

The Gippsland Anglican

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Sue Fordham

Less than a week before Christmas and against a backdrop of searing 44 degree heat, the Bishops of the Gippsland Anglican and Catholic churches met in conversation at the Abbey on Raymond Island.

The subject of their deliberation was the Pope's encyclical, *Laudato Si*, an encyclical letter on ecology and climate.

Catholic Bishop, Pat O'Regan, focussed on Pope Francis's notion of the world as our 'common home', together with its degradation being our collective responsibility and its care and recovery our common goal.

We are a people of 'communion' or common union, the Bishop observed as he teased out the implications of the west's current obsession with the cult of the individual to the detriment of community and interdependence, which he saw as being at the heart of the gospel. When community is broken or ignored in the assertion of individuality, the creation as a whole suffers.

Bishop O'Regan said that Pope Francis's encyclical urged the importance of living in engagement with all people and with the whole of creation in contrast to focussing on mere survival and emphasised our role as stewards in caring for the created order, an empowering though costly role. In support of this he quoted Bonaventure, a Franciscan, who wrote about many additional sacraments, especially the sacrament of creation. "We should always look through the prism of creation," Bishop Pat concluded. The encyclical invited a continuous Advent reflection on the one who comes among us. "We must focus on the gift of creation, but we must also acknowledge its giver," he said.

Photo courtesy Catholic Diocese



Bp Patrick O'Regan

Photo: Edie Ashley



Cross number 10 in The Abbey grounds



Bp Kay Goldsworthy

Our common home — two bishops talk climate, ecology and faith

The first steps in the process of recovery and renewal, he reminded listeners, was the invitation to dialogue with all people and dialogue was an activity that involved listening as well as talking. This spiritual form of dialogue, he said, meant a bringing together of heart and head as well as hands.

Bishop Kay Goldsworthy began her observations with Michael Leunig's Summer Prayer:

We welcome summer and the glorious blessing of light. We are rich with light; we are loved by the sun. Let us empty our hearts into the brilliance. Let us pour our darkness into the glorious, forgiving light.



Pope Francis's shoes at the Paris Conference on Climate in December 2015

For this loving abundance let us give thanks and offer our joy. Amen.

In the then Advent season, when Christians reach towards the light, she remarked that the Anglican "middle" way with its five Marks of Mission invited us to live in service to humanity and to safeguard the integrity of creation.

She praised the great leadership of Pope Francis for all Christian peoples; not just with the production of this encyclical and its focus on environment but also for his demonstrated humility and concern for the poor and for justice.

She referred to his recent symbolic act in sending his shoes to the Paris Conference on Climate to represent the fact that he stood in solidarity with those people most affected by climate change.

She saw this encyclical as having significant ecumenical possibility in engaging Christians of all denominations

as well as people of other faiths and no faith in the common cause of protecting our home.

As an example, she cited the writings of retired British Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sachs who emphasized seeing ourselves, all people, as human beings in common relationship to God.

Like Bishop Pat, Bishop Kay noted this Pope's warning that the problem for creation begins when we see nothing higher than ourselves. Anthropomorphism, she said, is the sin of the Garden, our brokenness, which has led us to where we are now.

Bishop Kay quoted from the writings of 20th century French Jesuit palaeontologist and philosopher, Teilhard De Chardin in his Hymn of Creation: "I will make the whole earth my altar" and St John of the Cross: "God is present in the things we can touch and see" as they observed the unity of all created things and their interdependence, a concept integral to Pope Francis's encyclical.

She unpicked the meanings inherent in the Pope's call to repentance; a call to conversion or transformation in the human heart, a conversion that needs

to happen, not once for all but on a regular basis, as is true for any conversion or act of repentance, a turning not just away from but a turning towards in our relationship to our total environment.

Bishop Kay also quoted a friend who observed that, "when we receive the body of Christ at communion we are also eating the stars".

One thing she felt to be missing from the encyclical was the issue of population sustainability and the related issues of contraception and intergenerational responsibility. These need to be addressed as a matter of urgency, she said.

The Bishops agreed that the encyclical was a call to justice for the earth and our work, begun today, together, must end with a comma, not a full stop.

The people who came to participate in the dialogue and the lively question and answer session that followed were unanimous in endorsing this ecumenical initiative at the Abbey and eagerly spoke of other ways the common Christian family might work together for the betterment of the world.

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The Gippsland Anglican

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There has been a rise in the popularity of Shrove Tuesday or “fat” Tuesday gatherings in recent years. Getting together and cooking up pancakes acknowledges the past practice of emptying the house of any and all sweet things before the Lent fast begins.

However, it’s the Ash Wednesday words “Remember you are dust, and to dust you will return” that usher in the season of fasting, repentance and self-examination that is Lent. These words will be spoken and heard all around the world this Ash Wednesday.

They are uncomfortable words. They are discomfiting words. Originally, these words are spoken in Genesis after the serpent beguiles and tricks the woman, after the man eats without questioning, after they both notice for the first time that they are naked, after they hide from God in the garden and sew together leaves to cover themselves.

The words come after the Lord God questions them about eating from the tree in the middle of the garden, and as they hear of the consequences of their action... “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Perhaps it’s not so strange that the Ash Wednesday remembering of our human need for God’s saving love isn’t as popular as those pancakes. On the one hand, popular culture continues to focus on all things age-defying, and a particular view of perfection, beauty, and



Remember you are dust

entitlement. On the other, we are often overwhelmed by the news images and stories which bear out our human sinfulness and frailty.

On Ash Wednesday people gather to remember our need of God’s loving grace and community. We dare to call to mind that God’s love reaches out toward us and wraps its arms around us in the love of Jesus. We do this not in the privacy of our own home or room – but as a public witness to the promises of God in Christ.

We remember what that gift of repentance and renewal means. We remember Paul’s words written to the early church in Corinth, “...for as all die in Adam so all will be made alive in Christ.”

Recently, the Primates of the Anglican Communion met together in Canterbury, their first meeting together with Archbishop Justin of

Canterbury. Anglicans across the Communion acknowledge that we are a community, a family, like all families, living with strained relationships. Predictably enough, some members of this family scattered across the globe in 39 autonomous Provinces, were calling on others to repent, to turn away from what they deem to be wrong and turn afresh to Christ.

“It’s no secret to say” Archbishop Justin admitted, “that before the meeting, the signs were not good. It really was possible that we would reach a decision to walk apart in effect, to split the Anglican Communion. In the debates that have raged for several decades now, some have said unity is worthless if achieved at the expense of justice. Others have argued unity is a false prize if it undermines truth. Both of these views misunderstand the nature

of the church, which is not an organisation, but a body of people committed to each other because they are followers of Jesus Christ. We are put together as family by God, because we are all God’s children.

“The meeting reached a point where we chose quite simply to decide on this point – do we walk together at a distance, or walk apart? And what happened next went beyond everyone’s expectations. It was Spirit-led. It was a ‘God moment’. As leaders of our Anglican Communion, and more importantly as Christians, we looked at each other across our deep and complex differences and we recognised those we saw as those with whom we are called to journey in hope towards the truth and love of Jesus Christ.”

Repentance is not a one-way street. It doesn’t apply only to those we condemn because they disagree with us. Ash Wednesday reminds us that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. All, not some. All, not just those tiresome people over there. All, including ourselves. In Lent we take out the flotsam and jetsam of our own inadequate response to the inexhaustible gift of God’s love for humanity, and touch the dust of our own lives, the dust of life in the Church, committing to an unflinchingly honest appraisal of our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ – the One in whom we know ourselves to be one family, always and only in his love.

+Kau

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Saturday 5:00 pm – repeated: Wednesday 1:00 pm
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The Spirit of Things

Sunday 6:00 pm – repeated: Tuesday 1:00 pm
www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/spiritofthings

Rhythm Divine

Sunday 6:00 am – repeated: Monday 1:00 am (music program)
www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rhythmdivine



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Dean Spalding inducted at Drouin

Jan Down

The Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding was inducted and installed as Rector of the parish of Drouin on Wednesday 6 January, the Feast of the Epiphany.

Dr Spalding has been Dean of Studies at Wollaston Theological College in Perth for the past three and a half years. His PhD in Biblical Studies, recently completed, was on Luke, Acts and Hospitality. He brings significant gifts of scholarship and teaching to Drouin and the Gippsland diocese. Previous to his recent studies and position at Wollaston, Dean was a school chaplain for two

years and taught maths and science in Christian schools for eleven years.

Dean is originally from the Macedon Ranges in Victoria and the family's return to this state will make visiting Dean's elderly parents easier. Dean said he sees going back into parish ministry as "a return to core business". This will be his first time as rector of a parish; he was curate at St George's Monbulk some years ago.

Christ Church, Drouin, was filled for the service, with clergy and lay people from across the diocese and further afield, including about 20 people from St George's Monbulk. The Rev

Dr Gregory Seach, Warden of Wollaston Theological College, presented Dean to Bp Kay Goldsworthy on behalf of the college.

Drawing on the story of the magi, Bp Kay preached about gifts: the gifts of land and money that made the building of Christ Church – old and new – possible; the gifts of teaching and preaching that Dean brings to the parish; and especially the gift of Jesus – "God's declaration of love, made real in the baby".

In the speeches immediately following the service, Russell Broadbent MP welcomed Dean and his wife Kate on behalf of the local community, noting that where Dean had previously been 2D – "Dean Dean" at Wollaston – he was now 3D: "Dr Dean of Drouin"

Dean was also welcomed by Mark Smith, minister of the Drouin Presbyterian Church, on behalf of the Drouin Ministers' Association; the Rev'd Sue Jacka on behalf of the Western Deanery of the Anglican Gippsland Diocese, and Alacia Biggs, church warden, for the Drouin parish. Church wardens Lorraine Kinrade and June Burrows welcomed Kate and the three Spalding children, Meredyth (10), Emily (7) and Elisabeth (2). Kate was presented with flowers and the children each received a gift.

In Dean's response to the



speeches he said that being a lover of Luke, he "puts a lot of store by synchronicity", and on asking God for confirmation of his call to come to Drouin, he was given not just one, but many serendipitous signs. One of these was when he took a rare turn to minister at Rottne Island, and was there delighted to meet someone from Jindavick (one of Drouin's centres).

Dean paid tribute to the Rev'd Ken Parker who has

been locum at Drouin for much of the past year, and who had been instrumental years ago in encouraging him to study the Bible.

In closing, Dean asked the congregation not to "bubble wrap" their gifts now that the new rector has arrived but rather, like the wise men in the stable, to bring their gifts forward to be of service.

Some of those gifts were in evidence in the lavish supper that followed.



Photos: Jan Down

The Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding and wife Kate

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Pam Schmack and the Very Rev'd Steve Clarke at the AGM at St Paul's Cathedral in November last year. Pam was presented with rainbow coloured flowers in recognition of her many years of faithful service as a Lay Canon and member of Chapter. Dean Steve acknowledged Pam's immeasurable contribution to the parish; Pam's wisdom and guidance has been a valuable part of the parish leadership. Pam said that she still wants to serve her parish community and reminded us all that "we are in God's house and we are God's people", asking all parishioners to pull together as a community to do God's work.

Christine Morris – Sale

Christmas baptisms

Mary Nicholls

Moe / Newborough

On the Sunday following Christmas day the celebrations continued when parishioners from the partnership parishes of Moe and Newborough joined for the annual worship and Eucharist in the Moe Botanic Gardens. The day was made even more special with the baptisms of baby cousins Grace Walsh and Lacey Ridley, whose families have long association with St Luke's. A picnic lunch was enjoyed by many after the service.

Earlier Christmas celebrations included an early presentation of GFS Musical by Sue Burley, "One Magic Night," performed by members the children's ministry groups – GFS, Kidsplus+ Playgroup, Sunday

School and BAMB (Boys Anglican Ministry Moe).

A combined Newborough Moe Carol Service was held at St Aidan's, led by the specially formed choir and musicians: Ethan Detering on guitar, David Bruce (conductor) and Glenda Young on organ. Eighteen of Moe's kids' ministry children also sang a song from their musical.

The Crib Service on Christmas Eve brought a lot of joy to families and children as they assisted setting up the crib. Little paper folded angels, courtesy of the Moe Guild ladies, were well received gifts, presented with the inevitable cup cakes celebrating the birthday of Christ.



The Rev'd Sathi Anthony with Grace and baptism group: Mum Erin and Lacey's dad Justin look on

mainly music lends a hand

Jane Peters – Wonthaggi

The Wonthaggi *mainly music* group has been blessed in many ways during the last year, so when one of our team members heard about the Excluded Communities Initiative at a *mainly music* conference, we decided to be a small part of it.

The Excluded Communities Initiative focuses on groups in communities who, for various reasons, cannot access *mainly music* through their local church. These groups are not able to be self-funding like most *mainly music* groups so the *mainly music* organisation provides

the funding for them.

Looking at our options we decided that we didn't have the people power to do a big fundraiser, but we could set aside the money that we received at one *mainly music* session and send it as a special gift to the Excluded Communities fund. We shared with our families what we intended to do and one visiting family even gave special donation. It was only a small beginning but we also recognise that it would be quite simple to do it again a few times during the year and so enable others to be blessed by the *mainly music* ministry.



Hot weather fun at Yarragon

"My sheep looks so cute!"

Trafalgar Parish Holiday Program

Sue Jacka

I loved making the marble race. It even plays music as the marble goes down!" "The Earth Ball was scary, but I'm glad I did it." "My sheep looks so cute!" These were just a few of the comments from the children who came to the holiday program in the Trafalgar parish over January. The program was held over six mornings across the three different towns of Thorpdale, Yarragon and Trafalgar. Games and play equipment from the GFS/ Kidsplus trailer make it very easy to come up with enjoyable and exciting experiences.

This year two stories about David were used: firstly, the young David being chosen by the prophet Samuel rather than his fine looking older brothers because Samuel knew that God looks on our hearts rather than

our outward appearance. We talked about how we matter to God and that God has good things in store for each of us. The second one was David and Goliath and we discussed how we can face the things that are our giants when we have God on our side.

One of the special features about the holiday program is that it brings the adult team together so well. At Thorpdale we had people from the Anglican, Uniting and Wesleyan Methodists on the team. In Yarragon, others from Trafalgar came to add numbers to the team so that we could support outreach from a smaller congregation.

The Rev'd Sue Jacka is Rector of the parish of Trafalgar



Kate O'Halloran (right) leads mums and helpers in the *mainly music* session

GFS Kidsplus+ Gippsland news

GFS Kidsplus+ Gippsland will be celebrating 130 years of ministry to women and girls and, later in the 20th century, to boys, pre-schoolers and families. Our Network team is planning special commemorative activities in all deaneries throughout the year. More information will follow.

Coming events:

March 4–6: Kidsplus+ Camp at Forest Lodge Farm (Yarram)
Contact ASAP: 5127 2929 (to enquire for late applications).
Cost \$100, ages 6 years to 18 years.

April 30: GFS Kidsplus+ 130 year Birthday Celebrations.
Family, Friends and kids' groups.
Venue: The Summit Youth and Recreation Centre, Trafalgar East.
Lunchtime activities on lake, Flying Fox, displays and more.

A weekend of fellowship, thanksgiving and fun

On Saturday 22nd November over 30 Adult Friends and leaders of GFS Kidsplus+ and Affiliated parishes participated in the Annual Thanksgiving Eucharist, held this year at St James' Traralgon. We thank the Reverend Jeff Richardson for his hospitality and in presiding over the Eucharist and Service. Lunch followed at the Morwell Italian Club. We were pleased to be able to re-present (in person) the Life Membership Certificate to Annette Lade who last year was still in rehabilitation following her debilitating car accident in 2014.



George and Nyadet from Moe Parish on a tandem bike at the Traffic School

Diocesan Family Traffic School Afternoon

It was pleasing to see over 50 children together with parish leaders and families at the Kidsplus+ sponsored Traffic School afternoon. Families from Traralgon, Morwell, Moe, Trafalgar, Yallourn North and Newborough shared in the sausage sizzle, refreshments and fun. A wonderful opportunity for children from our diocesan parishes and varied ministry playgroups, Sunday schools, kidsclub and youth groups to meet one another, recognising the diocesan family.

The Blue Moose Mission team



Blue Moose Mission

Brenda Burney
Churchill / Boolarra / Yinnar

This summer, our parish was lucky enough to have a team of young people from Youth Dimension offer to come to Churchill and run a Blue Moose outreach. Youth Dimension is an inter-church youth organisation based in Victoria and has been running since 1978. They aim to help equip churches for mission with their main focus being on connecting with our youth and sharing the gospel with them.

The team of 15 arrived on Monday, December 28 and set themselves up in the church which was to be their base for the next ten days. One of the team leaders, Amanda Bremner, was originally from our parish and the team were able to sleep and shower at her parent's home.

Over the course of the mission I was privileged to join the team in some of their activities and as a guest for some meals. What an inspiring group of young people! Their heart for sharing the gospel was very evident in the way they connected with each other and with people of all ages in our church and in our wider community.

The church was an absolute hive of activity every time I visited. Liz (cook extraordinaire) and her husband Richard and friend Jenny were always busy preparing delicious meals (no-one went hungry I can assure you); there were people busy preparing programs and activities, leading Bible studies, praying, chatting, practising music ... and the list goes on. I think every corner of our church building was busy!

The team was also busy away from the church building. On the second day they held a BBQ at the shopping

centre to help promote the Blue Moose activities and to connect with some of the locals. I spent a couple of hours with them and lots of people were interested in what we doing. Some of them even bought sausages! Quite a few people made generous donations to the team.

Each afternoon the team had what was called "Contact time", when they would visit places in and around Churchill, Boolarra and Yinnar, such as the skate parks and Lake Hyland, to connect with youth and families so they could share the gospel and invite them to the activities they were offering. During this time they also visited a number of our people from our congregations.

In the evenings, the Churchill Town hall was transformed into a vibrant and fun space with laser lights, music, a pool table, table tennis, air hockey, a soccer table, card games and more! Although there weren't many attending on the first few nights, by the end of the final week there were over 30 people enjoying their time together. Each night one of the team would give a testimony and on the nights I was present, every set of ears and eyes was tuned in to the message. Hallelujah!

On Sunday, January 3, the team led a youth service at the church during the morning. It was lovely to sit back and be ministered to by this extremely gifted and faithful group of young people. From the music to the prayers to the message for the day (very ably given by Paul Bremner), it was clear that the gospel of Jesus shaped the hearts and souls of these young people.

During the last week the team also ran a program for younger children at the church on two mornings. Once again, they connected with the young ones and with their families brilliantly. The message they had for the children was based on the story of the Good Samaritan, brought to life by a puppet called "Steve".

I can't speak highly enough of this team of young people and their passion for sharing the gospel. Praise God for making this possible and for helping us – through this team – to connect with some more young people and their families.

(PS The equipment in the Kidsplus + youth trailer was a great addition to the Blue Moose Mission!)

The Rev'd Brenda Burney is the minister of the parish of Churchill / Boolarra / Yinnar

Christmas activities and drama

Lyn Gilbert – Korumburra

On the Monday and Tuesday afternoons before Christmas between 2 and 4 pm a Children's Activity afternoon was held in St. Paul's hall. The program was organised by the combined churches in Korumburra. Members from the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, AOG, Uniting and Lutheran churches all joined together to make the days a great success with most of the children coming both days.



A finished tree sign

The afternoons began with a sing along of carols and fun songs. Then came the various activities – the older children made two wooden Christmas trees and painted on them the words "Unto us a child is born" (these were then positioned outside two of the local churches over Christmas); craft activities making stars, angels, cards and so on, and a Christmas story time with activities area.

On Tuesday afternoon to end the program a group of children dressed up and joined with some of the adults to present the Christmas nativity story, "The Innkeeper".

The first service at St. Paul's, Korumburra, following the recent renovations was the Crib Service when about 120 people of all ages joined together for carol singing and a presentation of a Christmas play called "The Gift". The gift, the tinsel, tree, plum pudding and Santa all thought they were the most important at Christmas, but found out the truth of Jesus' birth, with Mary, Joseph and the angels – Jesus, the true "gift to the world".

Lighting the Maffra Advent Candles



The Rev'd Laurie Baker (locum at St John's) lighting the Advent Candle with helpers Mia, Evie and Otto Humphris at St John's in Maffra.



Justin and Ali, visitors to Yarram, had their photo taken in the purpose-built backdrop

Beloved Father, Beloved Son

Carolyn Raymond reviews a book studied in the Morwell parish during Advent

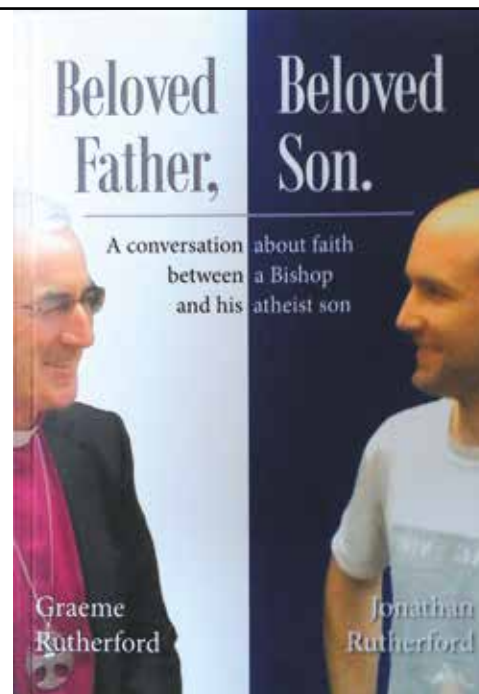
At St Mary's it is becoming a tradition that during Advent many people read a theological book recommended by our rector. This is part of our preparation for the coming of our Lord at Christmas.

This is the first Advent season that the Rev'd David Head has been with us at St Mary's and he suggested *Beloved Father, Beloved Son*, which is a conversation about faith between Bishop Graeme Rutherford and his atheist son, Jonathan (published by Morning Star).

The book is written as a conversation about various topics such as *God as wish-fulfillment*; *Does morality make sense without God?* and *The Bible... God's truth or human construct?*

The conversation between father and son is fascinating and very moving. The debate is always respectful and the love between Father and Son is very evident. Each deeply appreciated the confidences the other shared and learning how the beliefs of the other had changed and grown over the years.

The book challenges readers to think out their own understandings and beliefs and also what influences have helped form their own faith. The dialogue between father and son is always significant, clear, sensible and polite. The generational divide



is acknowledged; the different experiences significant to each of them are referred to and presented. Yet always the love between them remains.

This book will resonate with many experiences of sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, and with the life-long journey to know a faith which fills both heart and mind.

Bishop Graeme Rutherford is now retired. He was formerly a Bishop on the South Coast of NSW and now lives and worships in Melbourne. His son Jonathon works part-time as a coordinator of an independent bookshop. He is involved in environmental and social change activism and seeks to develop community skills in self-sufficiency.

Selfies in the stable

Glenda Amos – Yarram

The Yarram Christmas Tree Festival which was sponsored by The Anglican Parish of Yarram began on 30 November. The cypress at Holy Trinity was decorated with festive lights and there were decorated Christmas trees from local service clubs in shop windows.

A trophy was awarded to the Brightest Christmas Tree at the Combined Churches Christmas Carol Service. A forest of Christmas trees popped up in all sorts of unexpected places along Commercial Road, and in front of Holy Trinity church. The Yarram Men's Shed made wooden Christmas trees, which were decorated by local primary school students and students from Sale Special School. Special thanks to Wellington Shire, Bunnings of Sale and David Hartmaier and team who organised this exciting display in Yarram.

The Annual Nativity Exhibition at the Anglican Hall was held this year

from Saturday 12 to Wednesday 16 December, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm daily. There was a gorgeous display of nativity scenes gathered from far and wide. Visitors to the exhibition were able to become part of the display by dressing up as characters from the first Christmas and posing for a photo with baby Jesus. Getting a selfie in our purpose-built backdrop was an added attraction this year. There was also a Christmas gift shop with books, DVDs, CDs, nativity figurines, Christmas cards and decorations for sale.

We had a wonderful Christmas this year with parishioners sharing the pews with loads of visitors for our traditional Nine Lessons and Carols, Christingle and Midnight Mass. St John's and Holy Trinity were decorated for the season, including live fir trees and candle light at Holy Trinity, and special window decorations by local families at St John's.

Thank you Sarah

Brenda Burney

Churchill / Boolarra / Yinnar

Seven years ago we saw the beginning of a remarkable ministry emerging in this diocese. I will call it the advent of Sarah Gover. From the very first time I met Sarah and heard her speak of her role as Community Development Officer with Anglicare Victoria here in Gippsland, I felt that new and exciting things were on the horizon for our parishes and for the people in the communities we serve... and I wasn't disappointed.

In the time Sarah worked with us she opened up a whole new world of opportunities for us to reach out to people in our local communities. Whenever she spoke to the clergy at deanery meetings or our annual conferences, I always came away feeling inspired. Her wonderful enthusiasm, her professionalism, her ability to challenge us, her sense of humour, her compassion and her energy are just some of the treasures gifted to us by Sarah.

Personally, I'm sad that the time had to come for Sarah to move on. I will miss her being amongst us and working with

us. She has, however, left a lasting legacy here in Gippsland through her ministry and through her friendship. I treasure the time I had with her personally and professionally and I know she has helped to give me more confidence in finding ways to connect with my community and in accessing the grants and programs that are available to help our parish meet the many and varied needs of those who come to us for care and support. Making a difference in people's lives was something she did well in her time here.

In an email I wrote to Sarah just before Christmas I wrote that when she left there would be a Sarah-shaped hole left in Gippsland that would be hard to fill. I'm certain that many people across Gippsland who have worked with Sarah and got to know and love her in her time here will feel the same way as I do. I thank God for the gift of Sarah Gover and for gifting her!

The Rev'd Brenda Burney is the minister of the parish of Churchill / Boolarra / Yinnar



Sarah Gover (left) and the Rev'd Brenda Burney

Thanks Warren!

Geoff Pittaway – Mirboo North

There was a mixture of sadness and gratitude as we 'farewelled' Warren Peart who played the organ/piano (officially) for the last time at our 9.30 am service at St. Mary's Anglican Church on Sunday 6 December 2015.



Warren Peart

Warren has been involved with music at St. Mary's for 45 years (and he is just 60 years old!). We are thankful to God for his musical gift and his consistently faithful ministry to us over those many years. By way of thanks, during the service Warren was presented with a handcrafted card (signed by the congregation) and a hamper full of home-made goodies to enjoy in the coming months.

Many local people would be familiar with Warren's musical contributions at weddings and funerals. No doubt we will see him again. Thanks again Warren!



Rosanna and David Palmer, musicians at the Pub Church service, Mirboo North

Pub Church

Geoff Pittaway – Mirboo North

Some time ago, at the suggestion of Trish Roughead at the Mirboo North Hotel, members and clergy of the various churches of Mirboo North got together to plan an ecumenical service at the Pub. The culmination of this planning saw 80 people gather at the Mirboo North Hotel for "Pub Church" on Sunday 15 November last year. And what a great time we had as we sang and praised God, prayed for each other, our community and world, and reflected on the value of community under God.

Trish and Jess from the Pub organised coffee, tea, and cakes for us at 9:45 am before the service started at 10, finishing just after 11. The music was provided by Rosanna and David Palmer (of Rosanna's Raiders

fame from many years ago) and it was very uplifting, loud, and praiseworthy (although not everyone's cup of tea I discovered). Still it was in the Pub, in the community, enjoyed by the community, and a blessing to the community. A good number of people stayed afterwards to continue to enjoy each other's company over lunch.

Our thanks go to Trish and Jess who, after a big night of service for a wedding, backed up again to help us put on a good morning of fellowship. And guess what – the ceiling didn't fall in!

We are planning to do another Pub Church – so watch this space.

The Rev'd Geoff Pittaway is Rector of the parish of Mirboo North

Red Frogs Mission Team



Bass / Phillip Island parish hosted the Red Frogs mission team again this summer. The team spent time with schoolies, providing bottled water for rehydration, offering a bus service to take party-goers home, and serving breakfast the next morning. Student Life also complemented the work of Red Frogs, with their program of street evangelism.

Alternative Schoolies in Rwanda

A group of students and staff from the two Gippsland Anglican schools, with the Rev'd Rich Lanham as chaplain, travelled to Rwanda for an alternative schoolies experience at the end of 2015

The following are excerpts from various students' diaries:

24 NOVEMBER 2015

So today started with a wonderful breakfast of bread, honey, bananas and eggs. We then made the short journey up the hill to Gahini where we met the kids and teenagers, some of whom we will teach both this week and next week. Today was the first day we truly got to immerse ourselves in the Rwandan environment. We all really enjoyed the freedom of the day and the energy of the people in this exceedingly beautiful place.

27 NOVEMBER 2015

After visiting the market at Kayonza, we left for the Women for Women Centre (a micro-business opportunity centre). The group was given a tour of the Centre, viewing the various training and working stations, including basket weaving, cheese making, peanut butter making and beading. After the tour we headed to the gift shop which stocked the most beautiful items. It was overwhelming. Lunch was wood fired pizza and then those who still wanted to buy more went back to the shop! After arriving back at Seeds of Peace two members from Rays of Hope choir came to sing with us and teach us dancing. The boys and girls were split and taught different dances.

28 NOVEMBER 2015

Today we drove off to look at different parishes all around Rwanda. The first two parishes were connected to St Paul's and they were lovely both inside and outside. The third parish was connected to Maffra and they all had really beautiful fabric behind the altar which was in the Rwandan flag colours which really brightened up the room.

29 NOVEMBER 2015

Today being Sunday, we went to church in Gahini led by Bishop Alexis and with a sermon presented by Rich Lanham. As the students were now officially members of the Rays of Hope Choir they sat with the choir for the church service. Much of the three-hour service was spoken in Kinyarwanda; however, this was made more suitable for us through Bishop Alexis speaking some parts of the service in English and there were many songs that we were all able to join in on. After lunch that followed church the team opted for a relaxing afternoon with many people having time out in their rooms, chatting with others and paddling in the lake and enjoying the warm climate.

1 DECEMBER 2015

After lunch the real fun of today began. We decided to try our luck at painting the blackboards at the school, hoping that "noir de tableau" was French for "blackboard paint". We had a total of four tins and hoped that each tin would cover maybe one and a half blackboards; we were therefore surprised when at the end of the day we had painted 12 blackboards and had only used just under two tins of paint. Painting was done while singing songs, and that may have been the reason why it seemed half of the paint did not end up on the blackboards but on the wall surrounding them – and all over ourselves!

2 DECEMBER 2015

Today was a day that everyone was simultaneously looking forward to and dreading. It was our adventure day into Kigali and while this meant excitement, the visit to the Genocide Memorial Museum was weighing heavily on people's minds.

The museum informed us about the events leading up to the genocide; learning how early the hatred began was a shock to many of us as much of that information is not well known. Although there was a warning about the shocking nature of some images, nothing could have prepared us for the carnage that we faced. Learning about some of the acts committed during the genocide was painful, as we all reflected on the beautiful country we loved and the dark past it had endured. As we moved through this section emotions rose high and it was sometimes difficult to process the information that we had been given... However, Rwanda's ability and determination to forgive and move forward, but never forget, amazed me as I'm sure it amazed the others.

5 DECEMBER 2015

This morning was our last at Seeds of Peace. After a last breakfast in Gahini we said our farewells to Manasseh and Luke. We set off to Akagera National Park with Tracey, the owner of the tour company – she is Australian, has family in Heyfield and grew up in Melbourne. It felt strange to be leaving Seeds of Peace and knowing we would not return for a long time, if ever. However, we were also very excited to be moving on to a place which hopefully had toilet seats, hot water and more comfortable beds.

James Gover, Dux of Gippsland Grammar

Gippsland Grammar Dux of 2015, James Gover, obtained an ATAR score of 98.75 which included a High Distinction in Monash University Extension Mathematics. He now plans to study a double degree in Arts/Science at the University of Queensland.

Musician Ben McAnulty graduated from Gippsland Grammar with an ATAR score of 95.3.



James Gover with Principal David Baker.



Musician Ben McAnulty from Gippsland Grammar



The 2015 Dux of St Paul's Anglican Grammar School, Ashley Barnes with Principal Ms Lisa Moloney

Ashley Barnes, Dux of St Paul's

The 2015 Dux of St Paul's Anglican Grammar School is Ashley Barnes from Traralgon who achieved an outstanding ATAR of 99. Ashley completed Biology, Chemistry, English Language, Maths Methods, Physics and Specialist Mathematics

and is planning to study a Bachelor of Science – Advanced Research (Honours) at Monash University. Close behind Ashley were Michael Rehfish (98.75), Timothy Vickery-Howe (98.65) and Ashton Arthur (98.25).



The Send Off

Students and teachers from St Paul's and Gippsland Grammar campuses, and their chaplain, the Rev Rich Lanham, who were about to spend an alternative Schoolies Week visiting Rwanda. The team attended our church for worship late last year, to be blessed and prayed for as they prepared for exams and the trip.

Ruth Place, Churchill.



The Rev'd Rich Lanham with children on the recent trip to Rwanda

Too many things, not enough God

Rich Lanham

"... we need to de-clutter and get rid of the things we don't need or simply get away from the things that stop us depending on God."

I guess the most standout or perplexing experience of our recent trip to Rwanda was the reality that the people we encountered have a joy, love and satisfaction that is hard to understand.

What I mean is, they are happy without the things that we think a person needs to be happy. They generally don't have cars, TVs, computers, ipads, 4-5 bedroom homes, swimming pools, refrigerators, electricity, sewerage, plumbing, loads of toys and playthings, ovens, washing machines, running water, or nights at the movies. In fact, if you thought of all the things that you believe make you happy, they don't seem to have any of it.

So what is going on here? Is it just that they don't know these things exist, or is it that they can be happy and satisfied without them? I guess I can sum it up with an illustration a young person used a few years ago – after coming back from a country that experiences great poverty but has great love for Jesus – to describe his understanding of why people without much can still be happy.

He explained that it was as if our lives were a bucket, and in Australia we fill the bucket with cars, jobs, relationships, houses, toys, technology,

social media, food and so on, and in the end our bucket is so full of "stuff" there is little room for God or the things God wants for us like joy and peace and hope and purpose. He said that the people he had met had little to none of the stuff that we put in our bucket. After they added all the things they had or wanted to their bucket, there was still heaps of room for God and plenty of opportunity to experience what God had for them.

Bishop Alexis said to our group early on in our trip to consider our view of his people in light of what we think is important or valuable. He said that his people are not simply surviving, they are living and thriving.

He asked us to think about our lives and what we think is important in life. He asked us to think about whether we feel we are living and thriving or just surviving here in Australia. We need to make room for God in our lives and sometimes that means we need to de-clutter and get rid of the things we don't need or simply get away from the things that stop us depending on God.

Jesus wants us to trust him and follow him and his example. An example that was definitely not focused or preoccupied with things and possessions but instead, was seeking the will of God and following that.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:31-33

So don't worry about these things, saying, What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?

These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

I am continually challenged by these verses and have been very challenged by the lives and faith of our friends in Rwanda. I desire to make much more room in my bucket for God. I pray you will see the value in this for yourself as well. God bless you heaps.

The Rev'd Rich Lanham is Diocesan Youth Officer and Missional Priest of the 123 Project.



Children learning about kangaroos from their Australian friends

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LIVE AS IF HEAVEN IS ON EARTH

Cathrine Muston

You may have noticed the growing trend to display aphorisms or sayings in our homes. It started with simple words like: “eat” and “love” and “laugh” displayed large across kitchen and lounge room walls. They are of course designed to serve an artistic purpose, but I have often wondered why we need to be exhorted to do such rudimentary things as eating, loving and laughing.

But then, life in the 21st century is so fast, busy and complicated that this trend is perhaps not surprising. Not immune myself, I laugh every time I see the word-sculpture in my kitchen that says “simplify”. Oh the irony!

Recently though, I have noticed the sayings getting more philosophical. There is the traditional “Dance as if no one were watching, love like you’ve never been hurt, sing as if no one were listening, live like it’s heaven on earth” sign, but also “Don’t try so hard to fit in when you were born to stand out”. There’s “Live the life you’ve imagined”, or the one that I have in my office to encourage me when I have had a go at something that hasn’t quite worked out,

“Failure is just an opportunity to start again.”

There is something universal about putting our beliefs and values on our walls (even our Facebook walls!). It is as timeless as the “Home Sweet Home” embroidery samplers that our Great-Grandmothers produced as young women. Our homes (and offices) are a reflection of who we are and what we aspire to be, so it is understandable that we would want those who visit us to know that we value family, laughter and food.

It is also as though, having largely rejected religion, our culture is trying to find a creed to live by; something to hold onto that gives our lives shape and focus. And these mottos of love and laughter are what we have settled upon.

The challenge that I have been considering recently was prompted by a portion of one of these sayings: to “live as if heaven is on earth”. When wondering what that might look like I realise that heaven can be a variety of things to different people.

For the Christian, our understanding of heaven is that it is where God is, where He reigns and where His rules apply. This is just as likely to be here on earth as it is somewhere out beyond the galaxies: not too far away.

The challenge is to live as if God’s rule is imminent while still being aware that our world is still far from being under the heavenly rule that God intended.

However, in the meantime, we should remember that God is present in this world and that his nature is one of justice and mercy. To live as if heaven is on earth is to love as God loves and to advocate for justice where there is none. This means taking seriously Jesus’ words in Matthew 25 to love our neighbour, to serve the poor, and to visit the sick and imprisoned. It also involves making the decision to live responsibly within a world created for all to share, knowing that it is out of God’s love that the world and everything in it was created. Finding the time and space to do that in our world is fraught with challenge, and it is easy to give up when we fail.

As a new year begins and our resolutions are revised down or discarded, it is important to make a daily resolution to live in God’s presence, as if “heaven is on earth”. And while sayings on our walls can be an excellent way of reminding ourselves how we want to live, they are so much more effective when written on our hearts.

EDITORIAL

Things in common

Why do Australians with backyards big enough to grow their own vegetables take up plots in community gardens? This is not England, where space for gardens is so limited. Why do people go to Farmers’ Markets and food swaps, or join community groups?

While the pursuit of money, power and pleasure prevail – the cult of the individual mentioned by Bp Pat Regan during the Advent Conversation in December – there are other yearnings and trends in evidence. Many people who are deeply concerned about the environment are also looking for community, for meaningful connection.

There is a recognition that a return to the local, to reducing food miles, to knowing where your food, clothes and other goods come from – all of this represents not only an alternative economic model that addresses environmental concerns by reducing dependence on fossil fuels, but is also interwoven with a return to community, to a sense of place, to knowing your neighbours and growing trusting relationships.

As Sue Fordham reported, Bp Kay Goldsworthy, in the Advent Conversation, saw in Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si*, the ecumenical possibilities for engaging with “people of other denominations, faiths and no faith in the common cause of protecting our home”.

Pope Francis “shows us just how inseparable is the bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace” (from – *Laudato Si*, A Summary).

These links are recognised by many people outside the Christian church, which suggests there is a point of spiritual connection between people following the Way of Christ, and those of other beliefs or philosophies who are seeking healing for the earth and restoration of community. In this lies a great opportunity for conversations – in the community garden perhaps.



A LASTING GIFT: A bequest to the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland or your parish

The Church, over the years, has been blessed with the generosity of Anglicans and others in support of its mission. One way you can support this ideal in a relatively easy way, is to make a gift through your will. In the first instance, of course, you will consider carefully the needs of your immediate family and friends before proceeding with a bequest to the church.

We offer a way of helping you to carry out your wishes. Your gift, through your bequest, will be very much appreciated. You may wish to support the Diocese of Gippsland as a whole, or your own parish, or for a particular purpose.

Making your bequest in your Will is a simple procedure, although in preparing or amending your Will you should always consult a solicitor. The Registrar of the Diocese of Gippsland has information to assist you in making a bequest, including the form of words you and your solicitor might want to use.

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Lake shore, Raymond Island

Lakeside ramble, Sabbath renewal

Moments at The Abbey, Raymond Island

Edie Ashley

From the blistering heat before Christmas, through the rain and thunder, the hot and cold, to now, Saturday 16 January 2016, when the sun is shining and the breeze is gentle, the number of visitors walking the island has slowed and the most recent group of Abbey guests has just left the site... there comes a deep down sense of quiet wellbeing that invites a walk along the lake's shore.

The last of the summer native orchids catches my attention, an attractive pink amidst the green of the grasses and trees, and as I stop to look the sleeping koala in the tree overhead opens its eyes and lifts its head, as if to acknowledge my presence and give me a silent nod of welcome.

To the side of the orchid stands the cross, cross number ten of the fourteen that surround The Abbey grounds. Just in front of the cross the recently planted Goodenia opens its first yellow bud, peeking out above the plant guard that has kept it safe as it established its presence in the earth. Not two steps further on – so to speak – the new self sown eucalypt emerges from the fallen trees!

In silence I stand and allow this picture before me to speak of things unseen: of hope that emerges in the midst of what appears too hard, too barren; the new shoots of possibility and moments of love that awaken the soul to life and love and generosity; of the cross – the ultimate generosity of God who, in love, sent his Son save the world; of creativity and wonder and grace–

*to be changed as we listen to God in prayer, as we live into our God-given place in creation.**

From the bushland to the lake shore; the expanse of lake is stunning. The water glistens in the sun, holidays are in the air, the sound of the passing motor boat can be heard before the eye sees and as the boat fades into the distance the impact of its wake comes in waves up on the sand.

Along the lake's shore there is a corridor of sand and open grass between the lake and the bush that surrounds The Abbey. This is the place to walk and reflect, to think and pray.

I am always amazed by the resilience of the natural bush. Clearing the weeds and protecting an area from further human and animal destruction for a period of time – and then waiting, is like setting aside a Sabbath rest for the land, a prayer for the wellbeing of creation.

The discipline of waiting for the cycles of nature, the wonder of seeing the new plants emerge, changes us. No longer are we in charge in a position of domination determining time and process, or which plants should grow where, but rather we, with the land, with all people, wait on the renewing capacity that is embedded within creation. The Sabbath of the land becomes like a Sabbath for the people and we are sustained and blessed by God

*To adopt new ways to work for the healing of the planet.**

The walk along the lake's shore continues – a conversation with the last of our guests who is still waiting for a friend to come, and a short chat with one of the island visitors looking

Resources and ideas for LENT 2016

1. Asylum Seekers Study Guide

The Gippsland Diocesan Synod Task Group has created a brochure outlining many resources on asylum seekers. The group recommends a five session Study Guide produced by the Diocesan Social Responsibilities Committee of the Diocese of Brisbane: *Asylum Seekers and Refugees: scriptural, theological and ethical approaches*, available at anglicanchurchsq.org.au/.

2. Daily reflections from ABM – "Into the desert"

The Anglican Board of Mission Australia is offering some inspiring daily reflection as a free app for iPhone, iPads and

Android smartphones and tablets. Or you can subscribe to receive daily emails during Lent. Go to abmission.org and click on Resources.

3. TEAR Australia's Carbon Fast 40 Days and Lenten Prayers

The Carbon Fast involves 40 simple daily actions accompanied by a seven-part study series. Reflect on God's creation and take action to protect the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities from the impacts of climate disaster. Go to tear.org.au/resources/carbon-fast Study Guide can be downloaded. For weekly Lent prayers and art: fortomorrow.org.au

EARTH CARE CARD

– Tips and inspiration for churches and households



Climbing fig

16 Book an energy audit for church or home

A professional energy audit for your church complex or home can surprise you with some simple, inexpensive ways to save on electricity, gas or water. It takes some time and effort, particularly for churches, to gather the data required for an audit, but can be extremely worthwhile.

One church, for example, discovered they could save \$800 per year simply by turning off one of their boiling water units, rather than leaving it on 24 hours a day. Another church was told that planting evergreen vines (e.g. *figus pumila*, a climbing fig) against a western wall would be a cost-effective measure to reduce heat gain from the sun.

for koalas. The tea towels have been washed and The Abbey is being prepared for the next group to arrive, Monday 18 January.

The cycles of coming and going, of welcome and goodbye, of temporary and inclusive community, are surrounded by the sparkling lake and the cycles of Sabbath renewal of the bushland surrounding The Abbey. All is held in Jesus Christ, sustained and blessed by God.

* Taken from the Diocesan Mission Strategy

Archdeacon Edie Ashley is Abbey Priest, Raymond Island.

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Work ahead

Back to work, face to God

Gordon Preece

Holidays over, back to work! That's the cry echoing in the ears of many paid workers, teachers and students as February looms. Although for mothers and farmers there's rarely a holiday, maybe just a slight slowing of their work's relentless rhythm.

Despite these looming pressures though, I want to argue that the return to work for Christians, for all its aspects of the Genesis 3:16-17 curse, when we "repent on the job", is also a Genesis 1:26-28 blessing. Work is a place to seek God's face, not in the high distance or clouds; not only in ordained/paid church work or distant missionary service; but near at hand, under our noses, in our neighbours, colleagues, clients, customers, even competitors and enemies.

This Sunday I'm preaching on Luke 3:10-13 (the fortnight after we're commissioning our workers and students on return to work). There the Baptist brings fire and brimstone down on the pseudo-religious and righteous, challenging God's people to re-enter the promised land of the Kingdom through a baptism of repentance at the Jordan. When the crowd asked "What shall we do?" John shifted repentance from privatised and domestic "religion" to right action, in the direction of God's coming reign of right and reconciled relationships. "Repent on the job!" is John's cry. Not necessarily repent from the job, for all John's ascetic lifestyle out in the desert. Instead, share your food and clothes; tax collectors

stop lining your pockets; soldiers, don't extort, coerce or falsely accuse. Whatever occupation (paid or unpaid) we're in, we're to "bear fruits fit for repentance".

These roles, especially working for the imperial Romans, were full of temptation and compromise. But in warning them to flee the immanent judgement John doesn't tell them to flee their jobs, but transform them, from the inside out. Clement of Alexandria's 3rd Century AD Exhortation agrees: "Practise farming, we say, if you are a farmer, but while you till your fields, know God. Sail the sea, you who are devoted to navigation, yet call the whilst on the heavenly Pilot. Has knowledge taken hold of you while engaged in military service? Listen to the commander, who orders what is right."

In the first two cases (farmer and sailor), Clement counsels focussing on God. Hence the same likely applies to the soldier told to listen to the true Commander, Christ. Your earthly commander or boss doesn't get a blank cheque, though one interpretation

could be, in line with Romans 13, that if they serve and minister what is right, they should be obeyed, but if not, not. "We must obey God not men" (Acts 5:29 cf 4:19).

The Baptist and Paul speak to people already in particular workplaces. This is different to going complicitly into a place of blatant compromise, e.g. killing. The broadly accepted Apostolic Tradition says that a soldier preparing for baptism must be told not to kill.

An ex-soldier and student of mine, now minister, justified use of deadly force when on guard duty one night in East Timor when he saw a distant shadowy figure heading towards him. Assuming them to be an enemy soldier he was about to fire when a comrade identified them as a friendly peasant. Close call. What disturbed me was not his being in the army, though Christians rightly debate that, but that he said he'd have no qualms of conscience about killing, even an innocent. I wonder if his conscience was asleep on the job, not discerning nor repenting on the job – what we sometimes do in ambiguous situations, when even the enemy bears the face of God. Let's take that back to work with us.

The Rev'd Dr Gordon Preece is Director of Ethos (www.ethos.org.au for Engage free monthly emails with articles on Christian ethics), Minister of Yarraville Anglican Parish, and Chair and executive of Melbourne Anglican Diocese Social Responsibilities Committee.

This article is to be published simultaneously in Engage and TGA.



Diocesan calendar

First Saturday of each month: all welcome to walk the labyrinth at the end of Back Beach Road at San Remo, Phillip Island, from 10:30 am.

February

- 9 Shrove Tuesday
- 10 Ash Wednesday

March


- 4-6 Kidsplus+ Camp, Forest Lodge Farm, Yarram (see page 5)
- 5 Anam Cara Quiet Day (check Anam Cara website for details)
- 15 10:00 am Lady Day, St Paul's Cathedral, Sale. Refreshments, followed by 10:30 Holy Eucharist. Preacher: Bp Kay Goldsworthy. Christine Brain, Australian MU Overseas & Northern Outreach Coordinator will be Guest Speaker in the afternoon. All are welcome to help celebrate.
- 20 Palm Sunday
- 20 10:00 am Stagfair, Gippsland Grammar's Garnsey Campus, Princes Highway Sale. Rides, activities, food and stalls, music and entertainment. More details: 5143 6388
- 24 Maundy Thursday
- 25 Good Friday
- 27 Easter Sunday

April

- 30 GFS Kidsplus+ 130 year Birthday Celebrations at The Summit Youth and Recreation Centre, Trafalgar East. (see page 5)



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