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The Gippsland Anglican

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Premier welcomes church leaders

Some Anglican representatives with the Premier L - R: The Rev'd Prashant Bhonsle, Bp Paul Barker, Bp Garry Weatherill, The Rev'd Canon Dr Bob Derrenbacker, The Hon Jacinta Allan MP, Premier of Victoria, Bp Genieve Blackwell, Bp Richard Treloar, The Rev'd Hoda Amerithe, The Rev'd Dr Sheela Pandhare (front), and The Rev'd Canon Dr Rhys Bezzant (rear)

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP, Premier of Victoria, hosted Church leaders from across the state at a Reception in Melbourne on Shrove Tuesday. The ecumenical gathering was especially significant given the common date for Easter this year – a point stressed by several speakers from Eastern and Western traditions. Acting Metropolitan Bishop Garry Weatherill, was one of the leaders to address the gathering, speaking of the justice, hope, and love that many Victorians encounter

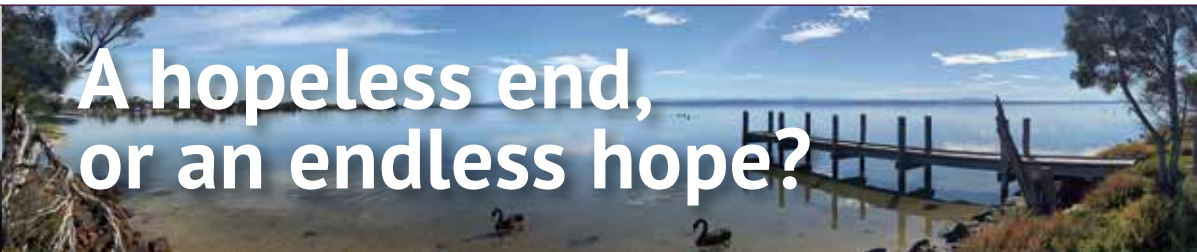
through Anglican agencies, often with the support of government.

In her remarks to those assembled, the Premier spoke candidly of her own Roman Catholic upbringing in the Diocese of Sandhurst (Bendigo), and referred to this year's 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicea as an example of how Christians from diverse perspectives can come together in ways that have lasting benefit for wider society.

Continued on page 2



A hopeless end, or an endless hope?



In Passiontide, as we draw nearer to the foot of the cross, we recognise again its original and enduring ambiguity. Do we see there the death throes of yet another prophet who tried to stand up to 'City Hall', or the birth pangs of a new community of hope for whom the *Via Dolorosa* – the path of sorrows – is the way of new life?

In this edition of *The Gippsland Anglican* we have a Letter to the Editor from a character named 'Forest' (see page 18). Forest writes to us from the future, and I expect this won't be the only time we hear from her. Indeed I hope not, for our vision of the future has much to teach us about how we inhabit the present.

Former TGA Editor Jan Down recently introduced the ACTinG group to the phrase *tempora nullius*, 'empty time'. In the same way that colonising powers drew on the morally bankrupt notion of *terra nullius* – 'empty land' or 'no one's land' – in claiming territories that were never ceded, so Australian-born philosopher Roman Krznaric coins *tempora nullius* to describe our tendency to treat the future as 'empty time' or 'no one's time.'

What Krznaric calls our 'short-termism' is effectively a colonising of the future, potentially dispossessing others of it, stealing it from those generations to whom it rightly belongs.

There's another important theological sense in which the future – like all of time – ultimately belongs to God. I reflected on this in relation to land in the February edition of TGA. Just as God is the only 'landlord', so (with apologies to Dr Who!) God is the only 'timelord.' Like the literary figure, Forest, God speaks to us from the

future, inviting us to live into a vision of new creation through the same definitive Word that first called creation, into being.

As we approach Holy Week, in a year when Eastern and Western Christians celebrate the Paschal Mysteries at the one time, we hear again how God's future breaks into, and transforms the present, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's as though in the Crucified One, God's eternal Word colonises 'now' from that story's end or goal; not in some violent way that creates servitude but rather in the liberating invitation to live as if the Kingdom of God were our primary reality, come to meet us in the Word made flesh.

C S Lewis was one of my mother's favourite writers, and I have just finished reading a biography by theologian Alister McGrath *Deep Magic, Dragons, and Talking Mice: How Reading C S Lewis Can Change Your Life*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2015. McGrath traces the journey of this 'Oxbridge' don from angry post-WWI atheist to one of the twentieth century's greatest Christian apologists, highlighting the place of both reason and imagination in what Lewis describes as his 'reconversion'. Lewis once famously wrote:

I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because it see it, but because by it I see everything else.

(as cited by McGrath, p. 12).

This metaphor – and anyone who has read or seen the cinematic renderings of the *Narnia* series will appreciate Lewis' gift for extended metaphor – helps us to think about how the vision of the

Kingdom, the reign of God which we experience as both coming and present in the great liturgical observances of this season, informs how we are to live here and now as people of hope.

Without thinking of heaven in spatial or temporal terms, Lewis insists that to aim at heaven is not to neglect this world or earthly concerns. On the contrary, it is to raise expectations of what life can be – and ought to be – in light of a fuller reality, a greater story that has the power to connect and make sense of our smaller stories.

If the future is, in fact, *tempora nullius*, then 'short-termism' makes about as much sense as anything else: why not plunder the future? After all, if we're on 'borrowed time', why not plunge our descendants deeper into debt?

If, however, we understand the future as God's, then we have a responsibility to those who have not ceded it to us, just as – under God – we have a responsibility towards those who have not ceded their land.

In Forest's word to us from the future perhaps we have a small 'echo', a harmonic, of God's Word to us from the future – a future secured and revealed in that Word's word from the cross: 'it is finished, accomplished'; and in its reprise, 'behold, I am making all things new.'

This Passiontide, Holy Week, and Easter, may our worship and our discipleship point to Lewis' sense (as paraphrased by McGrath, p.167) of what the churches must offer the world: not a hopeless end, but an endless hope.

+RM

Premier welcomes church leaders

Continued from page 1

The Premier was generous in her acknowledgment of the contribution that the member churches of the Victorian

Council of Churches make to the community, and gracious in seeking genuine engagement on a range of social issues and needs.

Although church leaders have

met with Premiers on and off over the years, this reception was the first of its kind and those present were greatly encouraged by the prospect of closer collaboration in the future.



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.

Four new appointments to the Diocesan Staff team

Gippsland Anglicans are heartened by the announcement a new Archdeacon, two new Regional Deans, and an Associate Regional Dean, to join Vicar General Graham Knott, Dean Keren Terpstra, and Regional Dean Lyndon Phillips on the Diocesan Staff team.

The Rev'd John Webster Archdeacon



John has become a valued colleague since he and Phillippa moved to Drouin. He is a member of the Safe Ministry Authority and the Diocesan Vocations Group, with particular responsibility for those in Discernment. Whilst John happens to serve in the Western Region, his archidiaconal service will – as does Graham's and did Sue Jacka's before him – extend across the Diocese. Reflecting on this new ministry John writes:

I have enjoyed the privilege of being Rector of Drouin, and thus part of the Gippsland diocesan family, for almost two years. Since coming to Australia in 2006 I have been the parish priest of Tallangatta and then Rutherglen in Wangaratta Diocese, followed by Surf Coast and Croydon in Melbourne Diocese. Prior to that I was ordained as a non-stipendiary priest in Oxford, and served in a benefice of three, then six, parishes in Berkshire, UK.

My journey to ordination started among suburban parishes in Cape Town, South Africa, as a server, youth group leader, chorister, and lay reader. I'm looking forward to bringing to my new role as Archdeacon not only my life-long experience in the church, but also my career experience as a business analyst. I hope to serve both the diocesan staff team and the parishes effectively, as together we help grow God's kingdom in Gippsland.

The Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes Regional Dean of the Southern Region



Fran is well known to us in Gippsland, serving as Priest-in-Charge of Korumburra/Poowong since 2017, and from August last year as Rector of Corner Inlet.

Fran was made a Canon of St Paul's Cathedral, Sale, in 2021, and is thus *ex officio* a member of Greater Chapter. She has long and deep connections in the Southern Region of our Diocese, where she ministered in General Practice for some 25 years prior to sensing a call to holy orders. Fran's honorary

role will be primarily pastoral within the Southern Region, assisting with Deanery meetings and helping local colleagues to connect for mutual encouragement and support.

The Rev'd Daniel Gebert Regional Dean of the Western Region



Daniel has quickly made a home in the Diocese, and in the Parish of Warragul, since his Induction as Rector a little over a year ago. A highlight in this time has been, with staff and lay leaders, moving a number of parish goals from vision to action, including pastoral care, evangelism, and social outreach. He and Rose and their family have also been getting involved in the local community. Daniel's participation in the ministry of music and his encouragement of youth ministry within and beyond the Parish are among the skills and passions he brings to the team, and he has recently been appointed to the Finance Committee of Bishop-in-Council. Like Fran, Daniel's role is honorary and will be mostly local and pastoral.

The Rev'd Sue Newcombe Associate Regional Dean in the Eastern Region



The Eastern Region is our largest, geographically, and alongside long-serving Regional Dean Lyndon Phillips – who continues in that capacity and also carries diocesan responsibilities, including as a member of Bishop-in-Council – Sue will share some of the pastoral ministry to clerical colleagues in the east, and especially in the farther eastern parts of the Diocese. To what is also an honorary role, Sue brings her experience as a Lay Reader in Trafalgar and as Parish Deacon in Lakes Entrance/Metung, where she lives with husband David and their two Cavaliers. Sue has a heart for aged care, creative liturgy, and intentional Christian community.

We are enormously grateful to these four already busy people for accepting the invitation to take up important additional ministries. We are also thankful for the collegiality of outgoing Archdeacon Sue Jacka, and Graham, Keren, Lyndon, and others, who reflected deeply on the optimal diocesan staff structure to meet our current needs, and engaged in discernment as to who might be being called and equipped for such offices of pastoral leadership.

It is anticipated that John will be collated, and Sue, Fran, and Daniel commissioned, at the Synod Eucharist in St Paul's Cathedral on Friday evening, 16 May. In the meantime, they will start to exercise their new responsibilities as appropriate, and seek your prayers as they prepare to serve in these capacities.



The Inverloch Church of the Ascension. L-R: Alan Steenholdt, Meredyth Spalding (helper of Children's Ministry Leader), Meg Steenholdt, Helen Lowe, Stacey Kearney (helper of Children's Ministry), Rose Gebert and Daniel Gebert

■ Carol Monson

The event was blessed with four seasons in one day with some huge hailstones and then bright blue sky with a welcoming sun. It proved to be a time of spiritual refreshment and joyous community.

The theme was 'Open Doors', with evangelistic input from guest-speaker Julie-Ann Laird, Director of Missional Engagement at City-to-City Australia.

Sessions and meals were hosted by Inverloch's Church of the Ascension, with participants organising their own accommodation.

The sessions focused on three scripture passages – Colossians 4:2-6, 2, Corinthians 5:16-31 and 1 Peter 3:15-16, with major themes being – *What we offer*, *How we view people*, and *Gentleness and respect*.

Julie-Anne Laird's delivery of a powerful and practical message on evangelism reminded those present that sharing faith is less about delivering sermons and more about building genuine relationships. She placed an emphasis on asking thoughtful questions such as, *Have you ever wondered?* and *What do you mean by that?*

Her insights into the importance of prayer, particularly the passage from Colossians 4:2-6, resonated deeply with the Warragul Anglican Church (WAC) parishioners. 'Pray that God may open a door for our message', she said, reminding all present that it is God who changes hearts, not our own eloquence. She emphasised that sharing our authentic lives, our struggles and triumphs, as brothers and sisters in Christ, allows the Holy Spirit to work through us. She pointed to the 5Ps –

Pray, Proclaim, Prioritise, Prepare, and Practise – as guiding principles.

During the Sunday Sermon, Daniel Gebert, Rector of St Paul's, spoke of being 'bold', urging WAC parishioners to step out in faith and courage. He said, 'Initial courage, while essential, often becomes the catalyst for God to move us into new challenging territories. And that these new places, while sometimes very uncomfortable, become crucibles for growth'.

'We learn from our missteps and experiences, and through the gentle guidance of the Holy Spirit these lessons cultivate humility and a deeper more nuanced wisdom. It's in these moments of vulnerability, when we acknowledge our imperfections, that God's grace truly shines, transforming our initial boldness into a resilient spirit-led strength. I pray any spirit-led strength heals and guides us to remain in Christ.'

Victoria Hare reflected on the event. 'We learnt that preparation involves understanding the language of our community, and that practice means stepping out in faith, trusting that God will guide our words. Out of this came a simple message. Remember, pray, love others, point to Jesus, and maintain a sense of humour.'

Victoria said, 'Julie-Anne had astutely observed that our friendships span a diverse spectrum of individuals, from the apathetic and thoughtful to the curious, hostile, religious, and *de-churched*. Recognising these different "walks of life" allowed us to appreciate the varied needs and perspectives within our communities.'

'Julie-Anne had also emphasised

that a one-size-fits-all approach to evangelism is ineffective. Instead, she encouraged us to tailor our interactions, meeting people where they are, with empathy and understanding. A gentle question for a thoughtful friend, a patient ear for the apathetic, and a loving response to the hostile; all are acts of faith.

'Throughout it all, Julie-Anne reminded us that a shared laugh can often break down barriers and open hearts in unexpected ways! The camp weekend gave us time to practise, prepare, prioritise, proclaim and pray.'

Frances and Andrew Wood commented on the event, 'It was refreshing to have conversations with parishioners whom we may only be on nodding acquaintance with. This is the second *WAC Weekend Away* we have attended. We look forward to another one.'

Do you have
a question,
comment
or concern?

Let us know!

The ^{Gippsland} Anglican

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Wellbeing pancakes highlight the flipside of Drouin

Pancake flippers! L-R: Anne Connelly, Ailsa Yuill, Halina Zamora, John Yuill, Virginia Woodward, Calvin Langford

■ Libby Willems

It took a little bit of arm-twisting to find some players, but when six fully-grown adults began competitively flipping pancakes for nothing more than the glory of winning, the laughter rang out from participants and spectators alike.

Playing together can be so good for our social and emotional wellbeing, and wellbeing was a theme of Drouin's Shrove Tuesday open gathering. Upon arrival, people were offered a 'Wellbeing Pancake' questionnaire, a self-assessment of eight facets of life mapped onto a web-like scale that, once completed, forms a unique blob shape, much like a funny pancake. It was an amusing game packed with self-reflection that allowed a person to notice areas of strength and stability in their life. A person could also identify an area that might benefit from some care and attention and perhaps become a healthy focus for the season of Lent.

A pancake is a good metaphor for wellbeing. There is typically a 'good' side of a pancake - the side that hits the skillet on the initial pour. The colour is golden and consistent as the batter bakes evenly over the hot surface. We wait for the bubbles to begin to appear (never quickly enough!) and then we flip.

The second side rarely looks quite as good. The colour is often patchy and a bit pale. Like a pancake, we might prefer



Wellbeing Pancake questionnaire

Libby Willems

give attention and care to these parts of ourselves.

The live music, food, games and fellowship with familiar and new faces was a beautiful combination where the people of Drouin Parish once again used generous hospitality to 'love and serve the Lord'... and share lots and lots of pancakes!

Libby Willems is the Drouin Parish TGA representative and organiser of TGA Tuesdays.

people to see our best side and try to hide our patchy pale side from view, but the pancake doesn't exist without its better and less-than-better side.

As we, quite literally, stuffed our faces with delicious pancakes, many of us had in the back of our minds the commitment of Lent and how each of us might reflect and grow during this time. Lent is a perfect season to take an honest look at our patchy, pale truths so we can



Olivia Fielden enjoying her pancake

Libby Willems



After the storm ... came Plant Hope

■ Bev Piper

February 13 marked one year since a storm – random, fatal and shocking, rained on Mirboo North.

The storm in 2024 was short in time but left destruction in its trail that will be felt for many years to come.

A life was lost, homes destroyed, and trauma spread throughout the community. People were trapped in their cars as roads were closed and covered by fallen trees. Others were stranded in their homes as fallen trees and debris prevented them leaving.

Residents in our community were traumatised as they walked around the once beautiful town, devoid of trees, power, petrol, communications and banking. The town's infrastructure – golf course, iconic swimming pool, rail trail and the recreation reserve suffered serious damage. The 12-metre-high goal posts at the football oval were flattened to the ground – such was the ferocity of the storm.

The damage was widespread. The clean-up began almost immediately and continued not for days or months, but for the rest of the year and will extend into the foreseeable future.

Essential services were reconnected. However, destroyed homes, lost trees, gardens and infrastructure became another story. The swimming pool has just reopened after 12 months of rebuilding, the golf course closed for six months, the rail trail also closed, and people are still waiting for their homes to be rebuilt. The landscape of Mirboo North was changed on that day.

Residents' gardens were destroyed.

Plant Hope is an initiative of St Mary's Anglican Church. Plants were given to community members for their gardens as a sign of hope, regrowth and recovery. Over the past 12 months the Mirboo North community received thousands of plants. The plants are sourced/purchased through a fund donated by other churches, Mirboo North Community Foundation and individuals who sent money and plants to St Mary's to aid in the recovery effort.

To mark the one-year anniversary of the storm, St Mary's hosted a morning tea for anyone from the community who wished to gather and share their story with others, or just quietly mark the day

over a cup of tea. Locally sourced plants were available for people to take home not only as a sign of hope and recovery but of moving forward.

People from all walks of life came together during and after this emergency to help each other. Many projects have aided in the recovery phase. St Mary's initiative Plant Hope symbolises hope, recovery and moving forward. Many residents gratefully received the plants given and have planted them in a special place in their gardens as a remembrance and symbol of hope.

In a recent interview on ABC Gippsland, when asked how and why Plant Hope started, one of the Parish Wardens Lynne Beaty, replied, 'Rev'd Belinda (Seabrook) was given two words – Plant and Hope*.'

The interviewer asked, 'Who gave her those two words?'

Lynne replied, 'Well...God (of course!)'

Bev Piper is a TGA correspondent

* The Rev'd Belinda Seabrook is the Priest in Charge of St Mary's Mirboo North.



Flattened goal posts at the Recreation Reserve



Destruction of Mirboo North pool

■ **Melissa Thomson**

Voices soared and organ music filled the air, drifting from Christ Church Boolarra out onto Tarwin Street during the inaugural 'Sing-a-Long at the Boolarra Church' which was held as part of the Boolarra Folk Festival.

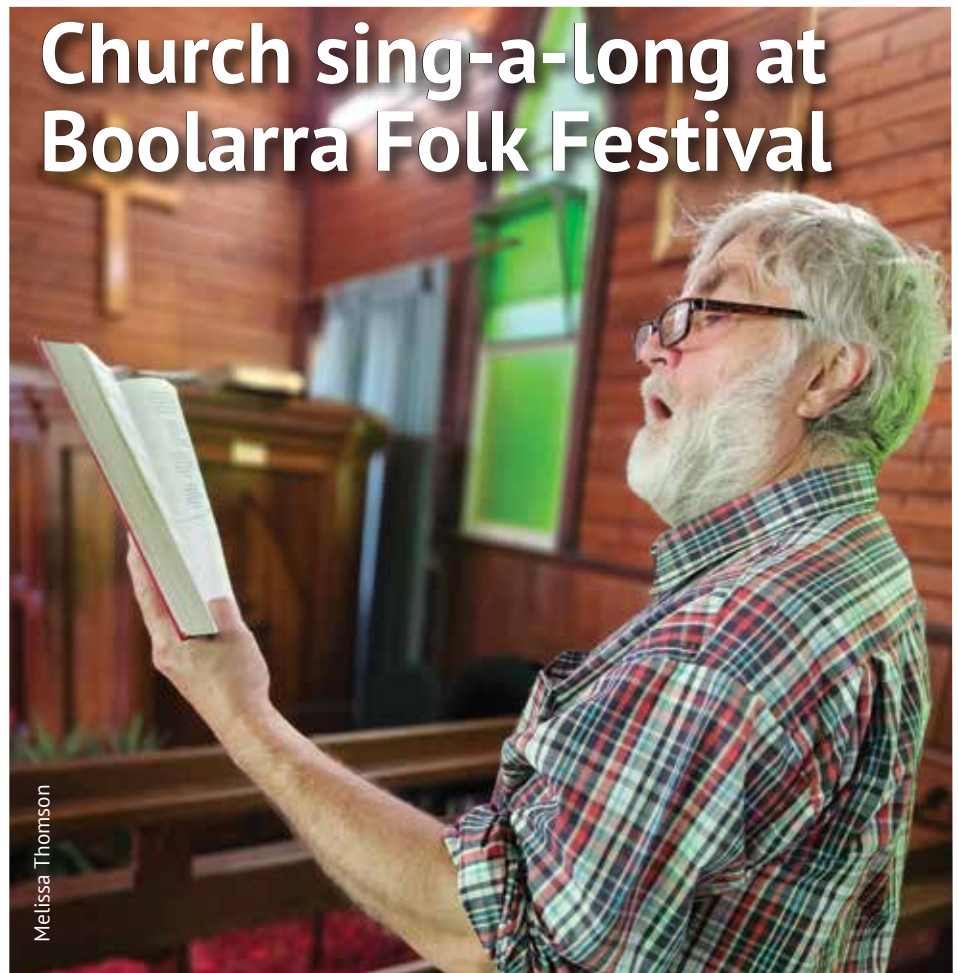
For the event, the church invited one-and-all to come for an hour of singing, welcoming people to request and sing hymns together. The event kicked off just before 11am on Saturday 1 March 2025 with the premise, 'If it is in the hymn book, we'll give it our best shot!'

About 25 people came to the event, with some staying for the whole hour and others dropping by for a few hymns. Cathie Halliwell, the UCA supply minister, said the singing could be heard from the street.

Requests came in thick and fast, including well-known favourites such as *How Great Thou Art*, *Great is Thy Faithfulness* and *I Will Sing the Wonderous Story*

Rosemary Abetz-Rouse, who played the organ, said, 'It was good that people felt free to come in.' Attendee Emma Hudson said she was surprised by the number of hymns that she knew so well. Attendee Keith Coverdale said, 'It was fun!'

The Rev'd Sue Jacka remarked, 'It was lovely to hear the community coming together to sing.' The Rev'd Rebecca Hayman, who organised the



Melissa Thomson

event, considered it a success and is looking forward to another church sing-a-long at the next Boolarra Folk Festival.

Giving a Christian voice to the festival

Melissa Thomson is a TGA correspondent for Churchill/Boolarra/Yinnar.

Music festival comes to St Peter's, Paynesville



East Gippsland Symphonia performing at St Peter's

As part of the Paynesville Festival of Music, it has become a tradition that the *East Gippsland Symphonia* plays at St Peter's 9:30 Eucharist, then performs a concert in the St Peter's Quiet Garden.

This year, the tradition was partially

fulfilled. The concert had to be moved into the church due to rain, but it was nonetheless a wonderful feast of music to suit most tastes.

The Eucharistic theme was *With Songs of Neverending Praise*. The intercessions had a decidedly musical emphasis and

the sermon, targeting a congregation of all ages, was titled *Storytime with Webster D Duck*, a clever, well delivered homily about recognising your gifts and acting on them.

The hymns were of the rousing variety as suits such a group, with the congregation engaged in the singing with fitting gusto.

Conducted by Carryn Caithness, the *Symphonia* was made up of mostly brass and percussion, with performers from a broad range of ages.

The audience was treated to music from movies including *Chicago*, *West Side Story*, *Aladdin*, and to music by composers such as Strauss and Henry Mancini. There were brackets of music that invited audience participation, some to sing along to, and some to guess the names of songs.

In all, it was a wonderful indulgence in music, movement and nostalgia.

Prayers fluttering in the wind

Prayers pegged to The Abbey's Prayer Tree

■ Cath Connelly

There is a green park bench here at The Abbey, next to the Prayer Tree and beside our Meditation Garden. Handwoven cords are wound across the branches of the tree, with pegs provided for people to attach their prayers and intentions. I have just returned to the office after allowing the tranquility of this corner of The Abbey to permeate my being.

It is humbling to see the pieces of paper fluttering in the breeze. Who knows what hopes, cries for help or prayers of gratitude are contained on these papers? Certainly, I will never be reading them – my contribution is to acknowledge their existence and offer 'Christ, in your mercy, hear our prayers'.

So many people wander through the grounds of The Abbey, with our land being public space on which all are welcome. The Prayer Tree is accessible to everyone, a public witness to the depth of spirituality embodied in this place. This is but one tree; other Prayer Trees are being planted in solidarity across the Diocese.

I know that some of you have planted young trees that will grow into becoming prayer trees. Other parishes have chosen an established tree to fill this need. A communion of trees, a Communion Forest, reaching across the diocese and beyond. Thank you. Let's offer this public invitation to pray across the land.

Save the date



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

APRIL

- 10 *Hush Day* - Canaan and East Gippsland: Occupied Lands. Facilitator: Michael Fox
- 10 Celtic Music session. 6:45pm–9:45pm
- 18 Stations of the Cross walk. 3:00pm

MAY

- 8 *Hush Day* - C.S. Lewis: The Figure of Aslan in the *Narnia Chronicles*. Facilitator: Jeff Berger
- 8 Celtic Music session. 6:45pm–9:45pm

JUNE

- 12 *Hush Day* – Pilgrimage. Facilitator: Cath Connelly
- 12 Celtic Music session. 6:45pm–9:45pm
- 20–22 *Moss!* Weekend retreat. Facilitator: Kelly Skilton

SAVE THE DATE!

Gippsland Camino 2025 1 – 4 May

HOPE²⁵

Pilgrims will walk from Traralgon to Stratford or just a small part of that distance.
Full walk will be 63 km along the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail
<https://gippslandplainsrailtrail.com.au>

**Opening service and blessing of Pilgrims
at Traralgon Uniting Church 4pm, Thursday 1 May**

Final celebration St Paul's Cathedral Sale, 5pm, 4 May

We acknowledge that we will be walking on the traditional lands of the GunaiKurnai people.

During this time, the churches along the Gippsland Rail Trail from Traralgon to Stratford will support you spiritually and physically.

Register at:

<https://events.humanitix.com/gippsland-camino>

For more details and information booklet please contact
The Rev'd Janet Wallis, PO Box 1408, Traralgon 3844.
Phone 0417 030 768 email: janetwal@bigpond.net.au



Harmony Day

Shane Rounce / Unsplash



■ Krista Mountford

Harmony Day, celebrated annually on March 21st, is a significant event in Australia that underscores the nation's commitment to cultural diversity, inclusiveness, and mutual respect. Established in 1999, this day aligns with the United Nations' International Day for

the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, serving as a reminder of the importance of building harmonious communities where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

The Anglican Church in Australia has been an active participant in promoting the values embodied by Harmony Day.

Through various initiatives, the Church fosters unity and understanding among diverse cultural groups. For instance, the Trafalgar Parish recently hosted a meeting of the Victorian Multicultural Commission's Gippsland Regional Advisory Council, highlighting the Church's role in supporting multicultural dialogues and activities.

Here in Gippsland there has been a notable increase in cultural diversity, enriching the community's social fabric. Organisations such as the Gippsland Multicultural Services (GMS), Gippsland Ethnic Communities Council (GECC), and the Baw Baw Islamic Network Australia Inc., which has recently opened a Mosque in Warragul, play pivotal roles in encouraging understanding, developing goodwill, and promoting harmony within the area.

Being a Christian means living out the teachings of Jesus Christ – love, compassion, and unity. Harmony Day aligns with these values, emphasising inclusiveness, respect, and belonging for all people, regardless of background. As Christians, we are called to love our neighbours and embrace diversity, recognising that all are made in God's image. Celebrating Harmony Day provides an opportunity to reflect on these principles, promote understanding, and build stronger, more inclusive communities. In places like Gippsland, where multiculturalism is growing, Christians play a vital role in fostering peace, kindness, and acceptance, embodying Christ's message of unity and love.

By celebrating Harmony Day, communities reaffirm their dedication to building a society where everyone feels valued and respected, regardless of their cultural or ethnic background.

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:7

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Thursday Weekly Bible Study

If you would like to meet with others in Gippsland to read and discuss the Bible, you are welcome to join The Rev'd Bec Hayman's Zoom Bible study group on Thursday evenings from 8:15pm–9:00pm.

Bec Hayman is the Anglican priest in the parish of Churchill/Boolarra/Yinnar. For more information or to receive the Zoom link contact Bec by telephone 0467 023 363 or email becca_mike@yahoo.com

Gippsland Grammar student leaders inducted

2025 Prefects: *Front Row:* School Captains Indiana Hicks and Logan Mills, Vice Captains Enzo Blackmore and Aishah Hanafi

Middle Row: **Wellbeing and Care Prefects:** Kenny Goncharow and Regan Leeson, **Community and Culture Prefects:** Ava Taylor and Olive Brooks,

Creativity and Expression Prefects: Evan Del Mastro and Connor Rogalsky

Back Row: Acting Principal Bo Power, **Sport and Experience Prefects:** Scarlett Tavasci and Teddy Ripper, Krista Walpole and Mia Humphris, and Head of Garnsey Campus Rohan Jayatilake

Student leadership and voice are valued at Gippsland Grammar. Formal services inducting student leaders at each of the school's three campuses were held during the first few weeks of the school year.

Year 12 students Indiana Hicks and Logan Mills were sworn in as 2025 School Captains, ably supported by Vice Captains Aishah Hanafi and Enzo Blackmore.

Wellbeing and Care Prefects Kenny Goncharow and Regan Leeson were also inducted alongside Community and Culture Prefects Ava Taylor and Olive Brooks, Creativity and Expression Prefects Evan Del Mastro and Connor Rogalsky, Sport and Experience Prefects Scarlett Tavasci and Teddy Ripper, and Learning and Development Prefects Krista Walpole and Mia Humphris.

St Anne's Campus Captains Elana Lazzaro and Connor McLeod, Year 6, have also been welcomed as leaders together with Bairnsdale Campus Captains Lilah Fraser and Simon Lynch.

As is tradition at Gippsland Grammar the younger students witness the ceremony and the signing of the student leadership registry which dates back 100 years.

Leadership is one of the independent school's five core values which also include compassion, excellence, respect and responsibility. It underpins the school's culture and expectations.

Gippsland Grammar Acting Principal Bo Power explained that

Gippsland Grammar students understood they were leaders within the school community, and all have the potential to influence others in a positive and compassionate manner.

Throughout the school there are opportunities for more formal leadership training. Leadership is recognised as a major component of our Personal Development program.

Since induction these students and others, including the Student Representative Councils and Green Teams, have participated in a full-day workshop

focussing on developing key leadership skills including – building relationships, learning how to be a part of effective teams, and exploring the benefits of goal setting.

The day was facilitated by WELS School, a leadership program which focusses on Wellbeing, Entrepreneurship, Leadership and Sustainability, and was funded by the Gippsland Grammar Foundation's Lorna Sparrow Fellowship.

Mr Power said he was looking forward to witnessing the positive impact these students will have on the school community throughout the year.



Bairnsdale Campus Captains Lilah Fraser and Simon Lynch with Head of Bairnsdale Campus Virginia Evans

Denison's Georgia Anderson awarded Gardiner Foundation Tertiary Scholarship



Georgia at Gippsland Livestock Exchange last year with Gippsland Grammar Acting Principal Bo Power

Denison's Georgia Anderson has been awarded a prestigious \$30,000 Gardiner Foundation Tertiary Scholarship to assist with expenses as she pursues her career in the dairy industry.

Georgia, who graduated from Gippsland Grammar last year while completing a Certificate IV in Agriculture through a school-based apprenticeship, is currently completing an Advanced Diploma of Agribusiness and Applied Agronomy at Longerenong Agricultural College near Horsham.

Last year while completing Year 12, Georgia supported the introduction of Agriculture and Horticulture Studies to Gippsland Grammar's curriculum. By integrating practical agriculture and horticulture studies into its VCE offering, Gippsland Grammar is not only embracing the rich agricultural heritage of the region but also paving the way for its students to become future leaders in the field.

Acting Principal Bo Power is teaching the subject, and said the response to introducing the subject was overwhelmingly positive. 'Farmers are often passionate and have *all-in* characters. I feel that our first cohort of students have similar traits and qualities.'

Gippsland Grammar rowers dominate both on and off the water

Gippsland Grammar rowers continue to excel in the water with the team returning from two separate regattas on 1-2 March with a slew of medals across all age divisions.

The school's senior rowers competed in the State Championship Regatta in Nagambie while students from Years 8-10 travelled interstate to the ACT Junior State Championship and the Head of the Lake Regatta in Canberra.

Gippsland Grammar Director of Rowing Nick Bartlett said 90 students attended the two regattas across the two states with the students 'achieving some fantastic results against some high quality opposition'.

'One of the standout moments at Nagambie was winning all three medals in the male under-21 double scull, which meant all six of our senior male rowers were on the podium at the same time,' Mr Bartlett said. 'A second great moment was when the medal table was published and April Harrison and Scarlett Tavasci topped the individual medal table for the State Championship Regatta with a remarkable five golds and a bronze medal.'

Gippsland Grammar's rowers also dominated in the ACT, both on and off the water.



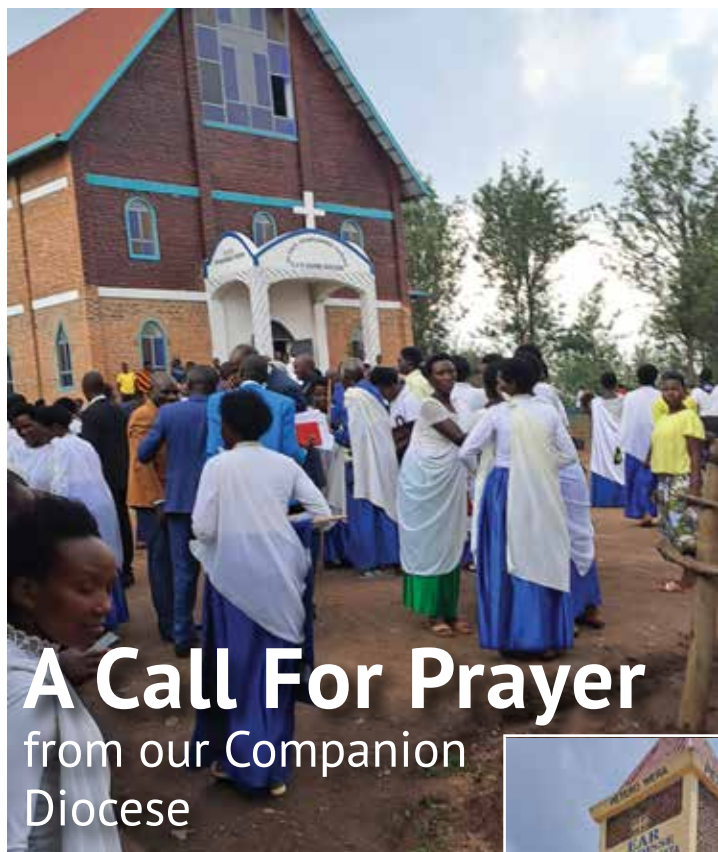
Students meet with Australia's Governor General Sam Mostyn AC

On the water, the school's women's under-17 quad scull of Aliesha Turnbull, Mia Kantzides, Eloise Tavasci, Maggie Sheridan and cox Chloe Olijnyk won a gold medal on the Saturday at the ACT Junior State Championships, and a bronze medal on the Sunday at the Head of the Lake Regatta.

Off the water, rowers enjoyed an

opportunity to meet and chat with the Governor General Sam Mostyn AC, herself a former rower. Students had a great conversation with Ms Mostyn about the benefits of the sport.

Mr Bartlett said it was fantastic for the school program to achieve such high levels of success across two major regattas in two separate states on the same weekend.



organizations must register with the government, have clear statements of doctrine, and pass safety and hygiene codes. The churches were given five years' notice that these standards would be implemented, but many struggled to secure the funds needed for the necessary upgrades.

Many local parishes found the cost of the upgrades challenging, such

In the meantime, churches remain closed. The bishop and clergy are looking for ways to encourage the faith of the Christians in the Diocese and promote evangelism in this challenging environment. As the months of closure drag on, raising funds for the necessary improvements to bring the church buildings up to standard is becoming increasingly difficult.

As the Diocese supports and encourages the clergy in this challenging environment, tensions within the country have increased.

A neighbouring country, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), has recently declared a catastrophic humanitarian crisis after a period of fighting that is related to and similar to the horrific violence during the times of genocide in Rwanda from the 1950s up to 1994. Much of the land that is now part of the DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda had been home to the Tutsis, Hutus, and other ethnic groups since the 19th century. The country borders were imposed on this area by colonial powers in the 1880s, splitting traditional tribal homelands. Although currently, there is a sense of peace in Rwanda, the violence in the DRC and rising tension in Burundi could shatter it at any moment.

The cuts to US AID have also been unsettling. In Rwanda, one of the primary recipients of US AID funding has been the HIV clinics that were set up a few years after the 1994 genocide. Although many of the clinics have had a temporary waiver and are still receiving funding, the waiver has indicated that they will no longer fund HIV medication for adolescent girls and young women, gay men, or sex workers.

The UK and several other countries have also reduced their aid to Rwanda because of the country's involvement in the fighting in the DRC. These cuts in foreign aid have diverse effects, including a slowing economy, closure of development programs targeted to help the poorest in the country, reduction in hospital and health services, and loss of jobs.

Things you might like to pray for:

- For the victims of the Congo crisis, that they will not be forgotten and for safety and the communities to rebuild.
- A stabilizing of the health sector after the removal of aid.
- For faith among the Christians that they will grow and thrive together even with closed centers.
- For creativity, resilience, and perseverance for the parishioners and clergy in the Diocese as they strive to get their buildings up to the required standards, then for patience as they apply for reassessment of the original notice.
- For the clergy as they complete their training and that the churches will be able to open as soon as possible.



Sarah Gover has been closely involved over a long period in Gipp'sland's Covenant of Companionship' with the Diocese of Gahini, Rwanda, now in its 22nd year. Sarah offers some insights into life and ministry in Gahini, and how we can support our sisters and brothers in prayer.

■ Sarah Gover

In 2003, the Diocese of Gippsland committed to a companion relationship with the Diocese of Gahini in Rwanda. This relationship encompasses many aspects, one of which is the ability to pray for each other. Initially, obtaining up-to-date and timely information from Rwanda was challenging. However, as Rwanda has recovered from the genocide, strengthened its economy, and developed its infrastructure and technology, communication has become much easier.

In a recent conversation with Bishop Manasseh, he expressed his appreciation for the covenant relationship and the value he places on the prayer support, especially for some of the significant issues the Diocese is facing.

In August last year, the Rwandan Government closed more than 5000 churches from all denominations for failing to comply with health and safety regulations. Initially, all but seven of the over 270 church buildings in the Diocese were closed. Since then, an additional six churches have reopened.

The new standards require that all clergy must have theology degrees, faith

as installing male, female, and disability toilets, paving the entrance way and car park of the church, soundproofing the church, and providing running water for hand washing stations.

While the parishes were working on the church buildings, the Diocese was focused on training clergy. In 2019, there was only one person in the Diocese of Gahini with a tertiary qualification in theology, Bishop Manasseh. Since then, the Diocese has secured funding to support six clergy with tertiary qualifications to complete a one-year master's program. They also supported eight clergy to complete an undergraduate degree.

Last year, Bishop Manasseh worked with World Vision Korea to secure funding for over one hundred and thirty clergy in the country, including fifteen in Gahini. With this and other initiatives, the Diocese hopes to have 43 qualified clergy by the end of the year.

They are also considering restructuring and combining parishes so that most centres might be open by the end of the year.



Honouring two decades of dedication

Celebrating 20 Years of Service at the St Paul's Warragul Campus
L-R: Scott Armour, Brad Kooloos, Louise Leighton, Joy Osler, Coralie Esbert, Megan Schreyer, Michelle Sullivan, George Runciman and Andrea Heard

A vibrant gathering of both new and long-serving staff members met to honour their colleagues during St Paul's Anglican Grammar School's 20 Years of Service events.

This year, nine members of staff at the Warragul Campus and two at the Traralgon Campus were celebrated for their unwavering commitment and dedication to the school.

The honourees at Warragul included Scott Armour, Coralie Esbert, Andrea Heard, Bradley Kooloos, Louise Leighton, Joy Osler, George Runciman, Megan Schreyer and Michelle Sullivan, while the Traralgon Campus recognised Andie Browne and Ingrid Snell.

The event was filled with heartwarming stories and cherished

memories as colleagues shared personal anecdotes and insights about the honourees from various faculties.

Each speech from the long-serving staff members reflected a mutual gratitude for their occupations and the enriching environment that they have all helped to cultivate at St Paul's.



Celebrating 20 Years of Service at the St Paul's Traralgon Campus
Ingrid Snell and Andie Browne, pictured with Deputy Principal Gordon Oldham and Principal Cameron Herbert

Syrup and smiles make for a flip-tacular Shrove Tuesday



Enjoying their treat on Shrove Tuesday are Tommy, Savannah, Effie and Seyara at the Warragul Campus

Shrove Tuesday, also known as Pancake Tuesday or Pancake Day, is the final day of Shrovetide, which marks the end of the pre-Lenten season. This year it fell on Tuesday 4 March 2025 with St Paul's Anglican Grammar School celebrating the day.

The expression 'Shrove Tuesday' comes from the word shrive, meaning absolution following confession. Christians traditionally visit church on Shrove Tuesday to confess their sins and clean their soul, thus

being shriven (absolved) before the start of the penitential season of Lent.

Students at the Drouin, Warragul and Traralgon Campuses celebrated the day discovering the art of pancake-making. But before the

fun really began, educators engaged students in lively discussions about the history and meaning of Shrove Tuesday.

Year 6 students from the Traralgon Campus spread the joy at St James Church where they perfected pancakes and served smiles to local community members. In addition to actively engaging in the pancake-making and cooking process, the event was made even more special by musical performances from the students, adding to the festive atmosphere.

The experience helped build stronger connections between the students and the community.

Students from Prep to Year 6 at Traralgon also enjoyed lively pancake relay races, showcasing their pancake-flipping skills, along with a few entertaining mishaps. Afterwards, they enjoyed eating their very own 'fresh' pancakes smothered in their favourite toppings.

At the school's new Drouin Campus, Junior School students dived into the pancake-making process. They followed the recipe, mixed the batter and quickly turned it into a friendly cook-off to see which group could make the best pancakes. Even the Early Learning Centre students lent a helping hand with the pancake-making, enjoying the tasty results of their efforts.

Junior School students at the Warragul Campus also enjoyed a treat as they lined up to make the all-important and tough decision: lemon and sugar or maple syrup?

It was a day full of fun, smiles, syrup, and, of course, plenty of pancakes, making this Shrove Tuesday at each of the St Paul's campuses one to remember!

Experience of CAMINO Pilgrimages

The Rev'd Heather den Houting tells of her two Camino walks in Italy and Spain as she prepares for the upcoming Hope 25 Gippsland Camino.

■ Heather den Houting

Over the past decade I have done part of the Via Francigena in Italy, and then *O Camino Dos Faros* in Spain. Both of these walks were my attempt to carve time out of my busy life in order to give myself time to reset. *Who am I? What do I do next with my life? What is most important to me?*

And I laughingly tell others that the walks, which I found challenging and exhilarating, gave me some answers. The first walk gave me the answer, 'All you need to do is put one foot in front

of the other.' The second gave me the answer, 'Don't fall off the cliff.'

I have found that pilgrims go through the process with a lot of baggage and end it having discarded baggage they no longer need. The process of the Camino is designed to allow you to find your own way, stripping away at that which is no longer essential.

Challenges of the walk become an extraordinary experience, and in my case have included pushing my body through a sense of physical fatigue to keep going.

It has allowed me to see that I have greater strength and resilience than I ever knew. I am not the fastest walker, nor am I

the most elegant of walkers, but each walk gives me confidence in my own abilities in ways that I have not experienced before.

My repetitive breath prayer for the Spanish Camino was taken from St Theresa of Avila:

*Nada te turbe, nada te espante
Todo se pasa, Dios no se muda
La paciencia todo lo alcanza
Quien a Dios tiene nada le falta
Sólo Dios basta.*

Let nothing disturb you
Nothing frighten you
All things are passing
God never changes
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing
God is enough.



Wonthaggi Bass Coast Anglicans are hosting a Gospel Open Mic Night at the Goods Shed on 13 April 2025 between 2pm–5pm. The banner for the event was painted by artist Ellen Hubble who is a member of the Wonthaggi Hope25 facilitation team.

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Gippsland Plains Rail Trail Camino

■ Heather den Houting

Over centuries people have used walking as a way of integrating their mind, heart, body and soul. Sometimes the walking is short and with a destination in mind. Sometimes the walking is more of a wander or a meander. But it seems that the practice of walking offers people an opportunity to be aware of their bodies and their thoughts at the same time, and when this happens, we see health and wellness improve in both. A Camino Walk is a deliberate and intentional practice of integrating a spiritual practice into a walk that challenges you physically.

The Nature of the Camino

Camino is a Spanish word that means 'I walk', and when described as El Camino it means 'The Way'. Traditionally a Camino is undertaken as a spiritual pilgrimage, the most famous being the Camino de Santiago, or Way of St James, which is a network of pilgrimage routes that end in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. It is Europe's oldest and most well-known pilgrimage route.

Why do a Camino?

These walks provide a unique combination of physical challenge, stunning scenery and a sense of community with fellow pilgrims. They are a profound opportunity for personal reflection and spiritual growth, intentionally designed to disconnect you from daily life and reconnect you with yourself and nature while experiencing a sense of accomplishment by completing the journey. The pilgrim's way is a form of reintegration of mind, heart, body and soul.

2025 Gippsland Plains Rail Trail Camino

In 2024 with Hope25 in mind a small group of enthusiastic people gathered together to imagine how we might offer our community an opportunity to participate in a place of connection and grounding, whilst experiencing the beauty of this part of

the country. By utilising a popular walking route and combining it with the enthusiastic participation of the local churches, we are offering a unique experience to connect back into yourself (see page 8).

The supported walk is occurring over a longer weekend, starting with a blessing of the pilgrims on the evening of Thursday 1 May 2025 and ending with a Pilgrims Conclusion Service on the evening of Sunday 4 May. While the pilgrims are responsible for their own food and accommodation, they will be walking with others, have access to volunteer support along the way and have the opportunity to visit, rest and reflect in local churches.

Information about local amenities and prayer resources will be an invaluable resource for any person using the route as a pilgrim. We have created the *Gippsland Camino Information Booklet* to be used as a resource on its own.

The nature of a pilgrimage is to walk at in your own time and at your own pace. The total course walked over 3 days is 64 kilometres. Pilgrims are

welcome to register for the whole or any part of the walk (see page 8 for details).

While the walk is not arduous, they are long day walks, and we encourage people to start training for the walk now.

https://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/assets/Camino_booklet.pdf

The Rev'd Heather den Houting
Minister/Community Development Worker
Traralgon District Uniting Church..



Family Farm Fun Day

Saturday 12th April

St John's Anglican Church are holding a Family Farm Fun Day. Bring the family for a fun day of activities. There is something for everyone, whether you are 9 days or 99 Years.

Activities Include:

- * Farm Animals (including Highland Cows)
- * Tractor Rides
- * Games
- * Face Painting
- * Easter Egg Hunt
- * Jumping Castle
- * Craft Activities
- * And a Visit from the Easter Bunny

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\$20 per car or \$5 for individuals



Seed Lakeside Community Garden in Sale

Walking the ridge-line on climate change

■ Jan Down

A startling message began arriving in my inbox early last year: *it's too late*. It came first from a respected friend who was always the optimist. To find her recommending an on-line course on acceptance of the collapse of our civilisation, and ways to develop resilience was disturbing, and I had to know more. Later, there was an invitation to attend an East Gippsland Climate Action Network (EGCAN) day on the topic of 'Climate-ready Communities'. This group too, which had always focused on reducing emissions, was now accepting the need to be ready for more disasters, with climate change making fires, floods, droughts and heatwaves more extreme, and with the threat of major, sometimes prolonged, disruptions to energy, water, transport, communications, food and other basic necessities.

From another friend came the recommendation of a book by Brian McLaren called *Life After Doom* – the title says it all. Fortunately, the sub-title is a little more positive: *Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart*.

The messages kept coming and only confirmed what I already knew at some deep level – it's time to accept reality, and change tack.

It's (almost certainly) too late

Although we can never be 100% certain about the future, we have to make some predictions in order to live. So we look at the information we have available, and make our best plans accordingly, preferably with some flexibility built in. So, too late for what?

Clive Hamilton and George Wilkenfeld in *Living Hot: Surviving and Thriving on a Heating Planet*, put the case that:

The global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions fast enough to avoid a continuing escalation of extreme weather events is lost. We are seeing the early signs of what it means to live on a different kind of earth, one where the forces of nature have been disrupted by human activity.

They argue that because Australia contributes only 1% of global emissions, or 3% including our fossil fuel exports, what Australia does will have 'no appreciable effect on global heating'. Is this a valid assessment?

Joelle Gergis, Australian climate scientist and a lead author of the IPCC's *Sixth Assessment Report*, says that globally 'under the best-case scenario, collectively we are on track to reduce emissions by around 10% of what the science says is needed by 2030.' (*Highway to Hell: Climate Change and Australia's Future*. Quarterly Essay Issue 94, 2024)

In *Humanity's Moment* (2022) she tells us that metres of sea-level rise are already locked in.

However, Gergis also believes that what Australia does really matters. She argues against those who say what we Australians do doesn't make a difference:

...if you consider all of the countries that also contribute less than two per cent of emissions, pretty quickly it adds up to more than 40 per cent of total international emissions. If we adopt this morally bankrupt logic, we will collectively fail to stabilise the Earth's climate.

(*The Saturday Paper*, January 18-24)

The key word there is 'collectively'.

Hamilton and Wilkenfeld (H & W) agree that Australians have a moral duty to keep reducing emissions. They offer other reasons too: that this will give Australia more credibility internationally, and 'may put a little more pressure on the big emitters'; that it is in our economic interests; and also, importantly, that 'the renewables-based, less-centralised energy system being developed has the potential to be more resilient during natural disasters, providing we design it in the right way'.

My conclusion is that both perspectives are right: what Australia does matters – every molecule of CO₂ counts – and we have to play our part, regardless of what others do. On a per capita basis, Australia is one of the highest emitting countries in the world. But I agree with H & W, that it is highly unlikely that the world as a whole will sufficiently reduce emissions soon enough, so we must plan for the most likely future while still going all-out to reduce our emissions. That's the ridge-line we need to walk.

H & W propose that what Australia needs is a national adaptation plan. Interestingly, Gergis also argues for this, saying what Australia has right now is merely 'a plan to have a plan'.

So climate-intensified disasters are getting worse, but why the expectation of some that we should expect the collapse of our civilisation?

One of the strongest arguments for this is the enormous change required in

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order for rich countries like Australia to end our dependence on fossil fuels, which are the main cause of climate change. We use them not only for energy and transport, but for steel, concrete, plastic, food production and clothing in vast amounts. Just think of the road works and housing developments going on everywhere – how would they happen without earthmoving machines, steel and concrete?

Collectively, we are unwilling or perhaps even incapable of making the change required, so it seems most likely to be forced upon us. Climate disasters and their flow-on effects are creating such world-wide havoc our systems will not be able to cope. We are already seeing the beginnings of this, with winter fires in Los Angeles, devastating flooding in Spain and the recent floods in northern Queensland, to name a few.

Grief, love and hope

I first heard about global warming 45 years ago, and since then, despite the global protests, despite the work of so many people to turn things around, global emissions have only increased. There is so much to grieve.

It's not only climate change, but also pollution and the loss of biodiversity. In the 200 years since Europeans arrived in Australia, this continent has lost about 100 species of plants and animals, largely due to introduced species. Rivers and creeks are polluted, the soil is degraded and eco-systems are breaking down. Tens of thousands of years of careful management by First Nations people smashed in a mere 200 years.

Nature around the world is being irrevocably changed, leading to crop failures, loss of lives and livelihoods. Many young people are losing hope, with some seriously wondering whether to have children. I think of the lack of action by governments, the callous and greed-driven behaviour of fossil-fuel companies. Carrie Philpott, writing on

her climate grief in an article in *Zadok Perspectives* (Autumn 2020) says:

I have come to appreciate my sorrow, because grief, often disguised as anger, is the price I pay for loving.

She is convinced:

God surely shares my sorrow. I trust that the Creator of the universe loves and grieves for all that is suffering in us and on this Earth.

Carrie has also found grief a source of power. Once felt and expressed, she found she could hope again and 'get on with the work at hand'.

Accept AND act, advocate AND adapt

My grief has come out mostly in anger, and in wanting to do something, to change things. There was a time when there was time to avert the worst of climate change, but that looks gone now – not universally, but in general terms.

When I first read *Living Hot*, I felt the grief at our failure, at the loss of the hoped-for future many of us had been trying to create and promote.

Back in 2009 I was excited about the Transition Towns movement, which was all about re-localising to reduce our dependence on oil and build community resilience. It included bringing back old skills and arts. It was creative and lots of fun. There was a tangible hope then that if enough people got together and worked on this, it would scale up to local governments (that happened in some places) and then to whole countries, in time to avert the breakdown of civilisation and nature.

It hasn't happened fast enough.

But I think there is now more reason than ever, in the face of climate disasters and likely collapse, to re-localise and create resilient local communities. Many people around the world are working on various aspects of this. Some manifestations include community gardens and orchards, food and clothing swaps, street libraries and 'the gift economy', as described in *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer (a biologist and member of the Potawatomi Nation). Churches have a wonderful opportunity to contribute to this, especially if they partner with local groups. Churches often have the land, but not always the energetic people to do the work.

We still need to be advocating for, and acting on climate change in our churches, as well as developing adaptation plans. I see this as our calling as Christians in the current context. How can we offer hope (in this year of Hope25) if we ignore the world around us, created through and for Christ? Churches could become places of sanctuary and hope if we start soon enough. Colourful manifestations of the kingdom of God!

So now there are four meanings to the A in ACTinG: Accepting, Acting, Advocating and Adapting.

Jan Down is Chair of ACTinG (Acting on Climate Together in Gippsland), a parishioner at St Paul's Cathedral in Sale, and a former Editor of *TGA*.

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Please include your name
and town for publication.
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interests of clarity or space.



A tiny library outside a house in Rosedale

Dear Editor

It is with mixed emotions that I read the historical *TGA* March 2025 edition. Gippsland sounds like it is a beautiful place, with the mention of lakes, farmland, mountains and ocean.

It is now Autumn Moon Day 2325. How I wish I had been able to see these marvels in their pristine condition. But three hundred years later, we are working hard to restore our planet. Each Full-Moon Day we gather to plant trees, placing them in swales that the younger folk build through the month. We make tree-planting a communal celebration, sharing our home-grown vegetables and providing pot-luck dinners. It is encouraging to

Time-travelling letter from the future

read that you too gather for communal celebrations, honouring the contribution of each member of your disparate communities.

I am writing to say that life has been tough over the past centuries. Once the oil dried up, we had to invent new ways for just about everything. But how creative we have become! We have envisioned new forms of transport, of education, of providing medical care to our people. I guess that we have become incredibly resilient. Nothing is wasted – we do not have that luxury.

There is so much about your time that we do not understand. You appear to have consumed without limits; you appear to

have poisoned the land and waterways. Maybe one day we will find out why you did this?

And yet, we know that we exist because of small actions taken by so many of you in the 21st century to save our planet. Millions of you, alone and collectively, committed in many ways to save the future we now live in. Because of you, we are. Thank you.

Each positive thing you have done, each action of healing relationships with each other and the Earth has made it possible for us to build relationships in our time. Again, thank you.

In confusion and gratitude,

Forest



Letter to the Editor

We are going through distressing times in the Middle East and in our own land. The undeclared war between Israel and the Hamas terrorist organisation has awoken deep prejudices in our community. The most overt sign of this has been a wave of antisemitism leading to hostile and criminal acts towards Jewish people.

In the midst of this, the bishops of the Anglican Church in Australia recently issued a Statement, published in the March edition of *TGA*. They carefully avoided any suggestion that they were 'taking sides'. The purpose of the Statement is to condemn racial intolerance in general to support a beleaguered minority in Australia.

In present circumstances, many who are opposed to the actions of the State of Israel are accused of being antisemitic. This is misleading. I count myself amongst those who have many Jewish friends and who have a deep love for Jewish people in general. This did not prevent me from writing to *The Age* recently in terms critical of the actions

of the Israeli state. For those who missed it, I include an extract of the letter here.

I was once a Housemaster in a large boys' boarding school. When there was any trouble between the boys, we'd ask, 'Where did it all start?'. We looked beyond the present circumstances to the root causes. Would that the apologists for Israel in the present conflict in the Middle East should do the same. The retiring Palestinian 'ambassador', Izzat Abdulhadi, hit the nail on the head (*The Age*, 8/1/25): 'We can't just perceive history as starting on 7 October. We can't ignore the root causes of the problem: the siege of Gaza, what happened in 1948 ... and the continuous systematic oppression of Palestinian people by Israelis.' For decades Israeli governments have been calling the bluff of the West by reacting to provocations of the moment while securing ever more deeply their (mostly illegal) domination of Palestinian people and their land – and then claiming the moral high ground.

The Rev'd Canon Dr Jim Connelly



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The Doctrine of the Word of God

Karl Barth: Church Dogmatics (Volume 1)

**The Doctrine of the Word of God,
2nd Edition: New York,
T & T International, 1975**

■ Richard Prideaux

German/Swiss theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968) was an extraordinary theologian, author, major contributor to the German Barmen Declaration and fierce opponent of Nazism. Barth's five volumes of the *Church Dogmatics* run in the English translation to 6 million words and 9,000 pages! Master of Latin, German and French and fierce opponent of both modernistic Protestantism and mediaeval Roman Catholicism, Barth has made a huge impact on many theologians and readers of many streams of the Christian faith.

Having said that all that in praise of Karl Barth I have to say that Barth's 2nd edition of *The Doctrine of the Word of God* is certainly the most difficult book I have ever read, and I have read one or two books in my time. I am quite uncertain if I have the courage to contemplate his volume 2, let alone volumes 3-5.

I suspect I may have to ask for a volume in heaven! On the plus side there are some things written in this major work that I am very glad to have pondered.

Here are a few:

- Theology is the criticism and correction of talk about God according to the criterion of the Church's own principles. (p6)
- Grace is the event of personal address, not a transmitted material condition. (p41)
- Talk about God in church must be related to a prior Word of God Himself. (p43)
- God is not bound to the historical church. (p48)
- Dogmatics must not dominate proclamation. (p85)
- Real proclamation means the Word of God preached. (p90)
- Between God and true service of God there can be no rivalry. (p94)
- The Church is in the place of revelation, of mercy and of peace. (p156)

- To evade the security of God's Word is to evade Christ. (p168)
- The Bible finds voice in the Church. (p261)
- God reveals himself as the Lord! Revelation is never the same but always new. (p306)

Richard Prideaux is a diocesan Lay Reader in Bass / Phillip Island Parish.

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EVENTS

For events at The Abbey, see page 8

APRIL

- 12 St John's Family Farm Fun Day 10:30am-2:30pm
230 Orrs Road, Wy Yung
- 13 Wonthaggi/Bass Coast Anglicans Gospel
Open Mic. 2pm-5pm

MAY

- 1 Opening service and blessing of Pilgrims for
Gippsland Camino at Traralgon Uniting Church
- 2-4 Gippsland Camino Walk and closing service at
St Paul's, Sale (see page 8 for more information)

27 May-3 June **National Reconciliation Week**

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/>

To Be A Pilgrim

Who would true valour see,
let them come hither;
those here will constant be,
come wind come weather.
There's no discouragement
shall make them once relent
each from a vowed intent
to be a pilgrim.

Those who beset them round
with dismal stories
cannot the brave confound;
their strength the more is.
No lion can them fright,
they'll with a giant fight,
but each will have a right
to be a pilgrim.

Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
can daunt their spirit:
they know they at the end
shall life inherit.
Then fancies fly away;
they'll scorn what people say,
and each work night and day
to be a pilgrim.

John Bunyan (1628–1688), alt.
Together in Song 561
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The Gippsland Anglican

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