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Just talking
about
Jesus

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CELEBRATING 120 YEARS

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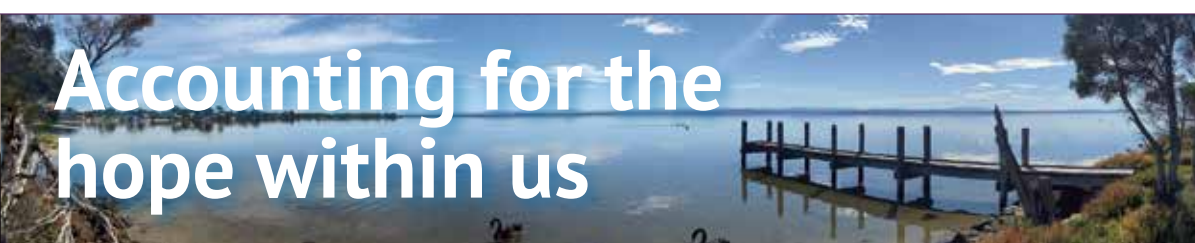


Operation Christmas Child

Pictured left to right are Elaine Smith and Sue Dower, Coordinator of Operation Christmas Child at Foster, with 'teddies for joy', knitted by Elaine. Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, delivering shoeboxes filled with gifts for children in need around the world. Many parishes in the Diocese support this appeal. See Foster story page 12.



Accounting for the hope within us



The original hearers and readers of the First Letter of Peter are urged to be ready to give an account of the hope that is in them (1 Pet 3:15), and to do so with gentleness and respect.

The wider setting of this familiar verse (including exhortations to wives and husbands; 3:1-7) may seem culturally opaque to later audiences. Given what we are starting to understand about enabling factors of family violence – not least in Christian households – the spiritual counsel offered may sit uncomfortably with our own reading context. There is, however, a helpful plaudit here to the winsomeness of faith.

If we can avoid getting stuck on the gendered specificity of 1 Peter 3:1, we have an important recognition of the place of wordless commendation of our faith to others: the evangelical freight of our behaviour, our actions.

This is of great comfort to those of us who sometimes struggle for words that might do justice to the hope that is within us. There's that well-worn quote often (and probably mistakenly) attributed to St Francis: 'Go out into all the world and proclaim the gospel; if necessary, use words.'

Sometimes, of course, words *are* necessary in commending our faith, even for Anglicans! Speech that is gentle and respectful of the experience and convictions of others is always going to be more winsome than language that is dogmatic or doctrinaire.

To believe in the Word-made-flesh is to understand that what is said cannot be separated from how it said; our speech is always embodied.

Indeed, it is precisely this complete integration of message and messenger in Christ that lends passion to speech which remains gentle and respectful, after the pattern of him whose Passion was the sum total – the culmination – of his words and actions.

In her *Handbook of Hope* (published in 2020) Abbey Director, Dr Cath Connelly, reminds us that hope is not the same as optimism. It's not an ambit claim to happy endings: a form of the great Australian aphorism 'she'll be right'.

At May's synod I cited American writer and activist Rebecca Solnit's take on hope in relation to climate change. For Solnit, hope has an urgent quality: 'not like a lottery ticket you can sit on the sofa and clutch, feeling lucky ... hope should shove you out the door.'

Does the hope we have in Christ shove us out the church door with good news?

The diocesan Hope25 facilitation group is keen to offer support to parishes and ministry centres looking to bring a gospel focus to our 'Connecting in Service'. As those 'Committed in Christ', how might we be equipped to share our faith when engaging in existing activities, or preparing to take on a fresh initiative in Eastertide next year? What could being 'Creative in Spirit' look like if our primary intention was to account for the hope that is within us?

One way we can support each other in taking up this encouragement from General Synod's Mission and Ministry Commission is via our diocesan website, where a Hope25 page has recently been added: <https://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/resources/hope25>

As well as some reviews of useful resources, and details of how to contact members of the Gippsland Hope25 facilitation group, you will find there some personal testimonies from Gippsland Anglicans about their hope in Christ.

I invite you to add your testimony to this page.

At one level it's easy: simply record a short (2 to 3 minute) video on your smart phone and send it to The Revd David Perryman. (I sent mine via WhatsApp,

and David will gladly talk you through this if you call or email him at the Registry Office.) The video might feature your smiling countenance, or your voice over some images or scenery, or a brief conversation with another person. There is no template or formula for these, and whatever you generously offer will be welcomed and gratefully received.

At another level it's quite challenging – in a good way – to think about how to give such an account in just a few words. What is my hope in Christ, and what does it mean to me? How is it reflected in the way I think, speak, and act, and how does it inform the choices I make? Why am I moved to tell others about it? What difference could it make to our communities, our world?

It would be heartening if over the next few months that page on the website started to fill up with these brief cameos from our clergy and lay people – accounts of the hope that we have in common, and yet that has as many different inflections as there are Gippsland Anglicans.

Over time we would also see this page as a forum for sharing ideas and projects emerging at the local level in preparation for the national season of evangelism between Easter and Pentecost next year. Your dreams, the difficulties you face, the seeds being planted in your local context – however small or simple – will inspire and give confidence to others around the Diocese, and beyond.

Remember, Hope25 is not a program; it is a call to all Australian Anglicans to step out in faith – to be shoved out the door by hope – for the glory of God and for the sake of the world God so loves.

Grace and peace,



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

Archdeacon Emeritus Edward (Ted) Gibson

1935 – 2024

Archdeacon Ted Gibson died peacefully at Opal Parklands on 30th September, just a few months short of his 90th birthday. As Bishop Jeffrey Driver and his wife Lindy were in PNG at the time of Ted's funeral in Bairnsdale on 10 October, Bishop Richard reflected briefly on Ted's long ministry in Gippsland before reading the homily written by Bishop Jeffrey.

From Bishop Richard

As Bishop Jeff touches on in what follows, Ted's pastoral ministry helped countless people, both here in Gippsland and across the continent in Bunbury.

He served in various capacities in fully one-third of our parishes, including as Dean of the Cathedral (where his croquet skills are the stuff of legend), and of course as Rector here at St John's from 1985, and as an Associate Priest these last ten years. He encouraged the worship life of the Chapel of St Barnabas at what became The Abbey on Raymond Island.

Among the leadership roles he exercised across almost seven decades as a cleric were those of Rural Dean, Canon, Archdeacon (a title he retained through 24 years of so-called 'retirement'), and Vicar General – the senior priest of the Diocese.

It is hard to imagine a greater devotion to the call to Holy Orders than Ted has embodied – a vocation he treasured humbly to the last, and would delight to reminisce about with that typical wry and gentle humour.

You needed time when calling on Ted – no, you wanted time, for there was always a story worth hearing!

Like many others today, Bishop Jeffrey is with us in spirit, and in reflecting on Ted's vast and living legacy, he has aptly titled his homily, 'Following Jesus the Good Shepherd'.

From Bishop Jeffrey's homily

I am saddened that I am not able to be physically present on this day that we honour the life of Ted Gibson. Yet, I am comforted that he was so supportive of my involvement in Papua New Guinea, and would want me to be there.

I've known Ted for about 23 years, which in the Ted Gibson timescale is not that long.

We are, after all, talking of a man who was ordained 68 years ago.

Today is filled with the mixed poignancy of grief and thanksgiving. Ted was ready to go. He carefully prepared himself, taking time to traverse his memories and to pray for those who had been part of his life.

Here are some phrases and images from Scripture that come to mind as I think of Ted.



Archdeacon Ted and Mrs Annabelle Gibson at The Abbey Winter Feast, 2014

A shepherd of the Good Shepherd

Ted saw the pastoral ministry as the highest of callings. While he had natural gifts as a pastor, Ted also saw his calling as one that required the learning of skills, discipline and organisation, often acquired, in days gone by, under rectors grumpy or good.

As a pastor, Ted worked hard at the disciplines of his craft. Just occasionally, he was known to lament that the modern church, for all its progress, did not provide the same opportunities for supervised formation that he experienced so many years ago.

In John's Gospel description of the Good Shepherd, Jesus says, 'I know my sheep and my sheep know me' (John 10.14). Few priests I have known better fulfil these words than Ted. He desired to know the people God gave him to serve.

Somehow he had the ability to get to know them. And their families. And their stories. And sometimes their distant relatives. And with genuine interest.

Much of it was Ted's natural interest in others. But it was also part of his pastoral discipline. Ted, thank you for this gift, this example, and challenge.

God in the ordinary stuff of human community

Some parts of the Bible that many of us pass quickly over are the genealogies and the 'begats'. But I can imagine Ted reading them

with care and appreciation.

He loved the stories of families and communities; who came from where, who was related to whom and who did what and when. Ted loved local history and had a capacity to work it into many a sermon.

We do Ted an injustice if we see this just as Ted doing his thing as an amateur historian. This is also Ted the pastor, the shepherd. He wanted to know the stories of his communities. He understood that people are connected and he wanted to understand those connections.

His desire was not just to know the individuals, but to know the communities, the connections that made them tick – how God was working through them, even when they did not know it.

The Good Shepherd, Jesus said, 'knows his own'. Ted, thank you for this gift, this example, and challenge.

Prayer pulls all things together

Ted Gibson was not a showman in his prayer life. As in many other things he was diligent and faithful. And as his health failed, his ministry of prayer became more important. In his room in Opal, he was very intentional about it. For Ted, prayer was the quiet thing that pulled all of those things together. Ted, thank you for this gift, this example, and challenge.

Rest eternal grant unto him O Lord. Amen.

■ John Webster

Joy Marshall was commissioned as Drouin Parish's new Intergenerational Ministry Leader on 22nd September at Christ Church Drouin. Joy introduces herself and her vocational experience and vision as follows:

Late in 2023 I packed up the last of my Family and Community Ministry resources at Canterbury Baptist Church and settled down in Drouin.

I had spent ten years at Canterbury and twelve years before that at Lilydale Baptist church in pastoral ministry. I expected that I had run the race to its completion and would now pour myself into my growing work as an Art and Play Therapist in Gippsland.

My next step was to look for a spiritual home in my new community. I first visited each local church's website and was so encouraged by what I saw in Christ Church that I decided to go along and see for myself.

That first Sunday confirmed that this was the place for me even though I was a 'stranger in a strange land'. God was at work bringing together many threads including my interest in contemplative prayer, Celtic Christianity, Godly Play, symbolic representation, and the beginning of my faith journey in the old Methodist church with its liturgy.

My ministry had begun many years before when as a child I put my faith in God. Dad was an ordained Methodist minister, and I spent many happy years as a 'PK' – Parson's Kid. At around six years of age, I and my five siblings were being reprimanded for some misdeed. When I felt I had not been listened to as I tried to explain the situation, then and there I decided that I would always listen to children. This decision became foundational to my ministry with children, parenting, and later as a psychotherapist.

After training as a registered nurse in the late '70s, marrying in 1980, moving to Far North Queensland, and welcoming five children, our family relocated to Melbourne in 1994 to study at the Bible College of Victoria to prepare for future work with Wycliffe Bible Translators. With God's guidance my work did not take me overseas as I expected but included both graphic design at WBT and children's ministry at Lilydale.

Throughout my life God has been at work, weaving together my faith in him, my interest in art, love for children, and emotional wellbeing. He led me to further study at Tabor in Counselling and Community Development and later at La Trobe University in Art Therapy to bring me to where I am today beginning



Joy Marshall is welcomed by The Rev'd John Webster

a new ministry as an Intergenerational Ministry Leader at Christ Church in Drouin.

Over the years the value I've placed on respecting children has moved me from doing ministry for or to children to ministry with children and finally developed into welcoming children to stay in church as fellow worshippers. Intergenerational ministry respects and affirms generational needs and differences, allows for all of us to contribute together with real roles to play, and fosters genuine relationships as we worship God together.

And so, it is with a sense of God's humour ('So you thought you were done') and his 'never ending, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love' (*The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd Jones) that I join hands with my fellow worshippers of all ages and look forward to where God takes us next.

The Parish of Drouin is blessed by having a well-run Op Shop and Warehouse, with volunteers from the community processing large volumes of donations. The monies raised from these contributions of goods, time and effort provide the funds for the work of our Intergenerational Ministry Leader.



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.

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Just talking about Jesus

■ Sue Jacka

When many of us think about 'Evangelism' we can feel inadequate, as if talking about Jesus is something for those with special gifts or with years of study behind them. We may have sensed a reticence in Australia to talk about religion. One organisation I have found is keen to make spiritual discussions as natural as talking about the footy or the weather.

Praxeis is a movement of people who have a heart for those who don't know God's love and peace and often didn't know where to start. Praxeis has a very simple premise, that God wants us to become disciples rather than just people who assent to belief in Jesus. A disciple is someone who follows Jesus in all they do, whose character is shaped to become more and more like Jesus. And a disciple is someone who talks naturally about Jesus and makes more disciples. They remind us that Jesus said to his first followers, 'Come with me, and I will teach you to catch people.' (Matthew 4:19, GNT)

HOPE25

Praxeis encourages us to look for 'people of peace' their term for people who are open to spiritual conversations. They encourage us to be alert to how others might respond to faith conversations. They suggest going on a 'prayer walk' where you ask God to make you aware of those around you who are open to talking about spiritual issues or the deeper matters of life. This could be as you walk down a local street or shopping centre. Ask God to show you who has a spiritual hunger or is open to such a dialogue.

Personally, I have found an easy way into this is to mention that I have a special theme at church this week, or that I am going to a retreat or conference. Or maybe that I've been very stretched lately but have found meditating or praying about it helps. Many people will pass this comment by, but others may express interest – like asking a question such as 'Why would you go on a retreat?'

When someone is sick or troubled by family difficulties, this often provides an opportunity to ask if you can pray with them... or even just for them. This can lead quite naturally into talking about how we have felt when people have prayed for us.

Once a 'person of peace' or someone who has some interest in learning more about Jesus is identified, it's quite natural to talk about our relationship with Jesus. The next step is probably what is so different about this simple methodology – it's to ask if they would like to read some passages from the Bible with you. It's about recognising that when someone is interested, now is the time to offer to go deeper.

Praxeis suggests a very simple method to open the riches of Scripture to people who may have never read anything from the Bible. Make a time to meet with them – and they might want to invite along someone else.

Have a simple time of hearing from each other. What are you thankful for this week? What has been difficult? What are the needs in our community? How can we help? Have you followed what God showed you last week? Have you shared? How did it go?

Then focus on the Bible. Choose a story – one of the parables works well. Read the passage out loud and then read it again, asking these simple questions: What does this tell us about God? What does this tell us about people? Then, as a group, close your Bibles and retell the story together. This is not about expert teaching, but about encouraging people to let the passage itself point to Jesus.

Finally close the group with a commitment. What will you do in response to what we've read? Who will you share this with? Is there someone you could bring next week?

These Discovery Bible Study groups have been multiplying rapidly across the world with many thousands coming to faith. As people discover Jesus through reading the Bible, they naturally want to share this with others and go on to leading their own group. They form the basis of Disciple Making Movements which account for much of the recent growth in the church across the world.

As we as a diocese look forward to Hope25 and all that it can offer, I think it would be great if we can find a new freedom in talking about how much Jesus means to us. Why not try this simple method!

For more information: <https://praxeis.org/>

The Ven Sue Jacka is Archdeacon of the western region and Rector at Morwell.

Allowing God to catch up with us

The grounds at Pallotti Retreat Centre

■ Gradwell Fredericks reflects on the recent clergy retreat

On any retreat, whether silent, directed, or just stepping away for a few hours, the reality of the presence of The Divine is what we need to encounter. This retreat was indeed such an encounter. Dr Cath Connelly, our retreat leader, reminded us to be truthful, and to open ourselves to the sacred, the silence and the landscape; to embrace the paradox of silence and noise – ‘there are no words for the deeper things’ – as John O’ Donahue says.

The annual diocesan clergy retreat was held from Monday 7 October – Thursday 10 October at Pallotti retreat centre in the Yarra Valley. The beauty of the surroundings truly set the tone for a spiritually refreshing and re-energising time, as Cath reflected on the Celtic saints: St Non, St David, St Gobnait, St Ia of Cornwall and the paradox of St Margaret.

In the midst of busy pastoral ministry, clergy sometimes fall into the trap of not being gentle with themselves. This time away was an opportunity to retreat *from*, and yet to retreat *to* the ‘thin places’ offered by Celtic spirituality. The pertinent and yet imperative question at each of the sessions was: ‘How are we doing? How have you been travelling thus far?’

Reflecting on Mary Oliver’s poem on prayer, we were encouraged to come and discover, to submit to this experience, to honour and respect this inner yearning.

It was an invitation to ponder, to be patient, pause, listen, act slowly, allow ourselves to be soaked in prayer, to meditate, to walk, sleep, notice our dreams, and enjoy the silence with God... we just had to show up with God and be reminded of our divine calling. In this way God could finally catch up with us.

The daily rhythm of the Morning and Evening offices, The Eucharist and Compline held every component of the retreat divinely together. The beauty of the traditional and creative Eucharistic service conducted by Rev’d John Webster, Ruth Hanlon and Graham Knott reminded us of our diversity in the spiritual expression of the environment we called home for a few days.

Reflecting in his homily on Mary and Martha, John Webster said ‘The kind of hospitality Mary offered was to pay attention.’

Our part in God’s plan is, when God catches up with us, we have to be hospitable and pay attention to The Divine One.

I think one of the most tangible and practical prayerful exercises was when Cath introduced the ‘Chalice Prayer’:

We bow to release
We rise to wait
We open to receive
We step forward to give

This summed up the retreat; we came to let go and to be renewed, re-energised and refreshed in a world/communities where we wear several hats and need to hold various tensions together. It is here in these thin places that we learn to let go and let God. It is here that we are reminded again to wait and trust in God. Then only can we open ourselves to receive what is new and be able to step off the mountain and back into valleys to respond effectively, by God’s never failing grace, to our divine calling of service, witness and ministry.

Thank you to Dr Cath Connelly for conducting an extraordinary and deeply contextual spiritual retreat on the Celtic saints and Mystics.

The Rev’d Gradwell Fredericks is Rector at Traralgon.

Forum to shine a light on domestic and gender-based violence

In keeping with the Bishop’s challenge to light a fire under the issue of domestic and gender-based violence, Warragul branch of Mothers Union is hosting a forum during the 16 Days of Activism Against Domestic and Gender-based Violence.

It will be held at St. Paul’s Anglican Church, Victoria Street Warragul on 29 November at 7 pm.



Panel members will include a survivor of domestic violence, a representative of Orange Door

organisation, the Regional College Chaplain, a former police officer and a Berry Street worker.

We will be happy to receive donations towards the holiday Mothers Union provides at The Abbey for families in need of a short time away.

Any queries may be directed to Diane Moyes: 0429 807 328 or Jenny MacRobb: 0431 000 125.



Daughters' and Sons' Days

Sons' Day service at Thorpdale in September

■ Dean Spalding

Egalitarianism and God's impartiality are radical and enduring Christian principles.

One way we try to express egalitarianism in the Parish of Trafalgar is to honour our two non-principal centres, for instance by making fifth Sundays 'whole-parish' services that alternate between Yarragon and Thorpdale, and for which we often develop special themes, and stay on for a communal lunch.

This year, the fifth Sunday of June coincided with the lectionary-allocated reading from Mark's Gospel about Jairus' daughter and the woman who suffered from continuous bleeding, whom Jesus commends as a 'daughter' whose 'faith' had made her well (Mark 5:21-43). We decided to create a service of 'prayer, praise and proclamation' in celebration of all daughters. And after this 11 am service of 30 June, most stayed on for lunch at the Yarragon Hotel.

The equality of worth for God's sons and daughters is affirmed in creation when God says 'Let us make humankind in our own image, according to our

likeness... So God created humankind, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them' (Genesis 1:26-27).

This principle of equality in identity and vocation to the Spirit-filled life is reiterated in the Age of the Holy Spirit, first through the Prophecy of Joel—'I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy' (Joel 2:28) and quoted by St Peter in the very first sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2:17).

St Paul articulates the same principle most clearly in Galatians where he affirms that in Christ 'there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3: 28).

In the 'in-between times', particularly in darker times described in some Old Testament accounts, the patriarchal cultures that dominated the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern worlds often preferred sons over daughters. Today we are in the midst of an attempt to redress millennia of this injustice and distortion, but in that 'redress' we can

overlook the celebration of sons, and so to model balance, on the fifth Sunday of September, we had a 'Sons' Day' service to complement our June 'Daughters' Day'. We had 48 at the 'Sons' Service', including ten members of the Longriders Christian Motorcycle Club, and then 38 for lunch at the Traveller's Rest Thorpdale.

The 'Sons' Day' liturgy incorporated some secular classics sung by Chris Newman (*Father and Son*; *Cats in the Cradle*); some classic hymns with fierce 'son-friendly' bass lines (*Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah*; and *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*). And an ancient bit of hymnody from one of God's most imprisoned sons which we left in its original language for this 'son-celebrating' day – Bunyan's *Who Would True Valour See* or *The Pilgrim's Hymn*. We concluded with a relatively new sung-blessing from a Christian community in California (*Bethel*) simply called *The Blessing* that incorporates Aaronic and Celtic influences. The singing raised the roof!

Snow gum for prayer tree at Trafalgar

■ Dean Spalding

Earlier this year, the Parish raised and found homes for 111 endangered Snow Gums as part of a 'living seed bank'. Snow Gums are experiencing wide-spread 'die-back', from Queensland to Tasmania, partly due to a change in the behaviour of a native beetle, the Longhorn beetle, whose larva is wood-boring. On Sunday 1 September, we planted the last one: Tree # 111, the 'runt of the litter', to become the 'prayer-tree' of St Mary's, symbolic of our prayers for an ecologically restored creation.

On Sunday, 1 September, the Parish of Trafalgar celebrated the start of the Season of Creation. After the morning service, we planted our own 'prayer tree' on the grounds of St Mary's. We had a small team of planters/prayers/witnesses. We used a beautiful order of service from Bishop Richard's recent blessing of a 'prayer tree' at The Abbey on Raymond Island. The prayers were really appropriate to our seeking of



Planting snow gum #111 as a prayer tree at Trafalgar: L-R Pepé Ortega, Len Makin, Vivienne Ortega, Sue Pye and Eleanor Harrington

God's blessing on this tree and upon the earth. We fashioned a tree-guard, a mulch circle and support for the little seedling which that night – its first out of its pot – saw a wild night of storms, which was really the first of

several bursts of strong winds which we experienced in Trafalgar in the first week of spring!

Thank you to the tree planting and praying team: Pepé and Vivienne, Sue, Len, Eleanor and Dean, the 'digger'.

St George's Boisdale celebrates centenary

■ Helen Montague

A traditional Morning Prayer service, reminiscent of the 1920's, was conducted on 29 September by The Rev'd Dr Tim Gaden, with The Rev'd Heather Cahill playing the organ and The Rev'd Dr Jim Connelly delivering the sermon to a packed church.

Jim's sermon included a history of the church from its inception as a soldier's memorial church – originally built and dedicated as St Patrick's on the Llowalong Soldier Settlement estate – to the relocation and rededication as St George's Boisdale seventy years ago.

Jim acknowledged all the community members and parishioners who worked tirelessly to maintain and honour the church over the past one hundred years.

Former members of the Llowalong community joined in the service and the grandson of the original builder of the church was able to attend, along with former Boisdale residents representing their family members.

Many of the congregation wore fashion relating to the 1920's and did indeed resemble parishioners of that era.

Following the service Tim acknowledged all those involved with the centenary celebrations and Helen Montague, on behalf of the St George's church wardens, acknowledged past parishioners from both Llowalong and Boisdale and the legacy they had created.

She also acknowledged the contribution of The Rev'd Laurie and Heather Baker, especially during their years as Boisdale residents,

and thanked all family members of former parishioners for their attendance.

A display of First World War memorabilia featuring the British soldier, 2nd Lt Claude Mackay (and other local soldiers who did not return from the front) was present at the front of the church.

A wonderful morning tea was held at the Boisdale Hall following the service, with many memories of the church shared, and the cutting of the centenary cake by past and present rectors.



Congregation at the centenary service – many wearing fashion from the 1920's



Esther Swift to play at The Abbey

There are a few events that have set The Abbey on fire this year. The Abbey Feast was a highlight, as was the *Back to Raymond Island* day. November is the month when three other key events come together.

We are blessed to have The Rev'd Kate Campbell as our keynote presenter at the annual **Diocesan Retreat**, 15–16 November. Kate has chosen the topic *Grace and the Holy Spirit*. She tells us that 'grace represents God's compassion and love for us even when we fall short, and the Holy Spirit is a constant presence.' She asks the questions 'How might the Holy Spirit be an active participant in our lives if we take Jesus' words seriously? How might we allow more grace into our lives and our world? How would it be if we slowed down and paid closer attention to one of God's greatest gifts to us?'

If you have never been on a retreat and are wondering what and how to be there, this is a perfect chance to 'dip your toe in' as it is only a one-night event.

Esther Swift is coming to The Abbey. (No, not Taylor, Esther.) We have been fortunate to become part of the circuit for international harpists touring Australia.

With Esther giving only a handful of concerts in Victoria – and a workshop at our Sale Cathedral – we are privileged to have Esther performing in our chapel at The Abbey on 21 November. All tickets are through Humanitix.com.

Maybe just stay down at The Abbey all month! Friday 29 November is the annual **Ecumenical Conversation**. Drs Merryl Blair and Chris Monaghan are our guest presenters, providing insight into Advent through both the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament. This is always a powerful day. Lunch, conversation, ecumenism – it doesn't get any better. Phone us at The Abbey on (03) 5156 6580 and we'll book you in.

Save the date



For further information, please contact Anna at the Abbey: (03) 5156 6580, info@theabbey.org.au

NOVEMBER

- 9 Garden party @ The Abbey.
- 14 Celtic music session. 7 pm – 10 pm
- 15, 16 Diocesan Retreat:
Grace and the Holy Spirit.
Facilitator: The Rev'd Kate Campbell.
- 21 *Hush Quiet Day*:
Prayer Life of C.S. Lewis.
Facilitator: The Rev'd Jeff Berger.
10 am – 3 pm.
- 29 Ecumenical Conversation.
10 am – 3 pm. Lunch, morning
& afternoon tea provided.
Cost \$25. RSVP by November 15th.

DECEMBER

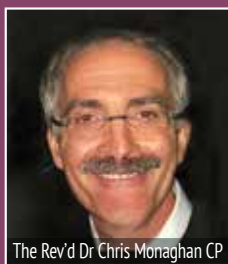
- 12 *Hush Quiet Day*:
Come Apart to Be a Part.
Facilitator: The Rev'd Gradwell Fredericks.
10 am – 3 pm.

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

This will be the seventh such Conversation convened jointly by the two Dioceses, reflecting the ongoing interest and support of clergy and lay people from both traditions for this significant ecumenical initiative.

Bishop Richard Treloar and Bishop Greg Bennet warmly invite you to join with them in this year's Advent Conversation based on Old and New Testament passages drawn from our common lectionary, as these speak to the great Advent themes.

ECUMENICAL ADVENT CONVERSATION 2024



The Rev'd Dr Chris Monaghan CP



The Rev'd Dr Merryl Blair OAM



The Rt Rev'd Dr Richard Treloar



The Most Rev'd Greg Bennett DD

We are delighted that the Conversation will once again be led by eminent biblical scholars from the University of Divinity, The Rev'd Dr Chris Monaghan CP, President of Yarra Theological Union and The Rev'd Dr Merryl Blair OAM, former Senior Lecturer, Stirling Theological College.

The Conversation will be held at

The Abbey on Friday 29 November commencing at 10 am and concluding with a short ecumenical service at 3.15pm.

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

Mental health skills for parish volunteers

Shelley Cooper, Rae Riley, Liam Altuna and Carol Johnstone were all participants at the first training day.

■ Sarah Gover

Local volunteers at the Traralgon Parish have recently completed a mental health training course, equipping them with valuable skills to support individuals facing mental health challenges.

The initiative, funded by a Latrobe City Council Community Connection Grant, aimed to address the increasing need for mental health support that the church had noticed in the community and the various community-facing ministries. Participants, who work across various parish roles including the playgroup, Opp Shop and Sorting Shed, shared personal experiences of encountering individuals in crisis and expressed a desire for better training to assist them effectively.

The 7-hour nationally recognised certificate course, led by local mental health expert Steph Bedgood from Three Rivers Training, covered a range of topics including identifying signs

and symptoms of mental health conditions, crisis intervention strategies, referrals and self-care strategies.

The training was open to all Parish volunteers, including parents from the playgroup, and attracted a diverse group of participants ranging in age from fifteen to people in their seventies.

'I attended the training so I could help others and learn more about myself and I enjoyed learning about the causes of trauma', one youth participant said. 'I learnt about the categories of mental health and that you don't have to do

anything formal – just having a cuppa might be very important', another person commented.

The Parish hopes that this initiative will not only benefit the individual participants and those they serve in the various ministries but will also inspire more people to become involved in volunteering and make a positive difference in the community.

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Singing *The Servant Song* to creation

Sisters Creek, Tasmania

The Rev'd Cathy Turnbull led the first ACTinG 'Prays for Creation' session via Zoom on 24 September. This half hour of prayer was divided into three sections: thanksgiving, lament and action. Here Cathy reflects on some of the thinking that informed those prayers.

Many are familiar with the hymn known as *The Servant Song* which begins with the line, *Brother, Sister, let me serve you...* [TIS 650] During the Season of Creation this song came up in our Sunday Worship just before I was about to preach about the connection we have as humans with the whole of creation. I was about to reference St Francis' Canticle of the Sun in which he refers to brother sun, sister moon and stars, brothers wind and air and sister water, brother fire and sister/mother earth.

St Francis obviously saw, in his wisdom, the familial connection humanity has with all of God's creation and not only the other living, breathing creatures but also the elements of the earth and the universe. All are interconnected as one single family belonging to God, created by God out of love.

So to return to the hymn, *The Servant Song*, as I sat and listened and sang this hymn during the service, I began to be drawn into seeing the brother and sister I was singing about as being the earth itself and all that is in her and upon her. The hymn came alive for me in that moment – what if we could truly see our need to be the servant of the earth, just as she has been our servant, giving of herself continually for our wellbeing? What if we could see the sun, the moon, the stars, the wind, fire and all the elements, the

animals, birds, fish, rocks, water, mountains, trees – all of it, as our brothers and sisters in God's family?

This song took on the form of a prayer of solidarity with the earth and the whole created universe, as our brother and sister with whom we walk together. We offer our hand out to the earth and speak the peace the earth longs to hear. We share the earth's joys, the beauty, the bird song, the spring-time air, the smell of scented flowers and damp soil.

We weep with the earth. We share with all within creation as our brothers and sisters in the deep sorrow of exploitation and greed which strips the earth of all that is good and leaves gaping scars and pain. In that sorrow we reach out our hand to bring healing to our brothers and sisters of creation.

And, as we do so, we know that in return creation will serve us for our own good and wellbeing, as creation has always done. In familial mutual love and respect of one another we walk this journey of pilgrimage and worship of the Lord, the Creator of all – where all creation can once more lift its voice to God in heaven and find such harmony.

ACTinG prays for creation

Via Zoom:

<https://tinyurl.com/2z28uyyy>
9.30am – 10 am

Last Tuesday of the month
Led by The Rev'd Cathy Turnbull
Join us!





Christ Church Foster to celebrate 125th

Christ Church Foster, circa 1949, before alterations

■ Carole Williams

Christ Church Foster will celebrate its 125th anniversary on 24 November with a morning service followed by lunch courtesy of the generous catering team. We would love to see former clergy and past parishioners joining the congregation to celebrate this great milestone, along with visitors from other parishes.

Christ Church was licensed in October, 1890, but sadly, the original church, and the vicarage, were destroyed by the disastrous bush fires of 1898.

The current Christ Church buildings are on a different site from the original Church of England. Rebuilding and renovations have taken place at various

times over the past century, retaining some original features and incorporating others from the Welshpool and Toora Anglican Churches and other sources.

Today's church buildings reflect the popularity of the many and varied activities that take place in the church complex and beyond. Sunday services are held at Foster and Hedley, along with a midweek service at the Toora Outreach Centre, which also houses the Parish Opportunity Shop.

There are two weekly Know Your Bible groups, a Men's study group, a fortnightly Cuppa and Chat afternoon, a Dine Alone group, and a Cuppa and Conversation group at Toora Outreach Centre.

The Christ Church congregation love to celebrate birthdays and frequently a birthday cake is the feature of the post service morning tea on Sundays.

Throughout the year parishioners support several Christian projects. Our annual participation in Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child has taken place recently and close to 100 boxes packed with gifts are on their 'journey of joy' to children in the Pacific region and beyond. Our boxes carry a special signature item – a miniature hand knitted teddy bear to cuddle and love, made by parishioner, Elaine Smith, whose knitting efforts produced more than ninety teddies for this year's effort!

National Police Remembrance Day Service

The Rev'd Kate Campbell presided at the annual National Police Remembrance Day service at St Paul's Cathedral Sale on Friday 27th September. This year saw the largest attendance of recent years, with about 90 people coming to remember those police service personnel who have lost their lives in the line of duty.



Christine Morris



Christine Morris

Paul Slavec from St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne

Cathedral celebrates 140th in style

St Paul's Cathedral in Sale celebrated the 140th anniversary of the opening of the church on Sunday 13th October, with a joyful service and lunch provided by the generous catering team.

The congregation was treated to some glorious music provided by Paul Slavec, sub-organist at St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne, and the two music scholarship students, Jessica and Caroline Martin, who sang beautifully.

Bishop Richard told some of the history of the church, Dean Keren offered a theological reflection, and symbols of various church ministries were brought forward. Christine Morris showed a fascinating slide show of the Cathedral's history.



■ Pam Roberts

The first Church of England services in Tinamba were held in private homes for several years.

These faithful Christians had a deep and long held desire to have their own church. People interested in the project attended meetings at the home of Jack and Ada Kingscott.

All present unanimously agreed to take a step out in faith and made a request to the Bishop of Gippsland for advice. Jack and Ada received an

encouraging reply from the Archdeacon of the Diocese Edmund Pelletier, dated 20th March, 1919.

He gave his blessing, advice and instructions for planning the erection of the church. Now they could turn their attention to securing a suitable site and commence work when the necessary funds became available.

The ladies held fundraising events such as flower shows, dances, euchre parties and home parties.

James Drysdale, a local builder and church committee member, was entrusted with the task of designing and building the church. Labouring alongside James was an enthusiastic, dedicated band of fellow parishioners and Tinamba men led by Jack Kingscott Snr.

The honour of laying the foundation stone was given to Rebecca Mills.

Rebecca possessed a deep reverence for God, expressed through her tireless work for the Church of England and her kindness and compassion towards the needy.

Rebecca laid the foundation stone on Anzac Day 1923 using a specially inscribed silver trowel, bearing her name and the date.

Coins were placed under the stone, along with a copy of the *Maffra Spectator* and a copy of the church paper.

The completed church of St Matthew was dedicated to the residents of Tinamba who had served in World War I.

The 2nd Bishop of Gippsland, The Rt Rev'd George Cranswick, officiated at a service on 3rd September 1924 during which the church was licensed, consecrated and opened free of debt, due to a substantial donation from Jack and Ada Kingscott.

Now we give thanks and praise as we remember those who, by the work of their hands, have given us this Church they have so lovingly created.

The first wedding at St Matthew's was held on 17th April 1925, when Jack and Ada's son Jack married Greta Ridley.



■ Julie Bruce, Moe Newborough

Over the past five years, the community garden in the church grounds at Moe has suffered neglect with a 'season of fallow' but in line with our diocesan call to celebrate the Season of Creation, is now in the process of revival. A tree will be sourced and established in the new cleared area to connect with those others recently planted around the diocese.

Community Gardens help with the potential of fresh consumable fruit and vegetables as we work together to share the bounty of the earth with our local people. Our Parish Community Garden, first initiated by parishioners Peter and Susan Lendon, had two garden beds on the disused St Luke's Tennis courts (circa 2009). It was then transplanted to the current site behind the South St

Rectory and has contributed significantly to the life of many visitors as a place for community building.

The garden caters for all ages, with raised garden beds, sunny and shaded sections and seating to encourage solitude and reflection. In addition to the cultivated areas, there are trees of significance which have been planted over the years, living reminders of those who have shared in the life of the parish at Moe.

This month our major aim is weeding, restoration, and preserving the existing resilient plants (apple, lemon, rhubarb, herbs, and some flowering stalwarts (bulbs and alstroemerias). We are feeling the benefit of the restorative role of nature, growth, fresh air, and fellowship, which in turn supports our mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. As keen gardeners we toil purposefully to combat onion and sticky weed and load mulch onto new beds. Garden plots will be ready for spring planting in a few weeks. Our community awaits the result!



Sunday School at Sale, 1898

Distance no excuse – The Church Mail Bag

■ Jan Down

Living at Stony Creek in the 1950s, six miles from the nearest primary school, Marion Dewar's education was by correspondence for several years – including Sunday School.

The Church Mail Bag was sent out by the Diocese to families in remote locations. Marion's family would receive lessons for two or three months at a time. There were two sorts of lessons, Marion says: stories about Jesus, and Old Testament stories 'tidied up for kids', but with 'no particular context'. But she learned a lot from those lessons, and noted 'We could find our way about a Bible'.

Did she enjoy them? 'I think so. Well, we had no choice!' Her mother was a school teacher and made sure the children completed the lessons, which were then sent back. They were not graded, but would be returned with comments.

The Rev'd Dr Jim Connelly in *Great*

Faithfulness (a history of the Diocese from 1902-2002) tells the story of how the Church Mail Bag began:

The scheme had a picturesque origin. In December 1918 Deaconess Winifred Shoobridge found herself taking a Sunday School class in a dugout at Cabbage Tree. She thought there must be a better way for the children to learn. 'Would it not be possible', the *Church News* of January 1919 enquired, 'for someone to undertake Sunday School by correspondence, as is done in the prairie wilds of Canada?' There was quick action. By the following year, 34 senior papers and 112 junior papers were being sent out by mail each month to places throughout Gippsland and beyond... Bible picture lessons and story books went to families each quarter, and there was a 'Bush Babies' posting to children on the cradle roll. Deaconess Shoobridge was the initiator of the scheme, and Mrs Laird the Secretary.

Marion's family attended the Anglican church at Meaniyan. Most of the

congregation there sent their children to the Methodist Sunday School in that town, but as this was held in the afternoons, it did not suit Marion's parents.

The Church Mail bag lessons continued until Marion was about 14 years old. Then, because they had never been to Sunday School and had had no preparation for confirmation, Bishop Garnsey directed Marion and her sister Jean to write an essay on John 3:16. On the basis of this, they were confirmed.

Marion has had many significant roles within the Diocese and her parish, including Trustee, and member of Executive Committee, Assistant Secretary (Lay) at Synod, Lay Reader, organist, Synod Rep for Leongatha, Diocesan Lay Canon, a member of Bishop-in-Council and of St Paul's Cathedral Greater Chapter. Her Church Mail Bag lessons must have laid a good foundation for such faithful and committed service.

Many ways to say 'Jesus loves you'

What I like about church

Ruth Place
Cheshill / Boolarra / Vines

On a Sunday recently, some of the children and young people, one parent and our Sunday School teacher Sharon were asked "What do you like about Church?" Here are their replies.

Kelvin says: "I like the singing. I like Sharon's talks. I like making stuff. I also like the quiet time in church when we pray."

Shallimar says: "I like the songs. I also like helping the Rev Deirdre with communion. I like Sharon's activities."

Amity says: "I like lighting the candles at the beginning of church and doing the coin collection. I like communion. I like Sharon's activities."

Sharon likes the singing and the fellowship. She sees kids' ministry as important. It keeps her busy with preparation, but she is grateful she can do it and use her gifts to help the children learn about God.



Children showing their work to the congregation.



Sunday School participant Sharon McConville says using a banana to help explain the Trinity!

Nyree, the parent of a two-year-old and a three-month-old child, says she sees bringing her son to church as giving the kids a sense of purpose and early direction in the Christian faith. Jeremy says: "I like the songs they sing. Youth Group is great. It is a kids' version of church for all different ages. It is good to have the different ages as that teaches the members. I like Sharon's talks and the kids' part of church. It gives me the opportunity to read the Bible readings. I like making the craft stuff and displaying it around the church so it looks more attractive; we can look at it and it is good for the parents to see what we do."

Another young person says he likes that kids can get involved with what Sharon does and go to the members and do church-based activities - talking about the story more and doing hands-on activities. "I love Youth Group as I get to hang out with my friends as well as go to church. I like the activities here. I like reading the Bible readings in church."



Constance Scher outlines children in a new pair of SALT Club

Warragul children's ministry

SALT Club
Corrie Edbert

SALT (Serve, Act, Live, and Thrive) Club is an integral part of children's ministry at Warragul Anglican Church. SALT Club's mission is to help our children know God, understand the Bible, pray, and witness to others about us. Children also develop strong relationships with their peers, helping them to feel secure and connected within the church.

SALT Club runs throughout school terms, where the children are invited to participate in the program whilst the family service (8:45am) is running. We are blessed with a large group of children, 35 in all, who are divided into age-appropriate groups for the sessions.

into Youth Group and other church ministries.



Monthly Music is full of song

This term the children are exploring the themes of God's creation, hope and salvation, and Jesus' love for us, through a variety of engaging and fun activities, crafts, songs, and stories. At the centre of every session is God's word as we read and learn from the Bible together. We look forward to God's continued blessing on the ministry, as well as the children and leaders involved.

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SALT Club and mainly music at Warragul - TGA March 2019



Children working at the Collection Board Board Response with Alan Brown serving (bottom right) which stands for the three wise children: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, and also for the Latin Christian name of the Virgin Mary: Sanctus.



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Sunday School children reporting back to the congregation - TGA July 2015

Summer with SUFM
Sharing the story of Jesus

On a morning in early January, a stream of bright blue T-shirts moved down the main street of Inverloch. With one of the group playing the guitar, and passing families on the way, they extended an invitation to a morning of games, crafts, music, drama, Bible stories - and lots of fun. Each summer, Inverloch SUFM (Scripture Union Family Mission), a group of young adults from churches in Melbourne and beyond, travel to this popular coastal spot to run their holiday program for kids and families.

Continued on page 12

Holiday fun and learning, with Scripture Union Family Mission - TGA February 2023

Seven confirmations at Korumburra

See 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 confirmee 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.



Children working at the Collection Board Board Response with Alan Brown serving (bottom right) which stands for the three wise children: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, and also for the Latin Christian name of the Virgin Mary: Sanctus.

The youngest confirmee at Korumburra was primary school age - TGA February 2024

All ages are now often actively involved in church services - TGA February 2023

St Francis of Assisi – a saint for our time



Anglican priest and Third Order Franciscan Pirrial Clift reflects on why St Francis has drawn her 'like a magnet', and speaks so powerfully to our time of war and ecological crisis. The following is an excerpt from a longer article.*

■ Pirrial Clift

May the power of your love, Lord Christ,
fiery and sweet as honey,
so absorb our hearts
as to withdraw them from all that is
under heaven.

So goes the Saint's prayer *The Absorbent*, concluding 'Grant that we may be ready to die for love of your love, as you died for love of our love. Amen.'

St Francis was afire with love and passion for Jesus; his love was constant and unashamed: it absorbed his heart for sure, making him ready 'to die for love of Jesus' love', as evidenced in his historical journey across the battlefield of the Fifth Crusade in Damietta, hoping for martyrdom. Whether he intended to convert Sultan al Kamil or to promote peace is contested; but it is known they parted on good terms, and Francis' writings from then on frequently refer to the value of peace-making,

exhorting the Brothers to avoid quarrels and disputes.

Following his namesake, in 2019 Pope Francis met with Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayab, the Grand Imam of al Azhar in the United Arab Emirates: they signed a declaration of human fraternity and respect as a gesture of goodwill. It is said that the Saint's promotion of ringing the Angelus bells trice daily across Europe, encouraging the faithful to pause for prayer, was inspired by his experience of the *adhan* (the Islamic Call to Prayer).

Early writings about St Francis and his first companions

frequently refer to their infectious joy: it was Francis' confidence and joy in God and transparent love for Jesus that reached across the centuries to draw me into his circle of influence like a magnet.

In the early 13th century God the Father was envisioned as fierce and intractable, whilst Jesus was frequently seen as the all-powerful and capricious judge, before whom folk quaked in fear. Francis revealed the true face of our compassionate Lord to a spiritually hungry people – and they responded in droves. There is nothing on this earth more attractive than genuine love and compassion.

The saint for our time

Our world, like the world in which St Francis lived, is largely ignorant of the true face of God. We are also surrounded by wars and violence, by corruption in society and (sadly) within the church. Many people have lost faith in the Church, and are wracked by spiritual hunger, mental anguish and anxiety. Depression amongst young people is a frightening thing – but understandable in the face of the mounting evidence of imminent climate crisis and misery looming in their future.

Franciscan spirituality is short on prescriptive rules and long on love: in his parting words to his Brothers Francis said: 'I have done what was mine to do. May Christ teach you what is yours to do.'

God's peace be with you.

The Rev'd Pirrial Clift is an Anglican priest and a tertiary within the Third Order of the Society of St Francis (tssf.org.au). She lives in the Kinglake Ranges.

* First published at Living Water (www.thelivingwater.com.au) and reprinted with kind permission. The full article can be seen here: <https://tinyurl.com/5n7m84ya>

A gathering of Third Order Franciscans will be held at Christ Church Drouin on Saturday 16th November from 11am to 3pm, including Eucharist, bring-and-share simple lunch, and Franciscan input. All welcome



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ARPA conference attendees and invited guests at the 2024 dinner

There is a time ...

Australasian Religious Press Association to wind up after 50 years

■ **Sally Woollett, former editor of TGA, reports on her one and only in-person ARPA conference – COVID having stopped such events during her time as editor.**

At the Golden Jubilee conference and AGM of the Australasian Religious Press Association (ARPA) in late September, members carried a motion relating to a special resolution that ARPA should cease to operate, and that it will wind up according to its constitution.

The special resolution was carried on the Country of the Yugambeh People, on Queensland's Gold Coast.

In opening the conference, entitled 'There Is a Time ...,' ARPA President Sophia Sinclair read from the Book of Ecclesiastes, encouraging delegates to reflect on God's timing in beginnings and endings. Sharing a Maori perspective of time at this Australasian gathering, she quoted a *whakataukī* (proverb): *Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua* ('I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past').

'It is the end of an era,' the President noted with evident sadness. Along with other members of the Executive Mark Brolly, Peter Bentley and Allan Sauer, she will be responsible for the winding up of the association.

In commenting on the resolution, Media and Communications Director for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Paul Osborne encouraged ecumenical media to continue the spirit of ARPA in coming together for online forums and events. Jamie O'Brien, President of the Australasian Catholic Press Association, offered the possibility of including ARPA in some form.

Aside from attending to the business of the AGM, conference attendees heard reflections from a number of past presidents and executive officers on the rich history of the association. The inaugural convention of the Australian Religious Press Association was held in Canberra in 1974, four years

after the association's predecessor, the Religious Press Association, folded. It had spent 10 years lobbying in the face of steep publication postage increases. In 1990, a New Zealand chapter of ARPA was added to create an Australasian body, which at its conclusion comprised 82 publications, as well as individual members.

In introducing the reflective session, Honorary Executive Officer Peter Bentley acknowledged the valuable and extensive contributions of bulletin editors, communication officers, chapter coordinators, presidents, vice presidents, treasurers, secretaries and executive officers over the years. Among them was The Rev'd Frank Lowe, editor of *The Gippsland Anglican* from 1965 to 1978, who became a life member of ARPA in 1989.

ARPA's aims have been broader than that of its predecessor: 'to develop members' skills, knowledge and professionalism; to offer opportunities for networking, fellowship and information-sharing among members; and to recognise excellence through the presentation of annual awards.'

Mirroring these aims at the conference were recollections by ARPA members relating to political context, the challenges and development of ARPA, the fostering of publishing excellence through ARPA awards and professional development at conferences. There was much gratitude for collegiality, ecumenical warmth and harmony.

With an eye to what might lie ahead, Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane Jeremy Greaves delivered his keynote address on the future of the Church, and a panel session on the future of Christian communication was held.

In his address Archbishop Jeremy said:

...Perhaps the future of the church is characterised by engagement in the world, taking seriously the understanding that that is where our work is to be done, and adopting a posture of humility in seeking to listen to where and how we might engage...

Our future lies in doing the careful, honest and humble work of listening for hints of what we might be called to be and do in this new age and having the courage to re-imagine the practices of the tradition – the rituals and ceremonies – to assist us in making meaning out of it all.

At the conference dinner, the President presented this year's Gutenberg Award for overall excellence to ARPA Treasurer Allan Sauer OAM. Reading the award citation, she described Allan as 'an exceptional and faithful colleague and peer who has dedicated his service to ensuring ARPA is an association which serves and blesses its members... To put it simply, Allan Sauer embodies the spirit of ARPA.'

Over the years, the ARPA awards have been presented to an individual or organisation for excellence in religious journalism and publishing in up to 23 categories, such as Best News Story, Best Photograph and Best Ecumenical Story.

In 2021, *The Gippsland Anglican* was honoured to accept a silver award in the Best Regional Publication category – one of five ARPA awards/accolades it received in that year.

In a closing worship that Peter Bentley described as 'a very special and suitably orderly time of giving thanks and praying for the future,' ARPA's longest-serving President, The Rev'd Bob Wiebusch, shared some encouraging words following the Bible reading (John 1: 1-15). The conference formally concluded with singing *Now Thank We All Our God*.



Artem Beliaikin on Unsplash

A call to continuous prayer for peace in the Middle East

A statement from the National Council of Churches, September 2024

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) invites all Australians and Christians worldwide to unite in fervent prayer for peace, justice, and reconciliation in Lebanon, the Holy Land, and the broader Middle East.

We turn to God in prayer, asking that His peace be poured out upon the people of the region, where violence and instability have left so many suffering. We pray that leaders may embrace paths of de-escalation and dialogue, working towards justice and the restoration of hope for millions who long for an end to conflict.

Our hearts are especially heavy following the recent escalations of violence, which have heightened fear and deepened wounds.

As we reflect on the conclusion of the 2024 Week of Prayer for Peace in Palestine and Israel, we continue to lift our voices in prayer for the Middle East, pleading for God's mercy and intervention.

We pray for the safety and protection of all civilians, for the innocent caught in the crossfire, and for those who have lost loved ones or have been displaced. We echo the call of Cardinal Bechara Rai, patriarch of the Maronite Catholic Church, who has condemned the ongoing attacks and called for peace. His plea for calm and reconciliation resounds in our own prayers.



The NCCA joins the World Council of Churches (WCC) in condemning the tragic loss of civilian lives from recent airstrikes. Together, we reaffirm the urgency of seeking peace and justice for those who live in constant fear and danger.

As we come together in prayer, we trust in the Lord who 'heals the broken-hearted

and binds up their wounds' (Psalm 147:3). May God's spirit of peace and reconciliation cover these troubled lands, bringing healing, safety, and renewed hope to all.

NCCA President The Rev'd John Gilmore expresses deep concern that our communities not allow the escalating conflict to undermine social cohesion in Australia. 'We must not let violence beget violence as it is the innocent who are suffering', The Rev'd Gilmore says.

'Together let us seek peace with justice. Let us continue to advocate for a permanent ceasefire, support humanitarian aid efforts, and, above all, trust in the transformative power of prayer. May God's peace, which surpasses all understanding, guard the hearts and minds of all those affected by the devastating conflict in the Middle East', prays The Rev'd Gilmore.

May peace prevail.

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■ Sarah Gover

Grace and peace to you my wonderful friends in Gippsland and Gahini's gift from God. Thank you so very much for standing with us at this time.

Bishop Manasseh

The pandemic dealt a significant blow to Seeds of Peace, leaving it in a state of disrepair. In January Gippsland House was unusable due to a leaking roof. With the goal of welcoming visitors again, especially those attending the 2025 centenary of the East African revival, the Diocese sought support to restore the building.

Thanks to a generous grant by Bishop-in-Council from funds held in trust for Gahini, and additional contributions from other friends of Gahini, Bishop Manasseh's team has begun to restore Gippsland House. The funding has enabled the Diocese to undertake essential renovations, including:

- Re-roofing the house, which involves removing, cleaning, and painting the tiles, as well as repairing and repainting the wooden trusses.
- Waterproofing the roof with plastic sheeting.
- Upgrading the water and electricity systems.
- Painting and other renovations to restore Gippsland House to its former glory.

Bishop Manasseh commented 'Soon Gippsland House will be like it was when Neville and Lynne Beaty (from Mirboo North) had finished it!'

The Diocese of Gahini has recently faced a significant health challenge: the Marburg virus outbreak that has swept through Rwanda. This highly contagious illness, similar to Ebola, has forced schools to close, restricted hospital visits, and encouraged mask-wearing and social distancing.



Re-roofing Gippsland House, Gahini

Despite the setbacks caused by the Marburg outbreak, the progress made on the renovation of Gippsland House has offered a glimmer of hope for the future. The project serves as a tangible reminder of the strength of compassion and the

importance of our companion relationship.

Bishop Manasseh ended his message of thanks to Gippsland: 'May the Lord continue to bless you dear friends for the great support given to Gahini to support my work'.



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

Our commitment to a safe church

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

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



Telephone: (03) 9416 1008 or 1800 135 246

Email: contact@kooyoora.org.au

julie@kooyoora.org.au

PO Box 329, Canterbury, Vic 3126



David and Bathsheba

a lesson in choices and responsibility

■ The Rev'd Daniel Lowe

At a recent church service, I shared a sermon on the story of David and Bathsheba – a narrative that, though ancient, carries valuable lessons for us today, particularly as we guide our young people through the complexities of life.

This story from 2 Samuel 11 is rich with themes of power, responsibility, and the consequences of our choices. It's a tale that could easily be the plot of a modern-day drama, filled with moments of temptation, ethical dilemmas, and the stark reality of human fallibility. But beyond the dramatic elements, it's a story that invites us to reflect on the decisions we make and the paths we choose, especially as we help our young people navigate their own journeys.

At the centre of the story is King David, a figure known for his devotion to God and his leadership. Yet, even David, described as a man after God's own heart, makes a series of poor decisions that lead to devastating consequences. His first misstep? Simply being in the wrong place. The passage begins, 'In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army... But David remained in Jerusalem.' David's decision to stay behind set the stage for the events that followed.

We see similar scenarios in our own lives and in the lives of our young people. A student lingering in a locker bay during class, for example, is often a sign that they are avoiding something they should be doing or are on the verge of making a poor choice. It's not that they are actively seeking trouble, but by being out of place, they become vulnerable to it. As parents and educators, we share the responsibility of guiding our young people back to where they should be, helping them recognize the importance of being in the right place – physically, emotionally, and morally.

David's story also highlights the vulnerabilities that come with guilt, fear, and laziness. When we're weighed down by guilt, whether it's from avoiding responsibilities or making poor decisions, it can lead us to further errors. Fear can paralyse us, keeping us from doing what's right because we're too worried about the potential consequences. And laziness, whether it's not studying for an important test or not following through

on commitments, can make us more susceptible to making choices we wouldn't normally consider. For young people, these feelings can manifest in various ways – procrastinating on assignments, avoiding difficult conversations, or even disengaging from activities they once enjoyed.

As David wandered on his rooftop, he saw Bathsheba, and what followed was a series of decisions that compounded his initial mistake. David's actions with Bathsheba are a stark example of the abuse of power. Whether Bathsheba was complicit or not is beside the point – the responsibility rests with David, who acted purely to satisfy his desires. When we have power or influence, it's our responsibility to use it wisely and ethically. This is a crucial lesson for us to impart to our children as they grow into roles of leadership and influence in their own lives.

What's striking in this story is that there were warning signs along the way – moments where David could have made a different choice. A servant tried to remind David of Bathsheba's identity, subtly cautioning him. In our lives, too, we often encounter warning signs when we're about to make a poor decision. These signs might come as advice from a friend, a nagging feeling in the pit of our stomach, or even a child's hesitation when they know they're straying from the right path. Our role as parents and educators is to help our children recognize these signs and encourage them to heed them.



David's story is a sobering reminder that even the best of us can make mistakes, and those mistakes can have significant consequences. However, it's also a story of redemption and grace. David's life didn't end with this failure, and neither do our young people's lives hinge on their mistakes. With our guidance and God's grace, they can learn, grow, and make better choices moving forward.

As we continue to partner in the education and upbringing of our young people, may we keep in mind the lessons from David's story. May we strive to be present in the right places, guide our young people through their fears and struggles, and help them use their growing influence for good. Together, we can help them navigate the complexities of life with wisdom and grace.

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

Song of Creation

(based on Job 38.1-7 and Psalm 22.3)

Where were you
when He laid the foundations?
Where were you
when He created the earth?
Where were you
when He measured its distance?
Where were you
when He laid the first stone?¹

For that was the day
when the stars sang together
The bright morning stars
sang together in song.
And all of the sons of God
shouted together.
They shouted for joy
with their voices as one.

The song of creation
was a long time before you
The song of creation
is still being sung.
The song of creation
Is singing around you
The air that you breathe
filled with bells being rung.

Can you hear it?

Do not let
your house remain empty²
Do not let
the silence prevail³
Do not let
your mind rest on nothing
Do not let
your space become stale.

But make this the day
when you sing with the stars.
The bright morning stars
singing praises to God.
Remember He lives
in the praises you give Him⁴
Join in the song
Use your voice, make it loud.

Where were you
when He laid the foundations
of the earth?

Fiona McKenzie © 2024

Fiona McKenzie lives in Wonthaggi and prays for renewal of the church and sharing of the gospel in the Bass Coast, South Gippsland and beyond.

1. Job 22.3 'Who laid its cornerstone?' Psalm 118.22 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.' See Matthew 21.42 where Jesus quotes this verse, regarding the farmer who sent his son to collect the harvest, but he was killed by the tenants of the farm. NKJV
2. Matt 12.44 The unclean spirit returns to a person to find the house 'empty, swept, and put in order', so he returns with seven other more wicked spirits who enter and dwell there (Matt 12.45).
3. Psalm 22.2 'O my God, I... am not silent.' KJV
4. Psalm 22.3 KJV 'But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel'. The word 'inhabit', also translated as 'enthroned', is from the Hebrew 'Yashab' to sit, remain, dwell.

Job, Enduring Hope

Andrew R. Prideaux

Sydney, Aquila Press

Reading the Bible Today series

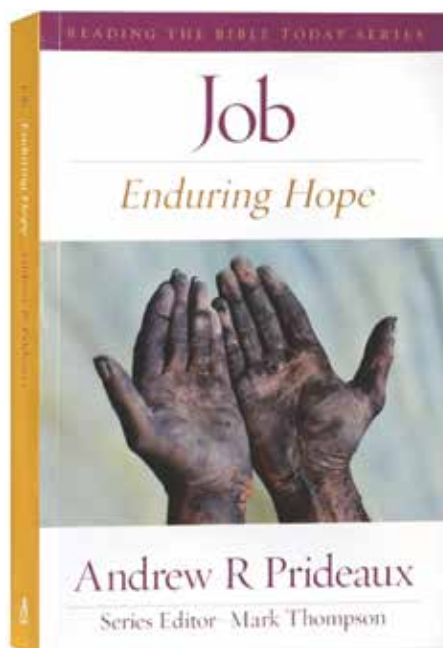
2024

■ A review and reflection by
Richard Prideaux*

The *Reading the Bible Today* series has been built around Australian commentators presenting their wealth of Biblical insight on paper. Andrew Prideaux's commentary on the Old Testament book of Job is the latest in this series. Covering 382 pages, *Enduring Hope* is no small read and his 390 footnotes demonstrate Andrew's careful attention to the Hebrew text as well as his interaction with a remarkable number of modern and ancient scholars who have written on the Book of Job.

A central value of the Book of Job for readers is the pastoral benefit to those who struggle in life for whatever reason. Perhaps they have had illness or other tragedies in their lives. Christian folk can travel along comfortably with their love and faith in God but they are not immune from traumatic events and troubles which can shake them off their runway. They, like Job, begin to seriously wonder whether God is all he is supposed to be and indeed whether he is any help at all. They may even doubt if God is actually there and if so, why has he allowed these things to happen to me, a faithful Christian.

The story of Job is unique in the Bible since the key character, Job, comes from the land of Uz, outside God's covenant people of Israel but nevertheless remaining a God-fearing man whose life and commitment have constantly been given over to the worship and service of the God of Israel.



In the opening narrative Satan challenges God with the idea that Job only serves and worships God because of his comfortable and wealthy lifestyle. Satan suggests that if these things were taken away Job would no longer worship or be committed to God but would reject him in his misery.

As the story unfolds Job loses his family, his home and his wealth and he himself suffers a horrifying destructive illness which makes him an outcast from his society and a horror to behold with even his wife turning against him.

Job is supported in his despair by three well-meaning friends who offer him plenty of advice which turns out to be meaningless for Job's search for at least a statement or a conversation with the Lord God. After the failure of the three friends Job is confronted by the words of the young Elihu whose confident rebuking of Job's desire to speak with

God humiliates Job even further, totally mistaking Job's wish to communicate with God. Elihu does not even elicit a response from Job.

Finally through a great storm God does address Job directly with a powerful account of his creation and sustaining of the universe in all its complexity and Job is both humbled and encouraged. Job quickly learns to recognise that, difficult though his situation is, God has a purpose for his world and his people, even in those things which, like his suffering, seem to make no sense. Job's faith in God and his understanding of God's sovereign purposes had been sincere, but also needed to be enlarged by God.

God opens Job's eyes to the wonder of God and his own smallness which enables him to understand the awe, power and mystery of God in a new way. In return God vents his anger on the three friends who have spoken so wrongly of Him and who are only restored as the Lord appoints Job to pray for them. God also restores Job's place a hundred fold.

The story of Job requires careful reading and deep thinking. Readers of this commentary will find many useful insights and a thoughtful and fresh understanding of this remarkable and hugely significant component of Scripture. This is a commentary to read carefully and thoughtfully and it will return rich spiritual encouragement.

* Richard Prideaux is the father of the book's author.

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Edwin Muir 1887–1959

■ Michael Fox invites readers to try a poet of perennial relevance and appeal.

In 1954 Edwin Muir was a major poet with the publication of his *Collected Poems* and was awarded a Professorship at Harvard. He had none of the brilliant modernistic pizzazz of Pound, Eliot, Auden, Empson or Les Murray. Blake, Holderlin, Yeats, Kafka were influences he absorbed into his own unique vision which is simple and melodious.

He belongs to no school. Above all he is a poet of fundamental realities: Birth and Death; Love and Hate; Tyranny and Freedom; Time and Eternity. These are his concerns – his vision that life exists spiritually beyond our everyday worries:

Light and Praise,
Love and Atonement, Harmony and Peace,
Touch me, assail me, break and make my heart.

He starts with the most ordinary – The Hill, The Road, The City, which lead into extra-sensory dimensions – The Voyage, The Labyrinth, The Journey back, before his insight leads him into the great religious topics – The Annunciation, The Covenant, The Transfiguration:

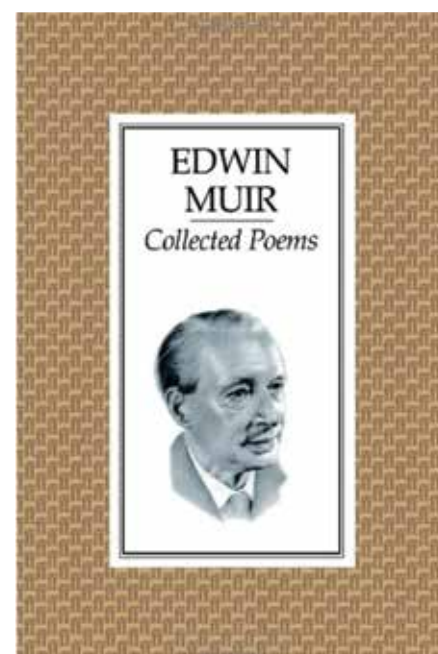
But he will come again... in our own time,
or at a time when time is ripe.
His agony unmade, his cross dismantled.
And Judas damned take his long journey
backward
From darkness into light and be a child
and the betrayal
Be quite undone and never more be done.

From 1920 to 1950 Muir explored with ever deepening insight the dualities of the life of the individual and our human history. His great endeavor was to find a way out of the labyrinth of his past – he was the first translator of Kafka into English – as he journeys towards the light:

We have hours but are drawn back again
By faces of goodness, faithful masks
of sorrow
Honesty, kindness, courage, fidelity,
The love that lasts a lifetime...
For how can we reject
The long last look on the ever-dying face
Turned backward from the other
side of time.

Muir's journey through the wisdom of his experience is forward but also backward to the source of all innocence that we lost long ago.

Read him. He speaks to all our conditions. His radiance is an essence angelic, grave and merry for all seasons. Try him!



EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Gippsland Grammar's Centenary STAGGfair

16 4–9 pm (fireworks at 8.45 pm)
St Anne's Campus,
52 Raglan St, Sale Entry: free

Third Order Franciscan gathering

11 am – 3 pm
Christ Church Drouin.
Includes Eucharist, Bring and Share
simple lunch, discussion. All welcome.

Christ Church Foster 125th Anniversary Celebrations.

24 Sunday 10 am
Holy Communion Service

Planting and Blessing of a Prayer Tree
Bring and Share Luncheon
Everyone welcome and invited to
attend, particularly past parishioners
and rectors of the Parish.
Contact Fran on 0435 727 089
c.i.anglican@gmail.com
for more information.

Lead Like a Woman MOW Conference

28 – 30
St Margaret's Girls School,
Ascot, Brisbane
[https://www.trybooking.com/
events/landing/1244337](https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1244337)

DECEMBER

Trafalgar Community Carols

4 7 pm–8:30 pm

Thorpdale Community Carols

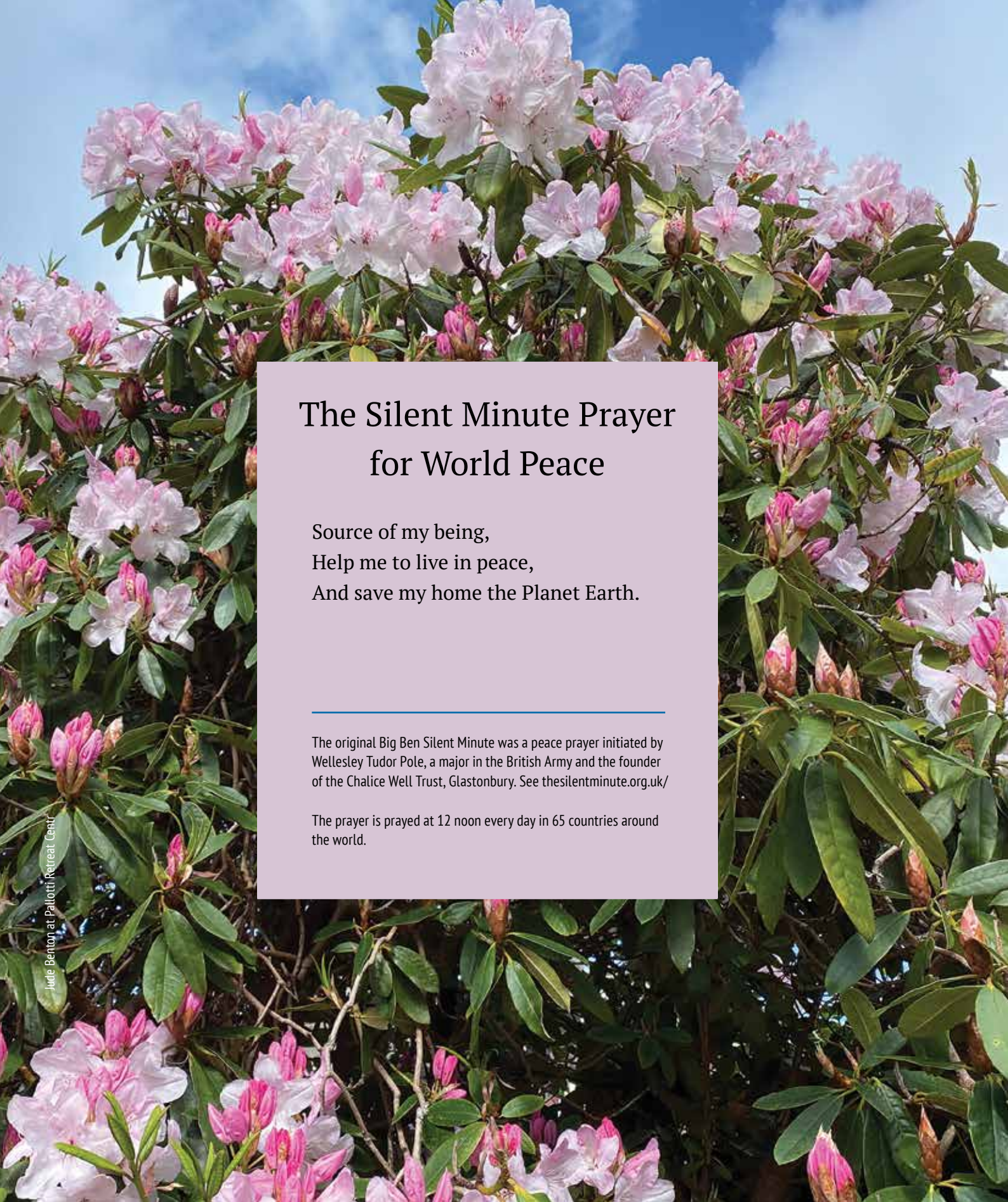
6 7pm at Traveller's Rest
contact Dean 0421216825

Trafalgar's Travelling Carollers

14 4:30–8:30 pm
Any troubadours happy to come
on board contact Dean 0421216825

Nine Carols and Lessons Thorpdale

22 11 am contact Dean 0421216825



Jude Benton at Pallotti Retreat Centre

The Silent Minute Prayer for World Peace

Source of my being,
Help me to live in peace,
And save my home the Planet Earth.

The original Big Ben Silent Minute was a peace prayer initiated by Wellesley Tudor Pole, a major in the British Army and the founder of the Chalice Well Trust, Glastonbury. See thesilentminute.org.uk/

The prayer is prayed at 12 noon every day in 65 countries around the world.

The Gippsland Anglican

Interim Editor: Jan Down
0407 614 661
editor@gippslandanglicans.org.au

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