Wheelers Hill. His ministry experience includes growing the church in local mission, launching a youth group and supporting people living



with mental illness. He is passionate about seeing everyone grow as disciples of Christ, using their gifts to share God's love with the people around them.

The Gebert family enjoys camping and is looking forward to being close to Wilson's Promontory. Daniel also likes to read, listen to podcasts, practise music and have a bowl in the nets.

Daniel, Rose, and their three young

children, Anton, Alexander and Clara, moved into the Rectory at St Paul's Warragul in January, and Daniel will be inducted on 7 February.

The Diocese congratulates Daniel and the Parish of Warragul on this exciting new appointment.

From Bishop Richard's *Ad Clerum*

## Rev'd Dennis Webster appointed Rector of Paynesville

The Rev'd Dennis Webster has accepted an invitation to serve as Rector of Paynesville.

Dennis is an experienced priest in the Diocese of Melbourne, and the Clergy Appointments Advisory Board for Paynesville recognises the gifts he will bring with a sense of calling to this new ministry context in East Gippsland.

Dennis was born in Tasmania, and grew up in the beautiful seaside town of Penguin. As a graduate of Music and Education from the University of Tasmania, he commenced a teaching career with the Tasmanian Education Department.

In 1991, he began theological studies at Trinity College, The University of Melbourne, before returning to Tasmania to be ordained in December 1993.

After serving two curacies, he was made Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of Channel/Cygnets. In 2001, Dennis moved to Melbourne, having been appointed to

the Parish of Braybrook in conjunction with Anglican Criminal Justice Ministry, working mainly at Port Phillip Prison and associated hospitals. Since then he has been Vicar of the parishes of Pascoe Vale/Oak Park, St Stephen's Richmond, and most recently Gisborne.

A keen musician, photographer and ex-football umpire, when not being bossed around by his two opinionated Tonkinese cats (Poly and Terps), Dennis is a long-suffering member of the Carlton Football Club – an affliction he shares with Abbey Chaplain Jeff Berger and Bishop Richard among others.

Dennis has an affinity with Celtic spirituality and looks forward to supporting the ministry and outreach of the Abbey Community.

Dennis will be inducted at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville, on a date to be advised

From Bishop Richard's *Ad Clerum*



# Meet Rev'd Gradwell Fredericks, new Rector of Traralgon

## ■ Rev'd Gradwell Fredericks

I was born in the town of George, in the Western Cape of South Africa. George is also the hometown of my wife, Tania. I grew up in the heart of the Cape Winelands: Wellington. I matriculated from Berg River Secondary School in 1988 and started my tertiary education at the University of the Western Cape. Although I had chosen law as my initial career, completing the degree was not to be – there was already a different path set out for me. I spent the next 12 years as an employee in the private sector – a buyer for an export company.

The call to the priesthood first came in 1976, a call to which I responded more than 20 years later, in 1999. After four years of testing my vocation to the ordained ministry, I joined the residential seminary, the College of the Transfiguration in Grahamstown, in 2004 to complete my residential theological training full time for the next two years.

I was made a transitional deacon in 2005 and in 2006 ordained to the priesthood, in the then undivided Diocese of Cape Town. I served my first curacy at St Peter's in the charming fishing village of Hout Bay for three years.

In 2009, I became the Rector of a township parish, St Andrews, in Steenberg, a suburb just outside of Cape Town. I served the parish for four years, and then in 2013 became the Rector of All Saints in Lansdowne with the chapelry of St Patrick's, another suburb just outside of Cape Town. During this period, I was appointed the Fellowship of Vocation warden in the Diocese of Cape Town.

I served the parish for three years and in January 2016 was appointed the College Chaplain of St Albans College in Pretoria, South Africa's legislative capital. I served as chaplain for just over four years, returning to Cape Town on the eve of lockdown during the Covid pandemic.

I started as the Rector of All Saints in Belhar the day South Africa entered a national lockdown, and I served the parish for three years and seven months. While settling into our new home and finding my feet as the rector of a parish of more than 1300 parishioners, services had to be conducted virtually for nearly four months, while funerals and weddings had limited attendees. It was certainly a new way of serving a parish, and my growth, both personal and in my vocation, in facing these challenges has been exponential.

During this period, I served as a Canon on the Diocesan Chapter of the Diocese of False Bay. I was the cluster rector of three parishes in the archdeaconry of Blue Downs. I also held the portfolio of Fellowship of Vocation Director and mid-way through 2023 the Director of Ordinands.

Tania spent eight years working in the medical field as a depot administrator at a pathology company. With our relocation to Pretoria, she took on a new role, as the boarding house administrator of St Albans College. After our return to Cape Town, she started her own venture: a beauty and skin care studio, Wonder Well. Tania and I enjoyed spending time at the beach, taking morning walks and enjoying the beauty our seaside had to offer. In November we celebrated 30 wonderful years of marriage.

We have two children: our daughter, Caryn, is 29 and married to Joshua. They have a seven-month old boy, Sebastian. Both Caryn and Joshua are attorneys. Our son, Paul, is 23 and graduated in 2023 with a bachelor's degree in Humanities. He is currently working as a claims administrator for an Australian company (the irony here is not lost on us).

I have always enjoyed sports, especially cricket, rugby and tennis. At St Albans College, I coached the third and fourth



Rev'd Gradwell Fredericks, with Associate Priest and Locum Rev'd Marilyn Obersby, soon after his arrival

rugby teams. I enjoy motorsport and am often referred to as a 'petrol head'.

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 were excited at the prospect of relocating to Gippsland and establishing ourselves among the people of Traralgon. We were warmly welcomed and the parish's hospitality made our settling in very comfortable and easy. We are enjoying the community and ministering here in the broader parish and community of Traralgon.



Gradwell at his previous parish, All Saints in Belhar, with his lay ministers, assistant clergy and two retired clergy



# A summer vision: SUFM in Inverloch

Participants enjoying time with the giant parachute at this summer's SUFM at Inverloch

## ■ Monique Conibear

For many people, the week between Christmas and New Year is a strange time where the days blend and it feels like very little happens. For those involved with Inverloch Scripture Union Family Mission (SUFM), that is far from the case! On 28 December the sea of blue shirts moved down the main street of Inverloch with a skip in their steps – far from the post-Christmas haze. Families made their way from surrounding towns, or from beachhouses just down the road, to join our free holiday program that would run until 5 January.

For some this is a regular routine – they have come year after year as their children have grown. Some parents even remember the days when they themselves went as kids. One family was quite the opposite. Having only met us a couple of weeks earlier at the Wonthaggi carols, they sussed out our program on day one with no initial intention to return. However, by their fifth day at our program it was pretty clear the kids were having a ball, and mum was in agreement.

Every year the SUFM team visit Inverloch to run a holiday program for kids and families. Typically the team come from churches around Melbourne, but this year we were blessed to have two locals join our team. Last year they had been participants in the teens program and had loved it so much they wanted to return as leaders themselves. Through their connections we were able to reach even more of the locals, and most days one of them would run into someone they knew on the walk down to the park.

The program started at 10 am each morning, and the kids instantly jumped into our games of cricket, the giant parachute and ring toss. Then, as music began to play, they raced towards the mats to sing

songs, watch Bible stories and make crafts in their age groups. Usually, we find the grade 4–6 age group is the smallest, but this year we were incredibly blessed by the large number joining in, and on one of the days every single participant in that group took home a copy of Luke! The team was amazed how engaged the kids were with God's word, following along intently with the words that were being said. God works in miraculous ways.

In the afternoons we ran 'community mission', which involved a hangout space in the park with face paint and henna, and a group down at the beach playing cricket and Kubb. A range of other events such as a bush dance, talent show and sandcastle competition were also embedded into the program. This gave us a chance to connect with the wider community. Many of those coming along weren't Christian themselves but were curious about what we were doing – these events allowed for that outreach.

During the evenings, we held a teens program down at the park. Each night would feature various games and activities, testimonies from our leaders, and discussion time unpacking the theme of 'Jesus versus the world'. It was wonderful hearing the participants engage in thoughts of what the Christian faith has to offer on spiritual and cultural hot topics in the context of society generally. We were all very encouraged by one teen who came along on the second night and loved it so much he begged his mum to let him come again. He ended up coming every single night after that and told us he can't wait until we are back next year. His mother expressed gratitude for the way she could see her son being more prepared for the challenges of high school following his

time with our team. Another teen asked very deep and thoughtful questions and asked us at the end how old he needed to be to join our team. He is only 12 years old, but we told him in just four more years he would be able to sign up. He was thrilled!

God's hand was clearly at work in ways both big and small throughout mission. We found that there were a few 'random' interactions where God presented us with unexpected opportunities to share our work. On one occasion a team member had to run back to church to collect something and ended up having an encounter with a neighbour who had been wondering for years who the "blue shirt people" were. Another time we started the teens program early and as we walked past a local restaurant we were stopped by holiday-makers who had been coming to Inverloch every year but had never seen us because we always missed them by half an hour. Although we may never know exactly how God is working through these individual stories, we are so encouraged how He works in unforeseeable ways.

Our vision in Inverloch was to demonstrate and share the love of Jesus with Inverloch. This meant loving and supporting each other as a team, and by God's grace one of the comments received from a parent was how much the love that we had for each other shone through in our program. Although it is difficult to know exactly how God is working through the hearts of everyone down at the park, we pray that we were able to demonstrate the character of Christ to those around and that they would see our genuine warmth. As we packed up our things on that final day, and made the trek back home, the resounding comment from everyone was how excited they are to come back.



Anglicare Victoria

# Activism artwork unites to end violence against women and girls

Anglicare Victoria's art therapist Karen Ryder worked with a group of clients from the family violence support program TRAK Forward to create this beautiful piece for last year's 16 Days of Activism (25 November to 10 December). The international theme was 'UNITE! Activism to end violence

against women and girls'. The piece was displayed at Latrobe Regional Gallery.

Clients took moulds of their hands (including a number of children) and then decorated the pieces individually. The gallery kindly donated their Open Studio space for this group to undertake their work.

The artwork represents each woman's strength, resilience and their unification of activism to end violence against women and children globally.

Anglicare Victoria

## Reach out to our rural readership

From Nar Nar Goon to the border, *The Gippsland Anglican* is distributed to parishes across our region.

Contact us about sharing your advertising message or for a copy of our media card.

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



## 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](mailto:contact@kooyoora.org.au)

[julie@kooyoora.org.au](mailto:julie@kooyoora.org.au)

PO Box 329, Canterbury, Vic 3126



# Seven confirmations at Korumburra

■ Sue Wilson

In recent years the Parish of Korumburra and Poowong has enjoyed baptisms and watching weddings from the sidelines, but we all had to think hard to remember the last time we witnessed a confirmation. On 19 November, we had the joy of participating in a confirmation service for no less than seven members of our church family.

Bishop Richard set us all at ease with his friendly and inclusive manner. In his sermon he described Christians as being people of hope, not of fear. We thought then of our seven friends stepping out in the hope of faith renewed and refreshed.

Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes named us, and called us to be, the Family of Church. That was not difficult to do as our youngest confirnee was of primary school age, being confirmed along with her parents, two young men, and two older members of the congregation. We too felt like proud parents or grandparents.

Our numbers were doubled with relatives and visitors, their enthusiasm and picture-taking brought an air of excitement, and our musicians added immensely to the quality of worship, as they always do.



Bishop Richard confirms the youngest candidate, with her godmother as sponsor

# Confirmation at Fish Creek Union Church

■ Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes

On 19 November, we were overjoyed to welcome Bishop Richard to Fish Creek Union Church to confirm four girls who had been baptised six years earlier. The youngest sister was baptised, and the four older girls acted as godparents to her.

This was the first confirmation held at the church since its renovation and extension back in 2003, and the girls have actively participated in celebrations and meals over the years.

Currently Fish Creek Union Church is cared for by ecumenical co-chaplains The Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes from the Anglican Diocese and The Rev'd Veronica Bradley from the Uniting Church.



The four confirmees and their newly baptised little sister with Bishop Richard and Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes



## Supporting the Aboriginal Ministry Fund

- employment of Aboriginal people in ministry
- training of Aboriginal people for ministry
- cultural education within Gippsland Diocese
- development of Aboriginal ministry

Would you like to be part of supporting these aims?  
To find out more, contact the Registrar: 03 5144 2044  
registrar@gippslandanglicans.org.au



## 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](http://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au) and search 'bequests', or contact Richard Connelly (03 5144 2044).

*Always consult a solicitor when preparing or amending your will.*



Ruth Place

## Christmas Club at Churchill Co-operating Church

(L-R) Christmas Club church volunteers Milton Shields, Liz Hudson Cooper, Emma Hudson, Laurie Jefferson, Rosslyn Jackson and Ray Hodges

### ■ Melissa Thomson

In early December last year, the annual Churchill Co-operating Church Christmas Club took place at Christ Church. Around 80 children from grades 1 to 4 from Churchill Primary School attended two sessions, participating in a range of Christmas-themed activities including arts and crafts, and in a nativity play.

The Christmas Club has been running for more than two decades. It was born from a suggestion by one of the supply ministers, The Rev'd Ivy Goodwin, to hold an Easter Club. Ruth Place, parishioner and Parish Council member at the Churchill Co-operating Church, remembers Ivy saying, "Why can't we do it?" to which Ruth replied, "Well ... okay!" Ivy volunteered to tell the Easter story and church volunteers organised craft activities. "And it all happened!" said Ruth, "So then, because Easter Club was so good, then we decided we'd try for Christmas Club."

Ruth was in touch with the Churchill Primary School at the time through teaching Christian Religious Education, and other women at church were involved in Breakfast Club and the Walking School Bus. These connections helped to promote the Easter Club and Christmas Club.

The aim of the Christmas Club is to tell the story of Jesus' birth and share the good news about him. In this latest Christmas

Club, volunteers from the church acted out the Christmas story, along with some of the children, who took the roles of the wise men and shepherds. Ruth Place was the narrator, and during her narration she provided moments for the rest of the children watching to add sound effects for the play. They were very enthusiastic in making 'clip-clop' noises for the donkey, as well as for the camels, and also providing the 'host of angels' for the shepherds to hear.

After the story was craft time. There were 12 different activities to choose from. Each activity was set up at a separate table and overseen by a volunteer. There was a limit of six children to a table. Activities included folding to make origami stars, creating CD decorations and crafting paper plate wreaths, as well as colouring in a nativity mural, which was displayed on the wall behind the altar table.

The crafts were organised by Faye Foley. She was kept busy on the day, making sure

that each table was not running out of necessities. There were some hiccups to be ironed out, such as checking glue sticks had not dried out and dealing with stickers that had lost their stick, but all these were quite surmountable. "We leave it all to Faye," said Ruth, "She's fabulous!"

Ros Jackson, who controlled the Christmas Star in the nativity play, has been involved in Christmas Club for over a decade. Her favourite part is the dress-ups. "The kids get right into that too," she said. "They love the activities and we love doing it with them."

Ruth Place agreed. "The school is so supportive," she said. "It has been an absolute joy."

## Stephen Baggs Funeral Directors

Talk to us about our at-need, pre-paid or pre-arranged funeral services.

613 MAIN STREET BAIRNSDALE  
Call 24 hours on 5153 2150 or visit  
us at [www.stephenbaggs.com.au](http://www.stephenbaggs.com.au)

## Opportunities for restoration and enjoyment

■ **Dr Cath Connelly**

It is beautiful here at The Abbey on Raymond Island. It truly is stunning, with our location on the shores of Lake Victoria awakening us to the glory of Creation. The Abbey is looking particularly beautiful at this time, with all the recent maintenance work.

One of the most noticeable changes is the refurbishment of the old bunk rooms into budget hostel-type accommodation. They're still basic and you bring all your own linen, but there are now comfortable single beds and access to cooking facilities. In the motel units, the three-bedroom cottage and now the budget cabins, there are many options for you to come and stay. Contact us on (03) 5156 6580 and we

can talk it through.

I bring to you great tidings of a year of retreats, quiet days and opportunities for restoration and enjoyment here at The Abbey. The Abbey program is extensive.

Email, phone or check [theabbey.org.au](http://theabbey.org.au) for a full list of our offerings this year. We are intentionally offering retreats of various lengths both mid-week and on weekends to give flexibility to your diaries. We have wonderful retreat leaders including Ray Cleary AM, Merryl Blair OAM, Martin Hosking, John Stewart, Julia Fullarton, Jeff Berger and Robyn Sussems. It's all happening!

This is your place; come find a home here.

## Anglican Earthcare Gippsland granted \$20K for First Nations wellbeing project

■ **Libby Willems**

Anglican Earthcare Gippsland (AEG) has been awarded a \$20,000 grant to host local First Nations family holidays at The Abbey, Raymond Island in 2024.

The project, titled Environments for Wellbeing with First Nations Families, was successful under the grant criteria of the Frank and Flora Leith Foundation.

In partnership with Diocesan Aboriginal Ministry and Quantum Support Services, The Abbey will provide free accommodation, hospitality and activities for local Aboriginal families who may not easily be able to have a holiday.

The project supports the objective of AEG to foster understanding and appreciation of and care for the natural environment, especially in relation to the unique environment of the Gippsland Lakes.

The Abbey Director, Dr Cath Connelly, said "We were so

pleased to be able to work with AEG and access its tax-deductible status to qualify for the grant and deliver a project that mutually benefits The Abbey, AEG and all other contributors."

The wellbeing stay at The Abbey is designed to be long enough for attendees to feel the benefits of an emotionally safe and nurturing break in an environment of great natural beauty and abundant fauna and flora.

The project will strengthen existing partnerships among organisations and individuals who support Aboriginal people and Community in Gippsland.

Environments for Wellbeing with First Nations Families will be completed by August 2024. For more information about the project, email [info@theabbey.org.au](mailto:info@theabbey.org.au).

To find out if your environmental project can be supported by AEG, please email [registrar@gippsanglican.org.au](mailto:registrar@gippsanglican.org.au)

### Save the date



#### FEBRUARY

- 8 *Hush*. Quiet Day: Spiritual Insights from the Celtic Wheel of the Year.
- 14 The Creation Windows through Literature, Art, and Music. February focus: water/the sea.

#### MARCH

- 14 *Hush* Quiet Day: Spirituality from the Desert.
- 23 Stitch 'n Time.
- 29 Good Friday: Walking the Stations of the Cross.

#### APRIL

- 10 The Creation Windows through Literature, Art, and Music. April focus: fish, birds and animals.
- 11 *Hush* Quiet Day: Spirituality from the Forest.
- 15-19 Island Pilgrimage: Walking the land, listening to Spirit, reflecting together. Facilitators: Dr Cath Connelly and Russell Smith.
- 27 Back to Raymond Island: Come revisit those memories.



### Smoking ceremony to mark 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence

At the beginning of last year's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence (25 November – 10 December), Bishop Richard – along with the men's and women's breakfast groups and other community representatives – attended a smoking ceremony outside Holy Trinity Yarram, led by local GunaiKurnai men and elders who spoke about this issue in their community.



Michelle Grinstead

## A time of turning: the 2023 Advent Conversation

(L-R) Dr Mary Reaburn, Catholic Bishop Greg Bennet, Ven Sue Jacka, Dr Ross Fishburn and Bishop Richard at The Abbey last November

### ■ Sue Fordham

On 23 November, the annual Ecumenical Advent Conversation was held at the Abbey on Raymond Island. Both Bishop Richard and Catholic Bishop Greg Bennet provided commentary on presentations by Catholic biblical scholar Dr Mary Reaburn and Anglican theologian Dr Ross Fishburn.

This time, the focus was on the Advent psalms and canticles (and their links to their companion readings), rather than just on the gospels, as has previously been the case.

Dr Reaburn, well known for her interfaith Jewish/Christian work and for her expertise in and teaching of wisdom literature, provided an analysis of psalms 80 and 85, set as readings during Advent.

Both psalms of lament made her wonder why Christians have lost their ability to lament together – a process, she said, that allows people in pain to express and thereby lighten shared griefs.

In Psalm 80, the grief is associated with the Jews' loss of the northern kingdom. "Lamentation allowed them, as today it allows us, to speak honestly to God. When we stamp our foot and raise our voices to God, it can be the start of an evolving understanding of the covenant relationship we have with God," she said.

Dr Reaburn emphasised that the repetition of 'turn/turning' in the psalms requires us to ask, "Turn from what? Turn to what?" Turning, she insisted, was at the core of Advent. "What, as individuals and as church, do we need to turn away from and turn to?"

The message of peace in the context of major global conflicts and our responsibility individually and collectively to work towards it was a constant theme of questioning from the audience.

Psalm 85, written in the context of the Babylonian exile, the destruction of the temple and the consequent Jewish search for identity, reminds us that we, too, constantly search for meaning, peace and identity in a troubled world. It invites us, Dr Reaburn observed, to ask what we can do to support the full flourishing of God's covenant relationship.

"We can't expect God to do it alone. We have to be convinced that God can speak peace through you and me," she concluded.

Bishop Richard said that, as a Carlton supporter, he understood the importance of a good lament and reminded us that the form of these psalms was replicated in the Eucharist when we retell the story of salvation. "But this is not a history lesson,"

he said. "It is retold to proclaim its power in the present, when the congregation of people reconsecrates itself anew to God."

As with all things, viewpoint has to be taken into account in reading the psalms, and Bishop Richard likened our viewpoint as 'insiders' to Doctor Who's Tardis: lots of room for meaning-making on the inside, but how might a First Nations person hear this Psalm post-Referendum – or a Palestinian?

Dr Fishburn introduced the canticles of Advent: The Song of Reversal (Magnificat or Song of Mary) and The Song of Redemption (Song of Zechariah) using modern expressions of these and engaging the 70-odd participants in singing.

The Song of Reversal he described as a turning upside down of then-current values, or the divine action taking power from the centre and giving it to those at the margins (a young girl, the poor, the hungry, the grief-stricken).

Dr Fishburn drew our attention to the fact that, although Luke quotes Isaiah, he stops short of the vengeance promised because Jesus' messiahship is one of 'undefended' or vulnerable love.

"Every day in the church's sacraments and the sacraments of his little ones, the poor and needy, God comes to us in opportunities to love and serve," Dr Fishburn observed.

Bishop Greg Bennet suggested that Mary's Song invited the listeners to be part of that turning, citing Pope Francis' work in and advocacy of welcoming and healing people who had been marginalised.

"What are *you* doing?" Bishop Greg challenged, underscoring that the work of inclusion is an individual as well as a whole-church responsibility.

The Song of Zechariah invites the hearer to contemplate the meaning of salvation; the liberation from external threat as well as the internal. Dr Fishburn described the internal as involving God's rescue of us from our besetting problem and salvation resulting from this process.

In this regard, Dr Fishburn quoted Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury: "Where there is salvation, his name is Jesus, his grammar is the cross and resurrection."

Dr Fishburn preferred to say, "Jesus is God's song, a song that takes a lifetime to learn." He encouraged us to accept the invitation to explore the turning, the movement from darkness to light.

In response, Bishop Richard asked, "If Jesus is the good news, what is the bad news from which he invites us to turn?" He contrasted the Pax Romana, a brutally enforced peace in Biblical time, to the peace offered by Jesus, and in summation said, "Trusting in his undefended love, in Advent may we bring our darkness to that light, turning to and being turned by the One who is always turned to us."



## Farewell to Drouin Anglican Church op shop volunteer Iris Morgan

Parish Councillor Lacy Biggs (left) presenting farewell gifts to Iris Morgan

### ■ Pauline Davies

Volunteers from the Drouin Anglican Church opportunity shop and warehouse farewelled volunteer Iris Morgan as part of a Christmas luncheon held in December.

The luncheon was a way to thank the volunteers for their commitment and time in keeping the op shop and the warehouse operating successfully. Volunteers also have a chance to get

to know those who work at a different location.

Iris had worked at both the shop and warehouse for about four years, but not just occasionally – she was there almost every day during that time. Iris was mainly responsible for closing down the previous op shop in Commercial Square and setting up the new shop, which opened in May

2023, together with her team of volunteers. This was a tremendous amount of work, including planning the layout and purchasing equipment.

A member of the Parish Council, Lacy Biggs, attended the luncheon, and presented Iris with a trophy congratulating her on her efforts, together with a gift voucher and flowers. Iris is looking forward to having a break as well as spending more time with her family interstate, and to picking up her craft work again. A new op shop coordinator has been appointed and is overseeing the daily shop operation, for which the church is most grateful.

The op shop provides the community with clothing and home goods at an affordable price. The fact that donations are recycled and re-sold also avoids a huge volume of items ending up in landfill. Items not suitable for the shop are donated to other charitable organisations or passed on to be shipped to Papua New Guinea, all helping those in need. Currently, financial support is donated to the Food Bank in Warragul and The Crossing in Drouin.

The shop has been very successful to date, as more volunteers have joined the team and are working well together. Anyone interested in joining the Anglican op shop team (41 Princes Way, Drouin) would be made most welcome.

To enquire, please call Drouin Parish on (03) 5625 4121.

## Celebrating the Christmas season and a new Rector in Warragul

### ■ Carol Monson

For the latter part of 2023, the Warragul Anglican Parish was without a Rector. However, The Rev'd Tracy Lauersen left the congregation having encouraged them to take a wide range of leadership roles, so that members of the parish remained actively engaged in its work.

The two People's Wardens, Jenny Worboys and Cameron Nicholls, along with a dedicated locum, David Atkinson, and a large team of supporters made sure the spiritual needs of the parish were met. Together they helped make the Christmas season meaningful, as well as updating the rectory to welcome our new incumbent The Rev'd Daniel Gebert and his family.

In a way, the season began the week before Advent, on the Feast of Christ the King, with a sung Evensong complete with choir.

A beautiful children's service was held on the first Sunday in December, when the story of the very first Christmas was retold. Excited children took the journeys of Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and wise men, and thought about the journey Christ made to come to earth as a baby. It was a message for all. Youth minister Jack Beamish marshalled the members of the youth group to decorate the upper branches of the church Christmas tree. The young children were then able to reach the lower branches to hang their own personal decorations during the service. The same busy youth group and leader conducted a service the following week.

On the third Sunday was a Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. Craig Doherty and a group of choristers led the music with both carols and other sung pieces, while Andrew Wood preached.



Young parish member Pip speaking at the pre-Christmas youth service

The singing, readings and sermon made for a great occasion of worship pointing to Christ's coming.



St Paul's Anglican Grammar School and Gippsland Grammar have celebrated the achievements of their 2023 VCE students, expressing pride in students' approach to their studies and in the school communities supporting them.

St Paul's says it is incredibly proud of the way the class of 2023 embraced every opportunity both in and outside of the classroom. They applied themselves to their studies in a dedicated and enthusiastic manner, and balanced this with involvement in a wide array of co-curricular pursuits. They approached this year with maturity and good humour and have actively pursued their potential to achieve excellent results.

This year's cohort have a variety of plans for the immediate future, from tertiary study in areas such as health, commerce and law, apprenticeships, Australian Defence Force traineeships and work.

Dux of St Paul's Anglican Grammar School for 2023, Hamna Mohamed Fahmi, achieved a perfect score for Psychology. Gippsland Grammar Dux Georgia Shell said being named dux was a surprise because she had always associated high ATAR rankings with STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects. She studied French, PE, Business Management, General Maths, Psychology and English Language and achieved study scores of more than 40 in all but one.

Gippsland Grammar Principal Michele

Wakeham was thrilled to celebrate the results of all the school's graduating students: "This year's cohort has shown such resilience through the adversity of Covid during much of their secondary education. Congratulations to all for the excellent effort the students put into their classes, co-curricular activities and assessments. They have been wonderful role models for other students to follow. A huge thank you to the teachers who persisted with skill and expertise. We are very proud of our community and our Year 12 students."

Gippsland Grammar also acknowledged the students who made a successful transition into the workforce through an apprenticeship or traineeship last year: "Tertiary study

is not the desired destination for all students, and we are so proud of the students that have just started their journey in the workforce," Michele said.



# From 1904 to the Voice

## How far have we come?

- Jan Down traces changing attitudes toward First Nations Peoples through 120 years of *The Gippsland Anglican*.

(Warning: This story includes obsolete and/or offensive references to and terms for First Nations Peoples.)

### SLOW CHANGE

The Rev'd John Bulmer's report in the January 1905 edition of *TCN* (*The Church News*, as *TGA* was then known) is revealing in the attitudes taken to Aboriginal people. Some of the language and concepts of the extract (see news clipping) would be far from acceptable in *TGA* today.

Bulmer goes on to tell the story of 'Willie Wimmera', a young Aboriginal boy who, abandoned in Melbourne by some bullock drivers from the Wimmera, was adopted by the Rev'd Septimus Lloyd Chase and came to know Christ. The boy's conversion inspired the setting up of the Church of England Mission to the Aborigines. Bulmer himself became involved in the mission, first at Yelta, near the Murray River at Mildura, then at Lake Tyers. He ends by saying that, despite considerable discouragements over the 50 years, "many received the good news into their hearts."

While Bulmer worked so hard to bring the gospel to these First Nations people and cared for them with heart and soul for so many years, his language reveals the attitudes of his day. There was a question about whether First Nations people have souls – in other words, whether they were fully human. They were seen to be "savages" in need of civilizing. The idea that the white settlers had stolen their land would have made no sense to people of that conviction.

Bulmer's understanding and attitudes expressed in the article are contradictory in places. The writing shows aspects of the subconscious blurring of the distinction between European culture and Christianity. Yet Bulmer also shows interest in Aboriginal culture and language – for example, mentioning pre-existing beliefs in a Supreme Being: "The blacks named him Ngoolambra, or ancient of days."

Interesting, too, is Bulmer's writing about the "native police" killing white people; he does not mention the massacres of Aboriginal people by white settlers. Yet he is known to have wanted to protect the people – this is one reason given for the choice of the remote peninsula for the mission.

In 1934, condescending attitudes – along with compassion and good intentions – were still common. An unattributed, possibly editorial, piece in *TCN* in July of that year reads as follows:

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES. Very definite and very different opinions are in vogue anent the mentality and general characteristics of the Australian black. Descriptions vary from 'Nature's Gentlemen' to 'vicious children'. The wild full-blood and the semi-civilised half-caste differ emphatically in many details, but naturally, a childish mentality characterises the great majority. Most of us are unqualified to express any valuable opinion, but we all know that we have a national responsibility to the race ... We must have ample land reserves for them; we must preserve the native and there must be a continuous attempt to give them as many benefits to civilisation as we can, without its damaging disabilities. This means, first, ample sanctuaries; secondly, sustained missionary and religious work, and thirdly, a government sympathy and financial backing in all social work which is really of benefit to them.

There is such irony to be heard now in calling for "ample land reserves for them," since it was and continues to be their land. But it also shows some sympathy, compassion, and a recognition of a right to exist, at a time when there was a general expectation that First Nations Peoples would die out altogether.

In 1971 the Lake Tyers land was returned to the people. Bishop David Garnsey wrote in his *TCN* letter of September that year:

The official handing over of Lake Tyers to an Aboriginal Trust on 24th July was a landmark. The South Australian and Victorian Governments have now taken a step which should be imitated by other States and the Federal Government.

What had happened to bring about so big a change in attitudes and understanding?

### THE STORY OF OUR MISSION TO THE ABORIGINES.

BY THE REV. JOHN BULMER.

As it is now 50 years since the Church of England Mission to the aborigines was established. I dare say it will be very interesting to those who cannot look back so far, to know how God, in His Providence, showed our Church their duties towards the blacks. From the apathy shown by some Christians, it must have been thought impossible to evangelize them. It is true some stations had been established, one at a place called Buntingdale, in the Western District, and the other further north in Victoria, presided over by the late Rev. Mr Parker, but we do not hear of any results from their work. The governments of the various colonies made use of them as trackers. Police, and one military man, thought if they were subjected to regular military drill, they would soon be civilized. While these methods were very good in themselves, so far as physical development went, yet it left the mind untrained. The old savage sometimes showed itself. I believe the only exploring party which went out with native police, under Mr Landsborough, had difficulty with the natives, for we read that his party had many skirmishes with the aborigines en route. This was to be expected, as the aborigines never tolerated visits from strangers. Strangers were called "Brajerak," or men to be feared. This arose from a superstitious dread of something being taken away which might be made into a charm, and cause the death of its owner, hence, even in our time, on the Murray, strangers were killed to prevent their return to their own people. So the native police would with the greatest pleasure have an occasional brush with those with whom they came in contact. By these methods, therefore, though the native was quickened a little in intellect, yet they left him still the murdering black-fellow when opportunity offered.

It was, therefore, a providential occurrence when the Church was led to see that the aborigines had souls to save...

It had taken a very long time. The one-page timeline of NAIDOC history ([naidoc.org.au/about/history](http://naidoc.org.au/about/history)) makes for sad reading of progress often undone and begun again: "Before the 1920s, Aboriginal rights groups boycotted Australia Day in protest against the status and treatment of Indigenous Australians. By the 1920s, they were increasingly aware that the broader Australian public were largely ignorant of the boycotts."

But persistent protest over decades paid off eventually. In 1962, all Aboriginal people were finally allowed to vote in their own country. By the time of the 1967 referendum on the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Australian Constitution, *TCN* (May 1967) reported Bishop Garnsey as saying, in his Synod address:

If the referendum is passed, the Aborigines will be counted as full members of our community and the Commonwealth Government will be empowered to legislate concerning their welfare. As Charles Perkins has said, this referendum is a 'moment of truth' for our voters. I trust every Anglican and every Australian will vote 'Yes' in this part of the referendum. It is an essential step in the campaign to remove the scandal of second-class citizenship based on colour.

The referendum passed, with 90.77% voting 'yes'. Bishop Garnsey was pleased, and hopeful of good outcomes (*TCN* May 1968).

The changing attitudes to First Nations Peoples in Australia and in the church in following decades are mirrored in the diocesan paper. Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week reports from parishes, The Abbey, Anglicare and the Anglican Schools appear year after year. Feature articles on Lakes Tyers have been published occasionally.

A *TGA* March 1986 report on a Family Conference calls on families to get to know Aboriginal people, and asks the Diocese to organise events with Gippsland Aboriginal people to express "our collective need for repentance and forgiveness; the oneness of Gubbars and Kooris in Jesus; our desire for reparation, [and] celebration of our diverse expression of the gospel."

One very significant event was the ordination, by Bishop John McIntyre, of two Gippsland Aboriginal priests, the Rev'd Aunty Phyllis Andy and the Rev'd Kathy Dalton, in 2011 (see cover on this page).

More recently, Aunty Phyllis was appointed a Canon of St Paul's Cathedral Sale by Bishop Richard Treloar during the 2021 Synod, becoming the first Indigenous priest in the Province of Victoria to be installed as a Canon in October of that year (see *TGA* November 2021, p. 3).

In July 2020, current *TGA* editor Sally Woollett wrote a cover story on the McMillan monuments controversy in Gippsland, in the context of the worldwide Black Lives Matter protests.

### 2023 REFERENDUM ON THE VOICE

In 2023, Australians voted in a referendum on the establishment of an Aboriginal Voice to Parliament, which was the first request of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. In the lead-up to this referendum, Australian people became increasingly divided on the Voice.

Bishop Richard had made his own support clear in his monthly *TGA* articles. Then, in his Presidential Address at Synod (see *TGA* June 2023), he said further, "If ever a people had cause to call others to repent, it is the First Peoples of this land. Instead, the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart reaches out with grace ..." He urged Gippsland Anglicans to consider different perspectives on the Voice, but added that, "as Christians, let it not be fear that drives us. Rather, let it be our openness to absurd generosity, to transformational forgiveness from the heart of God, and the heart of this land."

Asked for a comment on the Voice, the Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy first recalled the days when Aboriginal people were served last in the local shop, as a matter of course. She also talked about the way the Aborigines Protection Board would remove children who weren't going to school: "As much as the Aboriginal people wanted their children educated, they were sceptical about them going to school in fear that their children would not be coming home to them."

Aunty Phyllis was against the Voice to Parliament, seeing it as unnecessary, as she felt the 1967 referendum had given Indigenous people recognition. She was also unconvinced that the Voice would have made a difference to the inequalities of health, housing, education and employment.

The Rev'd Kathy Dalton tells a story of walking down Buckley Street in Morwell in the 1980s and seeing a beautiful map of Australia in a shop window. Noticing the words *Terra Nullius* written across the map, she asked the shopkeeper what this meant. She was devastated to hear that it meant 'no man's land'. She knew that this was the land her grandmother's grandfather had walked.



So, for Kathy, the Voice question went right back to this 1980s moment: "Mine was a yes vote, because it's about time the laws of the land were changed, that Aboriginal people were included in the Constitution."

Kathy was disheartened by the result of the referendum, in which 60% of Australians and 73% of Gippslanders voted 'no'. Her immediate reaction was, "Is this what Australians think of Aboriginal people?" But she sees some hope through education; she has observed that when people hear about the true history of First Nations people, it makes a difference. She is pleased the Latrobe Council flies the three flags: the Australian, the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander flags.

Kathy would like every church to put up a plaque acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land, and feels it is important to continue making the Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of services. "If we have to start again, we have to start again, for our children and our grandchildren. We're a multicultural nation, but don't forget about the First Nations people."



**SEMMENS FUNERALS**  
SERVICING GIPPSLAND



**Maffra** 5147 1954

**Sale** 5144 1954

**Heyfield** 5148 3354

[www.semmensfunerals.com.au](http://www.semmensfunerals.com.au)  
24 Hour Service

*Our Family Caring For  
Your Family Since 1979*

*Member Of The Australian  
Funeral Directors Association*



# Anglican Communion calls for climate change action at COP28

General view at the UN Climate Change Conference COP28 at Expo City Dubai, December 2023

At last year's UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), Anglican Communion delegates articulated Hope, Justice and a Voice for the Vulnerable, calling for a just transition, resilience-building in vulnerable communities and just financing in response to climate change. The Anglican Communion also wants to mobilise more people across the world's third largest Christian community to take action and promote its calls to their respective governments.

"We have a responsibility to those who are suffering to make sure something changes. Religious leaders listen to the voice of young people around the world telling us 'You can do more!,'" said Archbishop Julio Murray, Bishop of Panama and the Anglican Communion's Lead on climate change.

As world leaders converged in Dubai for the largest climate change negotiations, the Anglican Communion called for:

- a just transition: commitments at COP28 to phasing out fossil fuels, fastest in the highest polluting countries, ensuring dialogue with affected sectors and overcoming barriers to transitions in emerging markets
- resilience-building in vulnerable communities: double funding for adaptation, working strategically with faith groups already in vulnerable communities and making sure women,

youth and indigenous people are at the table

- just financing: countries that have done little to cause climate change should not have to pay for the damage it causes or the changes we need to limit it. This requires immediate action (payment into the loss and damage fund agreed at COP27 and long-term change (reforming financial systems driving debt and inequality).

The Communion also called Anglican churches to support outcomes of COP28, locally and globally.

In a video message to the Global Leaders Faith Summit, which met in Abu Dhabi shortly before COP28, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "Faith leaders represent the majority of people across the world, from both developed and developing countries. We can demonstrate to world leaders that people of faith want to see, and are willing to support, change. We can lead by example and let world leaders know they have a mandate for bold, ambitious decision making at COP28."

The Anglican Communion has permanent representation at the United Nations, raising the Church's voice on issues of justice, conflict, care of creation and more throughout the year. At major events like COP, a small group from the Communion join together to strengthen its advocacy and action.

During COP28 they met with representatives of states, business, investors, NGOs and faith groups to share the calls to action and listen to where change is possible. "We will pray and worship with other Christians gathered for COP and from across the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East," said Martha Jarvis, the Anglican Communion's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, in the lead-up to the event. She continued: "We are particularly grateful to be hosted by the Archbishop of Jerusalem and Primate of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, Hosam Naoum. With global attention on the situation in the Holy Land, it will be powerful to account with him for the links between conflict and climate change, and how the Church can be a voice of justice and reconciliation in our international politics."

The Anglican Communion hosted discussions with business leaders, Indigenous leaders, gatherings with young adults to hear their concerns, and conversations between faith leaders.

The Anglican Communion's COP28 report, 'Hope, Justice and a Voice for the Vulnerable – A call to Climate Action', is available at [anglicancommunion.org](http://anglicancommunion.org).

[anglicancommunion.org](http://anglicancommunion.org)

To join in with meaningful climate action in our diocese, email the ACTinG group at [hello@gippslandanglicans.org.au](mailto:hello@gippslandanglicans.org.au)

# Faith communities ask Environment Minister to protect Australia's biodiversity

The Faith Ecology Network (FEN) has written to the Hon Tanya Plibersek, Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, calling for the drafting of the new *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* to:

- provide more robust environmental protection standards that will protect Australian land, air and waters against further destruction
- ensure properly funded habitat restoration and species recovery programs
- close legal loopholes that make it possible for aggressive business practices that lead to the destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity.

"FEN strongly supports the establishment of an Independent National Environment Protection body that will monitor and enforce these measures. Protecting Australia's unique species in this increasingly dominant human and technological age requires a strong legal instrument that

would safeguard biodiversity protection for future generations," said Anne Lanyon, a Catholic Community Educator, and FEN coordinator, in the letter to the Minister.

Zubeda Raihman, President of the Muslim Women's National Network of Australia and long-time FEN member, says she is supportive of the letter because "as custodians of our environment, we all must ensure to protect Australian lands, skies and waters against further destruction. As per the holy Quran, Chapter Al-Araf 7:31, environment conservation is our duty and our obligation."

As an interfaith network of people connecting faith with ecological awareness and care, FEN is committed to promoting the wonder of biodiversity. In the context of biodiversity collapse, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the call of our First Nations to Heal Country, FEN is working at connecting faith groups to better learn from and care for biodiversity.

"We need good strong laws for environmental, biodiversity and conservation

protection – for the flourishing of life now and into the future. I encourage every person of faith to write to the Minister to protect Australia's biodiversity," said Ms Lanyon.

Faith Ecology Network

## Have your say in TGA!

Send your letters\* of approximately 350 words to [editor@gippslandanglicans.org.au](mailto:editor@gippslandanglicans.org.au).

\* Please include your name and suburb for publication.



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



**1039 LIFE FM**  
GIPPSLAND

**CREATING STORIES OF HOPE FOR A BETTER LIFE AND FUTURE**

We are a team making a difference to the future of Gippsland



**Here are few ways you can partner with us:**

- ✓ Become a member
- ✓ Donate to the station
- ✓ Volunteer
- ✓ Bring your skills
- ✓ Add your voice

**CONTACT US TODAY!**

w: [www.lifefm.com.au](http://www.lifefm.com.au)  
e: [gippsland@lifefm.com.au](mailto:gippsland@lifefm.com.au)  
ph: 03 5143 3505

## Handley & Anderson

FUNERAL DIRECTORS  
Servicing South Gippsland & Phillip Island

Scott & Sharon Anderson

**With care & dignity we serve South Gippsland and Phillip Island**

Main Office:  
**WONTHAGGI/INVERLOCH (03) 5672 1074**  
3085 Loch-Wonthaggi Road, Wonthaggi, Vic 3995  
Fax: (03) 5672 1747  
Email: [info@handafunerals.com.au](mailto:info@handafunerals.com.au)

**PHILLIP ISLAND (03) 5952 517**  
15 Warley Avenue, Cowes, Vic 3922  
(by appointment only)

Pre-paid & pre-arranged funeral plans available.

**CARING & PERSONAL 24 HOUR SERVICE**  
[www.handleyandandersonfunerals.com.au](http://www.handleyandandersonfunerals.com.au)

MEMBER OF AUSTRALIAN FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

# Where did the new year's resolution come from? Well, we've been making them for 4000 years

■ Joanne Dickson

As we welcome in the new year, a common activity across many cultures is the setting of new year resolutions. New year represents a significant temporal milestone in the calendar when many people set new goals for the year ahead. Here in Australia, over 70% of men and women (over 14 million Australians) are reported to have set at least one new year resolution in 2022.

New year pledges or promises are not new. This practice has been around for some time. Most ancient cultures practised some type of religious tradition or festival at the beginning of the new year.

## THE BABYLONIANS

Historically, the first recorded people to set new year pledges (later to become known as resolutions) are the Ancient Babylonians some 4000 years ago.

The Babylonians are also the first civilisation to hold recorded celebrations in honour of the new year. Though for the Babylonians the year began not in January, but in mid March, when the crops were being planted. New year resolutions for the Babylonians were intertwined with religion, mythology, power, and socioeconomic values.

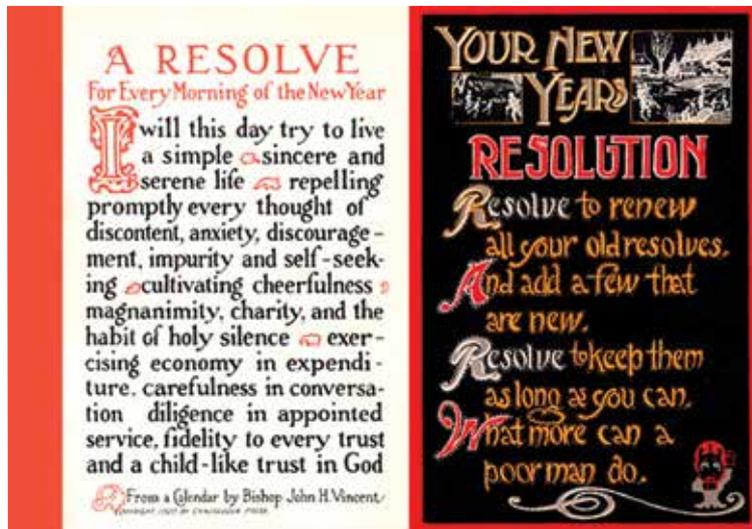
The Babylonians are said to have initiated the tradition of a 12-day new year festival called Akitu. Statues of the deities were paraded through the city streets, and rites were enacted to symbolise victory over the forces of chaos.

During this festival people planted crops, pledged their allegiance to the reigning king or crowned a new king, and made promises to repay debts in the year ahead. The Babylonians believed if they fulfilled their new year promises, then the Gods would look favourably upon them in the new year.

## ANCIENT ROME

Ancient Rome continued the tradition of celebrating new year and setting new year pledges. The Roman new year was initially celebrated on 15 March (The Ides of March), as this was the time the most important Roman officials (Consuls) took office.

The festival of Anna Perenna, an Italian goddess of the new year and the beginning of spring, was also celebrated on 15 March.



Ivan Akira/Wikimedia

Early 20th-century new year's resolution postcard

## THE JULIAN CALENDAR

The emperor Julius Caesar introduced the Julian calendar, in 46 BC, which declared 1 January as the start of the new year. This new date was to honour the Roman god, Janus.

Symbolically, Janus has two faces, to look back on the previous year and to look forward into the new year. Janus was the protector of doors, archways, thresholds and transitions into new beginnings.

Each new year Romans would offer sacrifices to Janus and pledge renewed bonds between citizens, the state, and the deities. Blessings and gifts were exchanged (for example sweet fruit and honey), and allegiances pledged to the emperor. New year celebrations and pledges were embedded into spirituality, power structures, and the societal fabric of the Roman culture.

## THE AGE OF CHIVALRY

In the Middle Ages (around 500 to 1500 AD), medieval knights pledged their allegiance and renewed their vows to chivalry and knightly valour each new year.

Legend has it the most celebrated chivalry vows were those called 'The Vow of the Peacock' or the 'Pheasant'. The knights placed their hands on a live or roast peacock and renewed their vows to maintain knightly values.

The splendid and various colours of these birds is thought to have symbolised the majesty of kings and nobility.

Beyond knightly valour and honour, however, chivalry served social and religious functions. Chivalry reinforced social divisions of wealth, prestige and superiority

that served the interests of the ruling nobility and landed aristocrats. Thus, knighthood became analogous to an elite members' club.

In the Middle Ages, new year was celebrated by different societies at different times of the year. Due to a timing miscalculation, the Julian calendar had resulted in seven extra days by the year 1000.

## MODERN TIMES

To solve problems associated with the Julian calendar, the Gregorian calendar was instituted by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. The new year was officially reinstated to 1 January.

Religion continued to exert a significant social and cultural influence on the purpose and function of people's new year pledges. For instance, in the 19th century, Protestantism emphasised setting pledges strongly aligned to religion, spirituality and moral character.

However, in the 1800s there is some evidence resolutions were beginning to be satirised. For instance, a series of satirical resolutions were being reported in the *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* (1802), "Statesmen have resolved to have no other object in view than the good of their country."

Resolutions had become a common activity, and people were making and breaking pledges just as they do to this day. For instance, as early as 1671, the Scottish writer Anne Halkett recorded in her diary the resolution, "I will not offend anymore."

As in earlier times, people from across cultures continue to celebrate the new year (though at different times), and to set resolutions. Just as ancient civilisations would pray for rich harvest, resolutions today tend to also project societal values.

Contemporary resolutions tend to be more secular than religious or societal in nature. Conceptually, however, new year resolutions continue to capture people's imagination, hopes, and promises for betterment. Even after 4000 years, the new year continues to symbolise a new threshold. An opportunity for a fresh start.

Joanne Dickson is Professor of Psychology & Mental Health, Edith Cowan University. First published at [theconversation.com](http://theconversation.com).



## Making moments and finding moments

### ■ Rev'd Daniel Lowe

It is a sunny Saturday afternoon, and I am sitting in a small electric boat with seven other people, six of them strangers. The food is delicious, the drinks refreshing and the conversation both deep and enriching. It's one of those magical moments in life that only come along occasionally.

This was no accidental moment, though. Thanks to a very creative friend (the other person on the boat that I knew), this was a carefully planned celebration designed for him and by him to celebrate his birthday. To produce that meaningful moment, homework had been given, bookings made, weather forecasts consulted and invitations sent. And full credit to him – it was a marvellous idea.

Fast forward to the next day – Father's Day – when I found myself eating a delicious hot breakfast cooked for me by one of my sons. Another magical moment, although this time I felt a tinge of disappointment that he couldn't stay and appreciate my enjoyment because he had to rush off to work. These two days and two moments got me thinking about the importance of those special moments with family, friends or even with God.

Plenty has been written, spoken and sung about treasuring the time we have with our children. There is a reason the 1974 Harry Chapin song *Cat's in the Hat* still resonates with us today. We know that there are things we can do to create moments with our family or with our friends, and that they don't all require a boat trip on the Yarra. Things like regular family meals, celebrating birthdays and taking family holidays. There are also moments that we can't plan for, that arrive unannounced and often at inconvenient moments. It is that moment when your child interrupts you as you are mid-task and says, "Could you have a look at this for me?" or asks enthusiastically, just as you collapse onto the couch, "Hey Dad, watch this – can you do this?" It is the moment when a friend suddenly stops, looks at you and, apropos of nothing, says, "Can I ask you a question?"

In those instances, we have a choice. Do we let the opportunity pass us by or do we enter into it and allow the moment to unfold? The key, as a colleague said to me recently, is being present in the moment. And, I would add, not just being present but

being prepared to discover moments where none were planned for. English writer GK Chesterton once wrote, "An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered." Are we prepared to consider those interruptions to our day as opportunities for adventure?

I have lamented in the past the constant wearing of earbuds or headphones and the need to be always plugged into some sort of entertainment that seems to beset our society. I think this makes it harder for those spontaneous moments to happen because it stops us from being present with the people and events immediately around us. To draw again from the wisdom of Chesterton, "The traveler sees what he sees. The tourist sees what he has come to see." When we use our devices to curate so much of what we see and hear, we limit ourselves to the carefully managed path of our digital tourist guide. When we allow ourselves to be open to the world around us, we become travelers who may find ourselves on all sorts of unexpected paths.

What is true for our family and friends is also true for our spiritual lives. How much room do we make for encounters with God? There are things we can do to create moments where we feel connected to God – church gatherings, private devotional times, prayer and meditation, connecting with nature – but there are also opportunities for 'spiritual moments' in the midst of the most mundane and practical tasks. Because God is a relational God and – just like our children, our family, our friends – the thing that God desires most is to be with us. Writer Skye Jethani (*With: Reimagining the Way You Relate to God*) puts it this way: "It is not our circumstances or behaviors or radical decisions that give our lives meaning and hope, but our unity with God himself."

So next time your child interrupts you at an inconvenient time, or you reach for the earbuds to distract yourself from the world around you, or you feel like God is distant, may you have the courage and grace to find in that moment the possibility of an adventure with someone who wants to journey with you. And, in that adventure, may you know the love of family, the bond of friendship, the joy of living and the overwhelming presence of God. Because, to give Chesterton the last word, "There are no uninteresting things, only uninterested people."

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

# Land of the unexpected, God of the unexpected

## Part 3: Relationships – our blessed friendships in PNG

### ■ Jennifer Boer

PNG is a relational culture, and of all the things we treasure from our PNG adventure, one of the most significant is the privilege of friendships with nationals. If we have any understanding of PNG, it is through our interaction with, and observations of, PNG friends.

### FATHER NICHOLAS KWAN

Our strongest connection with PNG Anglicans is with the Jimi Valley Anglicans, initiated by our driving to the remote Jimi parish of Koinambe to visit Father Barrie Slatter and his wife, Susan, to help them in their aim to build a new *haus lotu* (church building; Papuans call the people 'the church' and the building the worship house).

What is a 20-minute flight by Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) aircraft took us 13 hours in our imported Land Cruiser – a necessary extravagance in our estimation, if we were to know the country. It was on this journey that we got to know Father Nicholas Kwan, the priest at Koinambe and our guide on the way. This humble, gentle man has a genuine love of God and his word. When we asked him recently how he would like us to pray for his parish, he said they might be like the good soil and receive the Word of God with joy, producing fruit. Of course, Nicholas wanted us to help him and his family and parishioners, but any lack of help will never prevent him from continuing to minister.

Nicholas opened our eyes to the poverty of most remote clergy – their struggle to feed, house and educate their families. Nicholas' occasional trips to Mt Hagen from his Jimi home are to get 'supplies'. Not luxurious store goods for his family but wafers and wine, and maybe an umbrella to help on long pastoral treks through sun and rain. Clergy in the Aipo Rongo diocese don't appear to receive a stipend. Their parishioners give them garden produce on Sundays, but these are not cash economies. Whereas city clergy may receive a little cash, rural ones rarely do. If they want to eat, they must have gardens (easier in some parishes than others!); if they need cash, they must grow cash crops.

These discouragements mean many



Geoff and Jennifer Boer (centre) at Mt Hagen airport with (right) Garia, their housekeeper, cultural and spiritual teacher, and (left) Geoff's colleague Janet

clergy are unable to continue in ministry, but Nicholas has done so – limping around his mountainous parish on his destroyed knees, exercising compassion, praying with and for his people.

### LIYE IPUYUMU

When I joined the physiotherapy team at the provincial hospital, Liye Ipuyumu was appointed to assist me. She is at least trilingual and acted as my translator, an essential role in those early days of my Tok Pisin use. Liye is a hard worker, eager to learn.

Through Liye, my eyes were opened to just how tough the lives of PNG women can be. She was bringing up her five children alone because her teacher husband had chosen to leave his wife and children, and not go to his appointed school, but to remain in town and spend his wages irresponsibly. (About halfway through my PNG years, the prime minister tightened up monitoring of teachers' attendance at their schools. Those who hadn't fulfilled their paid role lost their wages.)

Liye started arriving at work bruised and battered because her husband saw his solution as Liye's wages. She had to earn their children's school fees, and provide all their needs, while living in fear of her husband.

She was devastated that, when her youngest daughter died of unexplained organ failure, his brothers came and claimed her body. They said "when we bought you, we bought your body and everything that comes out of it." I found knowing how to respond to such injustice very challenging.

### JANET RAPHAEL

The story of Janet Raphael becoming my research assistant and friend is a story of God's gracious provision in the face of my inadequacy. My work at the hospital had shown me I needed to develop tools appropriate to the language and culture. I undertook a research project looking at speech development through Curtin University in Perth.

In preparing for my research, I needed to find participants for four age groups who could satisfy various criteria, such as knowing their birth date and being speakers of our two target languages. I approached various preschools and elementary schools, and all told me that they could supply students who satisfy those criteria. Mysteriously, when I arrived back in PNG from Perth, having defended my thesis proposition, none of these sources could offer me participants.

## JESSIKA INGEN

I later found out that other universities paid the participants and those who sourced them! It was a good way to learn that, in PNG, people would rather tell you “yes” when they meant “yes, if you ...”

I thought my research project was dead in the water. However, I began walking the outlying villages and visiting those I had connections with. On one of these walks, I met Janet and her family, who told me to come back the next Saturday and they would have children ready. As I got in my car to leave, Janet quietly came up to me and said “Jennifer, I want to help you.” I said, “thank you, Janet, but I can’t pay you.” “I don’t want money, I want to learn,” she replied.

There is not space to say just how invaluable Janet was as a cultural guide, friend and data recorder, or how God made it possible for her to receive a small wage from me. Suffice it to say, I seriously question if I could have done this work without her.

From Janet I learned not to take my many advantages for granted. She is one of 11 children, her family members lead subsistence lives and could only afford to educate one child at a time. Her younger sister received a scholarship to a Roman Catholic high school and Janet had to leave school at year 10. With a little help from us, she has become dux of the matriculation college and is completing the final year of her education degree in Goroka. It’s been a struggle all the way, with challenges that seem so unfair to me, but she has met them with prayer and faith. Now she can help educate others in her family – when the tardy education department starts paying her wages!

During our time in Mt Hagen in the Western Highlands province, we fellow-shipped with the Anglican congregation of St Michael and All Angels. This parish is also the home of the Bishop of Aipo Rongo, Nathan Ingen. Bishop Nathan comes from one of the mountain villages that our mission, MAF, serves. We got to know him and his wife, Jessika quite well during our eight years there, making several long road trips up into the mountains. Jessika has a wonderful testimony of God’s work in her life and her village, and is much loved in the congregation and diocese.

Jessika is highly intelligent and a natural leader, motivating whoever she interacts with to be the best that they can be for Jesus, from youth musicians to Mothers’ Union.

A terrible accident happened one day when Jessika, Bishop Nathan and other parishioners were returning from the mountains where the bishop had been conducting a large confirmation service. She sustained terrible scalp injuries and suffered a subsequent infection. Her left hand was also badly injured. Mother Juliet, a former Mothers’ Union president of the region, was killed.

Jessika spent many weeks in hospital, after long, exhausting journeys and being turned away from two mission hospitals in neighbouring provinces – with surgery and rehabilitation to follow.

Ensuring Jessika received the best possible care was a somewhat tricky exercise, but we did what we could, including trying to arrange referrals and appointments. During a visit to my old

clinical home, the physiotherapy department, one of the physiotherapists gave Jessika a lovely massage and treatment of her hand, which really encouraged her. An MAF wife accompanied me on some visits to the bishop’s house and we have all prayed together. Hearing about Jessika’s work with the poor of Jimi valley, she plans to donate a suitcase of clothes for distribution.

It seems that, through ourselves and Bishop Driver, God is forging a link between the Diocese of Gippsland and PNG. May God be glorified, and his kingdom extended through our fellowship.



Jessika Ingen (left) with Jennifer Boer. Since surgery her hand is still bandaged and painful but she has recommenced her work

## Newton Theological College becomes part of Modawa Institute

### ■ Bishop Jeffrey Driver

The Modawa, or New Guinea Rosewood, has become a symbol for the Church in PNG. The early missionaries cut down bush timber to build a chapel in Dogura, a mission station in Milne Bay Province, in PNG’s south-east. One of the posts grew and became a symbol of the church. It is still there near the cathedral at Dogura, a symbol of resilience, growth and inclusion, providing shelter and shade for many.

The year 2023 has a special place in the history of Newton Theological College. As of 31 December, the college became part of a larger entity called the Modawa Institute of Higher Education. It brings together Newton College with the



St Margaret’s School of Nursing and a new school, the David Hand School of Teaching.

The Provincial Council of the Anglican Church of PNG has been considering this important initiative over the past two to three years and in November passed the enabling Canon. The Northern (Oro) Province Provincial Government has come behind the proposal with strong support and the Kokoda Trust Foundation has emerged as a major partner.

This means that the Newton College Graduation on 19 November last year

was the last under that banner. The next cohort of graduates will be from the Modawa Institute.

All this will call for renewed endeavours at several levels. The staff and systems of the college will need to be expanded. The IT arrangements will need further development and there will need to be several new buildings. Included among the new buildings will be dormitory facilities for female students as well as additional lecture spaces.

To support Newton College initiatives, visit [gippslandanglicans.org.au/donate](http://gippslandanglicans.org.au/donate)

## From the editor



The TGA 120th anniversary year is here! The editorial team is keen to sing happy birthday (and to eat cake!), but we must wait until March, the month of the inaugural issue.

Late last year (after mulling over possible delectable flavours for the future cake),

the editorial committee set about formulating/formalising a TGA purpose to share with readers during this special time.

What we came up with, guided by Bishop Richard, is a number of intentions that resonate with the Diocesan Vision of Gippsland Anglicans (see back cover).

Stories offer infinite possibilities to the reader – in awareness, connection, encouragement, inspiration, reflection, growth and much more. And each story is the source of an unknown number of future stories, with that number depending on how many people (each with their own unique 'take') read it. Likewise, the Diocesan Vision to be Committed

in Christ, Connecting in Service and Creative in Spirit opens to a universe of possible stories.

To kick off this anniversary, in this issue former editor and TGA 120th correspondent Jan Down asks 'How far have we come?', tracing local attitudes towards First Nations Australians from the time of TGA's inception (and during The Rev'd John Bulmer's time at the Lake Tyers mission), to last year's referendum on the Voice to Parliament (p. 14).

Having delved into the Diocese of Gippsland archives, Jan will be sharing further stories with us throughout this anniversary year.

## Letters to the editor

I read with interest Dr Gavin Brown's article 'Mental Health First Aid – a ministry opportunity' (TGA October 2023, p. 12), followed by David Miller's Letter to the Editor in response (TGA December 2023, p. 10) in which he cited Dr Jack Andrews' indication in *New Scientist* that the effectiveness of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) has a weak evidence base.

I feel I have some authority to speak on the topic of MHFA training in my capacity as a licensed instructor of two of their courses, which gives me access to not only the evidence that underpins the courses, but also the very large community of instructors ('brains trust') in Australia.

Here, I hope to make the point that the Cochrane Collaboration research referenced by Mr Miller was not conclusive and cannot be used as a foundation to cast doubt on the effectiveness of MHFA, and to dispel any thought that MHFA is not a valid response to a person experiencing a worsening state of mental health.

Mr Miller very helpfully provided the link to the Cochrane Collaboration review published in August 2023 ([bit.ly/4aPH-](https://bit.ly/4aPH-)

## Mental Health First Aid – a response

GLO). In their review, the authors state, "We cannot draw conclusions about the effects of MHFA training on our primary outcomes due to the lack of good quality evidence." In other words, they could not say with sufficient certainty that there was no positive effect.

Two months after the Cochrane Collaboration review was published, The University of Melbourne published an article in response, reminding readers of the known benefits of MHFA training. The article pointed to a 2018 review of research that found MHFA "improved recognition of mental health problems, provided better knowledge of effective treatments and how to offer support, gave people more confidence to offer support, led to an increase in the amount of support offered and a reduction in stigmatising attitudes" ([bit.ly/3tLmpco](https://bit.ly/3tLmpco)).

Mr Miller's statement that MHFA is not "effective at improving mental health" misses the true goal of the intervention. First aid is just that – an early and first response to a situation where health may be compromised further. MHFA does not claim to improve an individual's

mental health status. What it does do is train people to intervene early with appropriate knowledge and skills, offer support, respond in a crisis and reduce stigma to prevent further harm or death.

I strongly support Dr Brown's position that church communities are places where mental health can and should be effectively supported, whether that be by sustaining good mental health or supporting people experiencing a decline. Having people with MHFA training in your congregation is a bonus! I cannot vouch for the effectiveness of the Sanctuary Mental Health Course that Dr Brown talks about – I know nothing about it. But having spent eight full days being trained in two types of MHFA courses, and delivering training in the communities of West Gippsland, I can speak for the rigour and quality of MFHA training, and I encourage every adult to find out more. I hope that this response serves to encourage discourse on how we support mental health in our communities, especially in our church places and programs.

**Libby Willems, Drouin**

## Donation from Bunyip Anglicans to Gaza

It's good to be able to write about good things happening somewhere in the world.

We at Bunyip's small congregation joined together for a number of gatherings during the Christmas period and completed these with an enjoyable roast meal prepared by our catering

crew on New Year's Eve.

It is, however, a sad world we see when confronted by the evening news.

In the light of this, our little congregation decided to try to alleviate some suffering experienced by those living in areas supported by Christian communities.

With this in mind, we put a box in the church entrance intended to enable contributions to be made to the Church in Gaza. As a result, we were able to send \$2000 early in the New Year to ABM towards supporting the people in such a devastated landscape.

**Tim Green, Bunyip**

# Richard Dawkins, C.S. Lewis and the Meaning of Life

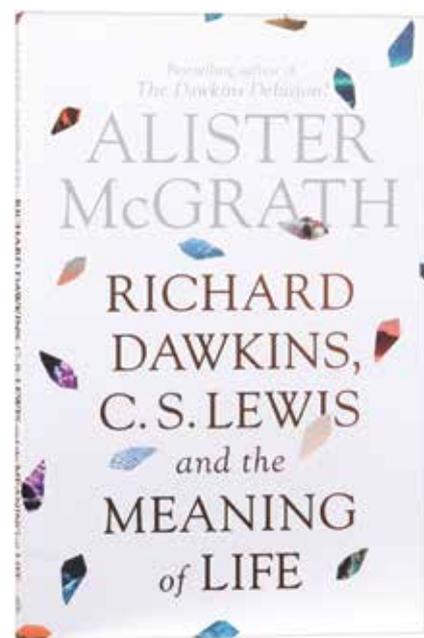
Alister McGrath

SPCK, 2019

## Richard Prideaux

Alister McGrath is the Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion at Oxford University and Director of the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion. He has written a vast array of outstanding books on Christian theology, church history and the relationship between Christian faith and science. His output includes the monumental three-volume *A Scientific Theology*; his doctoral thesis, *A History of the Doctrine of Justification*; and the outstanding *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, about the Reformation. In his very helpful *The Christian Theology Reader*, McGrath provides substantial readings from every major theologian from Justin Martyr to the present day, along with a thorough analysis of their key ideas and useful questions for study.

***McGrath puts some tough questions and criticisms to both these writers and challenges the reader to think deeply about what we really do believe about our lives, their future and purpose, and the meaning of our existence among billions of planets and stars.***



not the case: McGrath puts some tough questions and criticisms to both these writers and challenges the reader to think deeply about what we really do believe about our lives, their future and purpose, and the meaning of our existence among billions of planets and stars.

Of his main subjects, McGrath demonstrates that “both writers are men of faith holding committed positions that cannot be proved right, but which they clearly regard as justified and reasonable”. McGrath also points out that both psychology and philosophy show that humans have “a tendency to believe more than the evidence actually warrants.” McGrath challenges us to think through just “how we can show our beliefs to be justified.”

Don't read this book if you don't like your Christian faith being challenged. Read it if you want to consider deeply the meaning of your life and faith.

Alongside these massive theological tomes, McGrath's brief (70-page) paperback on Dawkins, Lewis and the meaning of life might seem a bit condensed. On the contrary, I found the four chapters of this little book demanding, thought-provoking and at times unsettling. At the outset, a reader might assume that McGrath would be very critical of Dawkins' outspoken critique of Christian faith and very praiseworthy of Lewis' well-known and very popular Christian books. This is



The caring, highly experienced and qualified team at Latrobe Valley Funeral Services have been servicing the Latrobe Valley community and greater Gippsland area for over 70 years. Providing a caring environment and personal touch to accommodate each individual's needs in remembering your loved ones.

### Contact Latrobe Valley Funeral Services

**Moe**  
6 Ollerton Avenue Moe, VIC 3855  
**03 5126 1111**

**Morwell**  
437A Princes Drive Morwell, VIC 3840  
**03 5134 4937**

**Traralgon**  
260 Princes Hwy Traralgon, VIC 3844  
**03 5174 2258**



**Barry and Annette Lett Funeral Directors**

*We offer care, compassion and service  
with dignity for the people of Gippsland.*

**67 Macarthur Street, Sale**  
**03 5143 1232**  
**admin@lettsfunerals.com.au**  
**www.lettsfunerals.com.au**

*Member of Australian Funeral Directors Association*

# The <sup>Gippsland</sup> Anglican

## Our purpose

The *Gippsland Anglican* seeks to serve God's people within and beyond the region by:

- connecting communities across Gippsland through the sharing of news and views
- building a sense of shared mission between parishes, Anglican schools and other ministry centres of the Diocese
- celebrating and learning from the diversity of service and outreach offered by local clergy and lay people
- strengthening links between the Diocese, the wider Anglican Communion and ecumenical partners
- encouraging faith and discipleship through a breadth of resources on spirituality, theology and Christian living
- examining current social issues through the lens of the gospel.



## Gippsland Anglicans

### Committed in Christ

Gippsland Anglicans are grounded in Christ. We engage with the Church's living traditions as intentional inclusive communities where all are welcome, respected, safe, and valued.

Our identity is shaped by

- **Scripture** studied with reverence and rigour
- **Worship** that unites and inspires
- **Ministry** exercised by all the baptised
- **Prayer** which opens hearts to grace
- **Diversity** received as a gift of creation
- **Growth** in belonging and believing

### Connecting in Service

Gippsland Anglicans share in Christ's mission. We hold fast to the vision of human flourishing Jesus called 'the Kingdom of God' and we reach out in partnership with good news for all.

Our ministry is marked by

- **Listening** to people's lived experience
- **Looking** outward in meeting needs
- **Speaking** into the big questions of the day
- **Reconciling** where there is injustice or injury
- **Building** up communities of care and trust
- **Acting** for the good of earth and all creatures

### Creative in Spirit

Gippsland Anglicans are open to Christ's leading. We seek to respond to changing needs and new understandings, to be faithful and imaginative in bearing stories of hope for our time and place.

Our calling is discovered by

- **Reflection** on what disruption teaches us
- **Readiness** to try new things and ideas
- **Engagement** with local communities
- **Collaboration** in small and large projects
- **Empowerment** of children and young people
- **Generosity** in the use of our resources



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

## The <sup>Gippsland</sup> Anglican

Editor: Sally Woollett  
0407 614 661  
editor@gippslandanglicans.org.au

Layout by Devine Design

Printed by Intellimail

ISSN: 2653-6102 (Print)

eISSN: 2653-6110 (Online)

The *Gippsland Anglican* is the official magazine of and is published by The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland, 58 Marley St, Sale, Victoria, 3850. [gippslandanglicans.org.au](http://gippslandanglicans.org.au)

Member of Australasian Religious Press Association



The editor reserves the right of final choice and format of material included in each issue. The *Gippsland Anglican* and the editor cannot necessarily verify any material used in this publication. Views contained in submitted material are those of contributors.

### Advertising and subscriptions

Please contact the editor for all advertising submissions, costing and enquiries, including about inserts. Subscription enquiries 03 5144 2044 [gippslandanglicans.org.au/news/advertising\\_rates](http://gippslandanglicans.org.au/news/advertising_rates)

**GIPPSLAND DIOCESE  
CLERICAL VACANCIES**

Bass/Phillip Island  
Corner Inlet  
Lakes Entrance/Metung

Maffra  
Moe/Newborough

For details see  
[gippslandanglicans.org.au](http://gippslandanglicans.org.au)