

PRAYER TREES

in Gippsland

Growing a Communion Forest
for hope, faith and love.

The Abbey's Prayer Tree

Whenever I travel, I love going into churches to pause, pray and light a candle. I particularly like the candle-lighting aspect, symbolising that my prayer continues even as I leave the building. Our chapel at The Abbey is open most days and people are welcome to pause and light a candle, but how much more inclusive it is to have a prayer tree

outside where anyone wandering across our grounds might leave their prayers and intentions in this place.



**DR CATH
CONNELLY**

Director, The Abbey

This idea sparked the exciting project that begins at The Abbey and is spreading across the diocese and beyond. Tied in with the invitation from the Communion Forest to participate in their/our global activity, The Abbey now has a dedicated prayer tree. (The Communion Forest is a global initiative comprising local activities of tree growing and ecosystem conservation, protection and restoration undertaken by parishes, dioceses and provinces across the Anglican Communion.) How does one tree become a forest? By inviting every parish, every community, every denomination to dedicate a tree in your own location to be your prayer tree, knowing that the 'Grandmother' tree of this 'forest beyond boundaries' is located at The Abbey. Our tree here has some cord tied across it, a sign explaining the concept, some paper, pegs and pens nearby and a park bench where people may pause as they write their prayers. We become a Communion Forest as each location adds your tree to this initiative.

This is a Prayer Tree.



This is a prayer tree.

We invite you to pause here, allowing this space to be one of quiet contemplation.

You are welcome to write your prayers and intentions and attach them to this tree.

In the same way as lighting a candle in a church is a symbol of our prayers continuing once we have left the building, so do our prayers and intentions in this space continue once we leave this place.

Prayer trees exist across the Gippsland diocese and further afield. This prayer tree, here at The Abbey, is the focal point of all these prayer trees, making up a communion forest of trees and prayers across the landscape.

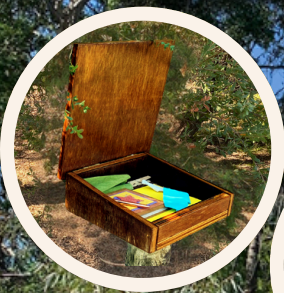
For further information, phone 5136 6580 or email us at info@theabbey.org.au

We invite you to pause here, allowing this space to be one of quiet contemplation.

You are welcome to write your prayers and intentions and attach them to this tree.

In the same way as lighting a candle in a church is a symbol of our prayers continuing once we have left the building, so do our prayers and intentions in this space continue once we leave this place.

Prayer trees exist across the Gippsland diocese and further afield. This prayer tree, here at The Abbey, is the focal point of all these prayer trees, making up a communion forest of trees and prayers across the landscape.



'On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.'
(Revelation 22:1-2)

Trees, ecology and climate change

Trees are part of God's good creation and are hugely important to the health of ecosystems. Some of the things trees do:

- Contribute to biodiversity, providing habitat for birds, animals, insects and micro-organisms
- Sequester carbon as they grow
- Filter air
- Retain water
- Bind and improve soil
- Delight the eye, calm minds and reduce anxiety (health benefits have been well documented)
- Provide shade for people and creatures
- Create the right conditions for other compatible plants to grow around them

Ways to add value to your prayer tree in a changing climate:

- Choose a food-producing tree (helping to develop food security and resilience in the local community)
- Plant a shade-giving tree to cool the garden and/or buildings during the inevitable and increasing heat waves
- Choose varieties that provide habitat for native birds and insects
- Select vegetation that has significance to local First Nations people
- Choose native species
- Welcome and encourage people into your place. Trees draw attention with their natural appeal.
- Provide a shady, pleasant space for people to sit / play / write / pray/ meet together / have an outdoor meal
- Use a well-selected, well-placed tree as a design feature in your garden that inspires the whole property.

To plant is to hope
To restore is to heal
To protect is to love



THE COMMUNION FOREST

The Communion Forest is a global initiative comprising local activities of forest protection, tree growing and eco-system restoration undertaken by provinces, dioceses and individual churches across the Anglican Communion to safeguard creation.



www.communionforest.org



Trees in the Bible

Trees are important symbols in the Bible. They are described as giving praise to God and they often symbolise spiritual growth and maturity.

From the Bible we also understand that trees are part of God's good creation, so they matter for what they are as well as what they symbolise. They serve many important functions in the web of life, as well as reflecting something of their Creator in their beauty and utility.

Praise God for the trees!

'Praise the Lord from the earth, ...
Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!'
(Psalm 148: 7a-10)

Help grow Gippsland's Communion Forest.



Register your
Gippsland Prayer Tree
with The Abbey.

Be part of something bigger and register your
local prayer trees with The Abbey.

Visitors to The Abbey or the website will be able
to find other places and significant trees in
Gippsland where they can meet God in the quiet
of their personal prayers and seek peace.

Contact The Abbey for more information.

✉ info@theabbey.org.au

🌐 www.theabbey.org.au

📌 @TheAbbeyRaymondIsland

📍 1-25 First Parade,
Raymond Island, VIC, Australia 3880

☎ +61 3 5156 6580

IMAGE CREDITS

Cover: Marjorie Iverach

P2: Cath Connelly

P3: Cath Connelly, Jan Down
(inset)

P4-5: Edie Ashley

P6: Dean Spalding (top);
Unknown (2nd); Cathy Turnbull
(3rd); Unknown (bottom).

P7: Cath Connelly; Marjorie
Iverach (inset)

Back: Marjorie Iverach

Graphic design by Libby Willems

Authorised by The Anglican
Diocese of Gippsland, May 2024.

