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New
Registrar
Rae Riley



P5
Vale
John Delzoppo
1931 – 2024



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The Gippsland Anglican

Published in Gippsland Diocese since 1904 FEBRUARY 2025



From Popondetta to Moe/Newborough Giles Motisi appointed Priest-in-Charge

The Rev'd Giles Motisi has accepted an invitation to serve as Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of Moe / Newborough.

Fr Giles is the Deputy Principal of what has long been known to us as Newton Theological College in Popondetta, Papua New Guinea, and which has recently become the Modawa Institute, where

our diocesan missionary, Bishop Jeffrey Driver, is the Acting Principal.

When Fr Giles visited the Diocese in September it was a joy for him to meet a number of Gippsland Anglicans who have supported Modawa and who knew some of his students by name.

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Sabbath rest and re-creation

As I write, the early days of January are fading into that holiday post-Christmas melange of gentler mornings, languid afternoons, and slowly tapering summer evenings – at least for those of us who find Epiphanytide a good time for some ‘R and R’.

For Christians, rest and recreation are not just how we recover from busier periods and freshen up for the next round. They are concepts and practices that carry significant theological freight, and ancient wisdom.

Dr Garry Deverell, Trawoolway man, priest and academic, writes about this in ABM’s excellent 2024 Lenten Study, *God’s Own Country: First Nations voices speak to the Church*. Garry reflects on the Hebrew Bible’s division of time into units of seven: seven days (Gen 2:2-3), seven years (Exod 23:10-12), and – in the case of the Jubilee every fiftieth year – seven times seven years (Lev 23:8-13).

This principle of ‘sabbath’ – which is the culmination of the first creation story (Gen 1:1-2:3) – is intended not only to provide rest for human beings, but for all who labour, including domestic animals and the land itself on which we labour. Indigenous cultures and farmers have understood the importance of a fallow period since time immemorial. If one doesn’t give the soil a chance from time to time to replenish its nutrients it will cease to be able to support growth.

The sabbath principle is writ large in the law of Jubilee. Whilst the year of Jubilee may not have actually been observed every 50 years in biblical times, in the abiding wisdom of *Torah* it serves as a kind of generational ‘circuit breaker’ in which everyone is to return to their ancestral land and there is to be no sowing or reaping. As Garry Deverell explains, the idea of Jubilee

... seeks to give everyone the opportunity to go back to zero. To return to what was originally given and make a better, and more just, go of things than the last time

around. For those who are poor, this is grace to start again. For those who are rich it is the grace to return to a place of humility by giving back what had been acquired from others.

(God’s Own Country, 85)

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, a contextually appropriate expression of the principle of sabbath rest is both gift and call: God’s gift inscribed in the wisdom of creation; and God’s call into the hope and promise of new creation.

The Leviticus text consecrating the year of Jubilee – which, significantly, begins on the day of atonement – concludes with the admonition ‘do not take advantage of one another’ (25:17). It cautions that land is not to be sold in perpetuity for God is the only landlord, and reminds residents that they must provide for the land’s redemption (25:23-24); that is, must honour the means by which it can be reclaimed by original occupants, as set out in various ways in the law.

This passage encourages a sense of stewardship over ownership. It forms part of the Holiness Code in Leviticus, which shines a lamp for biblical Israel on how its common life ought to be distinctive from the customs of the surrounding cultures, as a witness to God’s holiness and as an expression of its vocation as a light to the nations.

How might such a principle apply to us today? Garry Deverell says plainly that in this nation the idea of sabbath ‘means giving exploitation and injustice a rest.’ (88). For guidance, he adds, we can look to the Hebrew Bible, and we can also look to the First Peoples of this land. We might also recall the fourth and fifth Marks of Mission for Anglicans worldwide:

- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Might this new year of grace be for us a year of jubilee?

Must we wait for the Yoorrook Justice Commission to make its recommendations relating to land justice, or for formal treaty processes, before asking ourselves whether we are acting justly as a church with respect to what Deverell calls ‘the gratuity of the land’ on which we serve?

At its December 2024 meeting, Bishop-in-Council agreed to revisit the way that proceeds from land sales in the Diocese are to be disbursed. Of the 20% retained by B-i-C, currently 18.5% is held in trust to meet redress claims, and 1.5% (effectively 7.5% of the total funds retained) is allocated to Aboriginal Ministry. At the Yoorrook hearing on 1 May last year I described that figure as ‘woefully inadequate’.

This month B-i-C will be considering a proposal to significantly adjust these figures, including potentially broadening the allocation to better reflect our stewardship responsibilities. Such a redistribution of what the B-i-C budget receives from land sales would have no direct impact on parishes, and any revised B-i-C policy will of course be reported to Synod in May.

In 1975 the first Commonwealth legislation for granting Aboriginal land rights was drafted (though not enacted until the following year). In the same year the Aboriginal Land Fund (set up in December 1974) made it possible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to ‘redeem’ – ‘buy back’ – traditional lands, and ultimately funded 59 repurchases.

Fifty years on, in 2025, may we be alert to the gift and call of sabbath rest and re-creation for all people, for all creatures, and for the land itself, and ready to act accordingly. In doing so, perhaps we will enter more deeply into the ancient wisdoms of our own spiritual tradition, and of those who first stewarded the gratuity of these lands.



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.

RAE RILEY – A NEW REGISTRAR FOR THE DIOCESE



Rae has been appointed as our new Registrar following a thorough recruitment process which saw a number of expressions of interest in this important leadership position within the Diocese.

Rae grew up in Gippsland and has lived most of her life in

the region. She is an active and longstanding member of the Anglican Church, having served as Treasurer for both the Anglican Parish of Traralgon and Traralgon South Community Church. Rae comes to lead the Registry Office from the Community and Public Sector Union, where she has been instrumental in organising campaigns, mentoring teams, advocating for workers, and managing member services, with responsibility for financial oversight and stakeholder engagement.

She brings to this new role of Registrar a wealth of expertise in governance, compliance, administration, training and development, and work-health and safety. With over 30 years of professional experience across the legal, government, and non-profit sectors, Rae has developed a strong ability to balance strategic planning with practical problem-solving.

Reflecting on this new opportunity Rae said, 'I'm inspired by the Diocese's dedication to faith, service, and community. It is an honour to contribute to our vision and mission through the Registrar role, building on the solid foundation of those who have served before.'

In that spirit, Rae has already spent some time in the Registry, learning some existing processes and building relationships. She and Brian Norris (Acting Registrar) will work closely together during a transition period from 27 January, when Rae formally commences, until preparations for Synod after Easter.

We take this opportunity to pay tribute to Brian, who has been providing a most valuable ministry to us since stepping into the role of Acting Registrar in October, whilst continuing to care for the Parish of Tambo. Brian's steady, experienced hand has been a great comfort to Registry team colleagues, new and continuing, and it has been a pleasure to renew this working partnership with him.

INTRODUCING JOSEPH GORMALLY – DIOCESAN FINANCE OFFICER

A new arrival to Sale, Joseph comes to us with extensive experience in bookkeeping and accounting. With a Diploma in Business Management, Joseph has held senior positions in logistics and retail firms, where he has successfully led systems improvement and customer relations processes. He tells us a little more about himself here:

Hello, my name is Joseph Gormally and I am new to the Cathedral Parish of Sale. I'm 29 years old and I moved to the area as my partner is a pilot with the Royal Australian Air Force.

While I was born in the United Kingdom, I grew up in Ireland, so you may find my accent hard to place when we first meet. Growing up in rural Ireland I have always played an active role in the local Church; so much so that, when I left school, I spent a year as a seminarian. However, I soon learned my vocation remained in the laity. I first came to Australia in 2022 and spent my first two years in Perth as a key accounts manager. My professional background has been in leadership positions in the retail space.

I bring to the Diocese my experience, energy, and a thirst to learn. I pride myself on my interpersonal skills and hope to get to know as many of you as I can. Please don't be a stranger, and feel free to contact me any time I may be of help. And do keep me in your prayers as I take up this new challenge and make Sale my 'home away from home.'

Joseph will also start early in 2025. His on-boarding will enable Kate Campbell to transition further into her Parish Support role, which is dear to her diaconal heart.



We are blessed to have Kate and Brian's collective wisdom and experience to call upon as Rae and Joseph settle into the team.



Exploring Faith Matters

■ A reflection by Julie Bruce, on behalf of the South Gippsland EFM group

In late November our EFM group participants, ably lead by the Reverends Tony and Jenny Wicking, were given the opportunity to examine and reflect on the past year in the quiet serenity of The Abbey on Raymond Island near Paynesville.

EFM stands for 'Exploring Faith Matters' and is a four year course of study involving readings from the Reading and Reflection Guide and assigned texts. There is a weekly group study session on Zoom and there are occasional face-to-face meetings as well. We as a group have been together for three of the

course years, this year studying the topic of multiculturalism and honing the life skill of theological reflection.

During our time at The Abbey we were able to share deeply the highs and lows of this third year together. Some of us were profoundly challenged by the journey of the Christian Church throughout history, as revealed in our historical text. We were shocked at times, disillusioned and despairing, that, in the name of our Christian God, there had been justification for such misuse of power which had accompanied greedy design across the world and whose

impact is still felt even today.

And yet true faith has survived. We are here, journeying as Christians but not in a spirit of triumphalism and knowing all the answers; rather, we hope, with lowly, penitent and obedient hearts, ready to listen to our loving Lord whose nature is always to have mercy – One calling us to share His love with those around us.

During the course of our two days at the Abbey, we each presented a reflection on the past year and our spiritual journey thus far. After listening deeply and praying for each other after each presentation, there was the opportunity to share in the fellowship of lovely meals with a good serving of fun and laughter thrown into the mix. We catered for ourselves, and the blessing of sharing delicious food was truly appreciated. A time of meditation led by The Rev'd Jeff Berger on Wednesday evening was restorative, allowing us to relax, breathe and experience the peace of God.

The concluding highlight was the beautiful time of worship where we all participated in a blessed Eucharistic Feast, sharing the bread and wine and dipping our hands into the waters of the baptismal font as an expression of dedication and remembrance of our commitment to God and His covenant promise to us.

Before departure, we joined our hands and circled a prayer dance (with initial awkwardness) in an expression of unity and support. Clumsy feet mattered not, we were all in this together.

This time was a gift, an opportunity to retreat from our busy lives, examine our journeys together and enjoy this opportunity for re-creation, reflection and fellowship in a very special spiritual part of Gippsland, The Abbey on Raymond Island.

From Popondetta to Moe / Newborough Giles Motisi appointed Priest-in-Charge

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During that visit Giles attended a fund-raising event for the Institute at Bishops Court in Melbourne, and also met with the Dean of Theology at Trinity College Theological School, through which he will undertake postgraduate studies at the University of Divinity. Fr Giles introduces himself a little further as follows:

I am from Dogura Diocese, Milne Bay Province. I am 55 years old and have worked for seven years at what is now the Modawa Institute. I came to the Institute around the same time as Bishop Jeffrey Driver whom you all know. When the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea

appointed him as the Principal of (then) Newton College he asked me to be his Deputy Principal.

I hold a degree in Theology and another degree in Agricultural Science, and worked as a Plantation Manager before studying for ministry at the Catholic Theological Institute and being ordained. Most of my ministry has been in Theological Education and I also enjoyed serving briefly as a Parish Priest, which is something I am looking forward to experiencing again.

I am married to Julia and have four children. The two older boys are adults and are working while the third boy and a girl are at school.

We look forward to welcoming Fr Giles and members of his family to Gippsland. We anticipate him starting as Priest-in-Charge at 0.7 to enable him to devote time to his studies. As well as being a dedicated pastor, Giles' ministry with us will further strengthen the bonds between Gippsland and the Modawa Institute.

Please pray for him and his family, for their community at Popondetta, and for the clergy and people of Moe / Newborough at a time of significant change and exciting new directions.

The date for Fr Giles' induction will be announced shortly.

Vale The Hon John Edward Delzoppo OAM

3 DECEMBER 1931 – 23 NOVEMBER 2024

■ Philip R Davis

John Edward Delzoppo was foremost a family man, forming an indissoluble bond with Beth from their student days and then working side by side operating the pharmacy at Neerim South. They shared family duties raising Ian, Lindsay, Clare, and Anne; then sharing the joys of grandparenting.

Together they immersed themselves in their community sharing duties in representative roles. For John, who was regarded an exemplar of protocol and procedure, this led to service in many organisations as a leader and chairman.

John served for two decades on the Buln Buln Shire Council and was three times President. He was Chairman of the Gippsland Municipalities Association and a member of the Municipal Association of Victoria Executive. John was a strong advocate on community issues which led him further into political activity. He was a member of the Liberal Party for more than six decades and served in leadership roles including as a State Councillor and member of the State Executive.

John provided energetic leadership in the community which he and Beth adopted at Neerim South; where he served as the inaugural President of the Neerim South High School, President of the Neerim and District Soldiers Memorial Hospital and



Beth and John Delzoppo at the Synod Dinner, 2016

as Commissioner of the Neerim South Waterworks Trust. As a leader in his local parish, he was a synod representative for 50 years.

At a regional level John was President of the Central Gippsland Planning Regional Authority, inaugural Chairman of the Westernport Catchment Coordinating Group, member of the Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board and Chairman of the Central Gippsland Department of Community Welfare Services program.

John also served as Senior Vice President of the Victorian Bush Nursing Association and was a Life Member.

As a result of his commitment to many roles and organisations he was highly regarded and became the obvious replacement for the retiring long serving Member for Narracan, Jim Balfour at the 1982 State Election. John served in the Victorian Parliament until he retired in 1996, holding several shadow portfolios including Transport, Local Government, Water Resources and Property and Services. In 1992 with the election of the Kennett Liberal Government John was appointed Speaker in the Legislative Assembly. As Speaker he was acknowledged as having an encyclopaedic knowledge of the standing orders and applying them impartially.

John was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in 2009 Queens Birthday Honours for his service to the Victorian Parliament, local government, and the Neerim community.

Gippsland Anglicans will mostly know John from his role at Synod where for most of his service he was wielding the gavel as Chairman of Committees, a role in which he excelled, guiding Synod and successive bishops (more than half of all the bishops of Gippsland) through complex legislation and debate. He served in governance roles in the Diocese including Bishop-in-Council, the Finance Committee, the Trusts Corporation, the Board of Electors, and as a representative to General Synod. John was also an Honorary Lay Canon of the Cathedral.

Speaking in 1996 at a dinner held in Neerim South to celebrate his retirement from Parliament, John said 'Now I have fish to catch, grandchildren to cuddle, wood to turn to sawdust, but above all I just want to be a slob.'

Of course, John continued his energetic service to the community after his retirement from Parliament, particularly in Governance of the Diocese until 2019. He also served for 13 years as President of the Victorian Parliamentary Former Members Association, from 2002 to 2015.



John Delzoppo fishing, about 40 years ago.

Philip Davis was a Member of Parliament in Gippsland for 22 years from 1992, serving alongside John Delzoppo for some of that time. He also succeeded John as President of the Victorian Parliamentary Former Members Association. Philip served with John as member of the Diocesan Trusts Corporation, Finance Committee, Bishop-in-Council, Synod Deputy Chair of Committees, Board of Electors and Lay Canon of the Cathedral.

New diocesan canons: Daniel Lowe and Jan Misiurka

L-R: Bishop Richard Treloar; The Rev'd Canon Graeme MacRobb (former Dean of St Paul's); The Rev'd Canon David Head; The Rev'd Canon Daniel Lowe; Jan Misiurka, Diocesan Lay Canon; Kaye Harrington, Lay Canon; Christine Morris OAM, Lay Canon; Ian Maxfield, Diocesan Lay Canon; Marion Dewar, Diocesan lay Canon; Dean Keren Terpstra

■ Jan Down

Gippsland Diocese has two new diocesan canons. The Rev'd Daniel Lowe, Senior Chaplain at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School, and Jan Misiurka, Lay Reader in the Parish of Moe-Newborough and Diocesan Secretary for Mothers Union, were installed during Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral on Sunday 24 November.

This joyful service held on the Feast of Christ the King included some special musical contributions, with items by the Choir of St Paul's Warragul

and the Maffra Strings Group, and Craig Doherty as the guest organist.

Officiating at the service were Bishop Richard Treloar, The Very Rev'd Keren Terpstra and The Rev'd Dennis Webster, Rector at Paynesville.

The preacher, The Rev'd Canon Professor John Morgan AM, Associate Priest at Moe-Newborough, spoke about the origins of the relatively modern Feast of Christ the King, which has only been celebrated since 1925.

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A HOPE25 EVENT

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 4 pm Thursday 1 May

Final celebration St Paul's Cathedral Sale 5pm 4th 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. Ph 0417 030 768
email: janetwal@bigpond.net.au





The Hope in Sorry

■ A reflection by Sharron Lane for HOPE25

HOPE25

A personal sorry...

Recently I found myself in an awkward space that I am sure most of us have been in. I had a prompting from the Lord to do something, but being distracted by other things I missed the opportunity that was presented to me. This was despite the nudge being obvious. I was tired and distracted by my work and did not obey the Lord's call to action. In the ensuing couple of weeks, the failure stayed with me though not in a condemnatory way.

I was sorry. Sorry that I failed the Lord when what He asked of me was so small an action but as always one with potentially large spiritual outcomes. I was sad also that I let the Lord down. My sorry became a prayer. A prayer for another opportunity to right the wrong and do the task He had asked of me. Then suddenly, and to my joy, He opened the door again for me to complete what He asked. I was so grateful to be able to make recompense for my earlier failings. The power of sorry was evident. The Lord heard my prayer.

An institutional sorry...

In our society we have become accustomed to public displays of institutions saying sorry – the Stolen Generations speech delivered by Kevin Rudd to Parliament on 13th February 2008 being an instance of national significance. There are other such examples, and these have the potential to assist the healing process for individuals who have been scarred by their experiences within the confines of these powerful spaces. These types of sorry are most often delivered by leaders of large institutions on behalf of many smaller groups and individuals. It is in

these smaller spaces, however, that a grander sorry must echo into a series of smaller sorries. It is in these spaces, such as a local church body, that those injured need to encounter positive outcomes from these larger scale attempts to right many wrongs that have been done.

The HOPE25 call and the power of sorry for the church...

Many have been and are being hurt by the church. For some it will be leadership who misuse and abuse their positions for their own ends and fail to live up to Jesus' imperative as a servant shepherd. Others will struggle with members of the church who hold doctrine above love and fail to remember that Jesus is the only way. For others, change is the great enemy. They want their church to remain the same and how they like it even as church numbers dwindle. These are difficult times for many churches. Many have been found wanting. Some people have been seriously abused under the auspices of the church, but most of us have encountered difficulties.

As we journey toward the various options we are considering around the messages for Hope25 I am reminded again of the power of sorry. Not a flippant, culturally driven sorry, but a heartfelt and spiritual sorry. I know and acknowledge firstly that I am personally broken because *'all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God'*. (Romans 3:23) I have hurt people, hopefully not deliberately, but because I am not perfect. Let us remember the hope in sorry. Moving in prayer to the Lord first,

like my prayer for a second chance where I said: I am sorry. It must start in our own hearts. It must be genuine and sincere.

The Lord will meet us in such a sorry. We have the promise that our Lord can always redeem situations. Romans 8:28 reminds us that not all things are good but that the Lord in His infinite wisdom can make all things work as part of His plan for us. (for those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose).

The story of Joseph is just one such example. Joseph said to his brothers *'Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today.'* (Genesis 50:20) Secondly, we must be willing to listen and speak to others in the church and at times say: I am sorry. We can sometimes accidentally hurt others in our ignorance – believing, often sincerely, we were 'right', or at times, unfortunately, even in our wilfulness and pride. It's okay, we all miss the mark and what's more, it's healing for ourselves and others when we say a sincere sorry.

Finally, how brave would it be for HOPE25 to simply put a 'Sorry' on our church notice board? I can think of numerous things a local church could be sorry for. Who might read it? Who might visit to find out what we are sorry for? Sorry for thinking we were simply part of a denomination and not Christ's body and His hands and feet on earth? Ah, there is hope and power in sorry... if only we would use it more.

Sharron Lane is a warden in the Episcopal District of Westernport Parish and a member of the Diocesan Facilitation Group for Hope25.



Theos at Cowes

Members of the Theos team in front of the Cowes parish hall

■ Ruth Hanlon

A team of 31 committed young Christians arrived in the heat after battling the traffic to get to Cowes on Boxing Day! They quickly set up the parish hall and were ready to open the doors that very first night.

While the hall was set up with comfy couches and table tennis, much of the action took place outside with the excellent main street frontage. From Cowes Theos awnings they served coffee, hot chocolate and cheese or Nutella toasties. Having been involved in Theos over 30 years ago I was pleased to see that hot chocolates and toasted sandwiches were still key to mission (though Nutella is a new addition!).

Couches were taken outside for faith conversations along with a giant Jenga, face or henna painting, basketball hoop and cricket to engage with the young ones.

Theos is typically aimed at teenagers and young adults, but Cowes doesn't run an SU family mission and so this team related to people of all ages, including some younger families with children.

They handed out hundreds of New Testaments and had many faith conversations and opportunities to pray with some people. Everything they did was undergirded with prayer. They set up a prayer room for team members to go and pray during the outreach times.

On New Year's Eve they gave out lots of bottles of water and coffees and after they closed up at 10:30 they went down to the foreshore to look out for people and to pick up rubbish well after midnight.

As a church it was wonderful to feel a

part of this mission as the team used the hall and facilities and we supported them in prayer. We enjoyed members of the team coming to church on the Sunday.

One afternoon as I was in my office at the church a young mother came into the church feeling God was leading her there. We had a great chat, I gave her a Bible and prayed for her. Through prayer, God was stirring people's hearts as I heard other stories of young people genuinely engaging in faith conversations and open to prayer with members of the Theos team.

We give thanks for all the Summer Missions and pray that they bear much fruit. We may not see the outcome, but we trust and pray that those who have heard about how God loves them and what Jesus has done for them, may put their faith in him and find a caring church

community where they can connect and grow in faith.

The Rev'd Ruth Hanlon is Rector of the Parish of Bass / Phillip Island.

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in Ningxia on the Silk Road in China. Near the upper Yellow River, it is now a Chinese Muslim area. Ivan's musical journey started there when he learned the piano at six years old. It was a tormenting experience he says, so uncomfortable! In the 1980s he moved to Hong Kong where he learned the Zheng or Chinese harp. He loved its haunting, melodic tone and began to play professionally, alongside his accounting career.

Ivan's music was greatly appreciated by the congregation. It was a different cultural experience for most and the music was calming and gentle. The body of the harp is also used percussively which contrasted with the soothing melodies of the strings.

Ivan has performed in Hong Kong, Tokyo, Beijing, Rome and now Morwell! He also worked with the Japanese dance Bhuto group in Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts before moving to Morwell a few years ago. Ivan uses his married name as he says his Chinese one is too hard for Australians to say, let alone spell!

Epiphany Chinese Harp Recital

Ivan Middleton plays the Chinese harp

■ Sue Jacka

Epiphany, when the wise ones from foreign lands followed their star to worship the infant Jesus, was a fitting

occasion for St Mary's Morwell to enjoy a Chinese harp recital.

Ivan Middleton, a parishioner, was born

Boyd House and community connection restored

■ Sue Jacka

There is a plaque on Boyd House Morwell which simply calls it 'St Mary's Community Centre'. It was dedicated for this use in December 1979, when the church still had great connections with the community. Archdeacon Frank Lowe was the rector at the time and all sorts of community activities happened from it.

The name Boyd House refers to Eric and Celia Boyd, parishioners who were great supporters of community engagement.

Over the years, the community use must have diminished because the facility was leased to Anglicare as a contact centre for parents with orders against them, so they could see their children in a supervised and safe environment. After the foundations were discovered to be failing, Anglicare was moved out and the building just sat there for at least 10 years, gradually deteriorating due to lack of funds to complete the repairs.

The need to re-engage with the local community and to provide a low cost facility for community groups is still a very important part of the church's mission. I was keen to see Boyd House and its vision of outreach restored, but there were still insufficient parish funds to make this happen. Boldly I suggested to Parish Council that if this was God's will, the funds would come. A couple of retired engineers independently inspected the building pro bono and then

together they agreed that it was worth restoring.

Amazingly, a bequest from Roger Doyle, a former parishioner, arrived for \$50,000. We had the funds to make a start! Mainmark, a company specialising in stabilising the earth beneath foundations, was engaged to return the building to an upright position. The walls literally moved. Gaps between the window frames and walls were suddenly no longer there. Even the downpipes were stretched back to what they were prior to the building sinking.

Grants from Anglicare, City to City and the Vera Moore foundation were supplemented with parish funds to enable the restoration works and to create a fabulous new kitchen in the former office space.

The disaster struck! Our builder went into liquidation, having taken most of our money and leaving us with little completed on the renovation. Fortunately, our op shop was having a fabulous year and we were able to proceed.

On 20 October 2024 Bishop Richard blessed the newly restored and refurbished building and rededicated it for use as a community outreach centre. We had a short liturgy, with different parishioners praying through the various areas of the building.



The new builder Trevor Missen fixing windows of Boyd House

The donors and workers were thanked were thanked, noting especially the contribution of Ken Peake who oversaw the project, putting in countless hours of management expertise and purchasing items to enable the new builder to focus on the build.

Currently, The Rev'd Kathy Dalton uses the building for her ministry with the local Gunaikurnai mob, Narcotics Anonymous meets weekly and we have dreams and some plans for a repair café, craft events, community meals and English as a Second Language courses. The big challenge is to reconnect with the wider community and shine the light of Christ.

The Abbey and Anglicare Victoria – a renewed partnership

■ Wendy Mawoyo

In my new role as Anglicare Victoria's Community Development Coordinator (Parish Partnerships), I decided to visit The Abbey on Raymond Island late last year, after several recommendations. Despite numerous trips to Paynesville, I had never ventured to this serene retreat and I was curious about what made this place so special.

When I arrived, I was enveloped by a sense of peace as I stood amidst the lush vegetation. I could immediately see it as a perfect haven in which to dream, reflect or immerse myself in a good book.

I was warmly welcomed by Anna, the administration officer, and then met Abbey Director Cath Connelly, whose kindness and passion for The Abbey's mission were immediately evident. Over a thoughtfully prepared lunch, Cath shared her vision of The Abbey as a sanctuary for community healing.

Cath smiled as she spoke of their current music program, which is open to all – as are The Abbey grounds. She explained part of The Abbey's role as 'being in community, helping



Cath Connelly (left) and Wendy Mawoyo at The Abbey Prayer Tree

community and not necessarily for the community to believe they have to get involved in church services if they attend programs offered at The Abbey.'

We discussed various initiatives, such as having a training room for various programs, and plans to renovate facilities to better serve families in need, especially those affected by family violence. The Abbey offers rooms for individual or family retreats, providing solitude and restoration.

The natural beauty of the lake attracts locals, including young people, fostering a sense of community. I was pleased to see local young people sitting by the lake and enjoying the moment. A particularly moving feature at The Abbey is the Prayer Tree, inviting visitors to pause, reflect and leave their prayers, symbolising hope and healing.

My visit illuminated the potential for Anglicare Victoria and The Abbey to rekindle our partnership. By combining our strengths, we can offer respite for families (The Abbey providing a safe space for families affected by domestic violence to heal -and reconnect) youth engagement (using camping facilities at The Abbey to create enriching experiences for young people), team retreats (offering Anglicare teams a tranquil environment for connection and rejuvenation and workshops to leaders on hope) and volunteer training (Anglicare assisting The Abbey's volunteers with necessary training to enhance their contributions or apply for much-needed grants for community programs).

I'm excited that our leaders at Anglicare are doing their best to build strong communities through our programs. Re-establishing a partnership with The Abbey could usher in a new season of collaboration, benefiting both our organisations and the communities we serve.

I encourage Anglicare staff and/or their families to visit The Abbey, experience its tranquillity, and perhaps even spot a koala. Cath's warmth and dedication help make this place truly special.

As we look forward to an exciting 2025 of partnerships, let's consider how we can work together to support and uplift our communities.



Christine Morris

One fine cake

Bishop Richard, Jan Blake and the cake

Despite the jet lag (having just arrived home from the IASCUFO meeting in Kuala Lumpur – see page 19) Bishop Richard gave everyone a laugh with some impromptu lines at the cutting of the cake after the service of Nine Lessons and Carols at St Paul's Cathedral:

Bless this fine cake,
bless us that partake;
bless who it didst make:
even Jan Blake!
Amen.

For program coordinators considering engagement with The Abbey (www.theabbey.org.au), contact wendy.mawoyo@anglicarevic.org.au

Hospitality, spirituality and environment

■ Cath Connelly

Happy New Year from beautiful Raymond Island. New year is always a time of personal and communal reflection about the past year and visioning into our future. This year, I am aware that I have been Abbey Director for two years.

I remain convinced that The Abbey is a thin place, a place where heaven and earth kiss. Many visitors comment about the sense of peace that descends when coming across the waters to join us. People continue to be drawn to The Abbey as a place where the Holy One may be encountered – the tranquillity, the immanence of nature, the vastness of lake, sky and earth. The Abbey sits on the three legs of hospitality, spirituality and environment. Amidst these three may we always be a place of ‘generous hospitality, spacious conversation, and spiritual encounter’, to quote New Zealand’s Vaughan Park Anglican Retreat & Conference Centre.

Perhaps my best sense of what we offer at The Abbey is caught up in the vision espoused by theologian William Stringfellow in reference to the Northumbria Community: ‘dynamic and erratic, spontaneous and radical, audacious and immature, committed if not altogether coherent. Ecumenically open and often experimental; visible here and there, now and then but unsettled institutionally. Almost monastic in nature, but most of all enacting a fearful hope for society.’

This gives me something to work on! This is your place; come find a home here.

Save the date



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

FEBRUARY

- 13 *Hush* Quiet Day: Praying it Forward: Emerging Hope and Our Role as Ancestors of the Future. Facilitator: Cath Connelly.
- 13 Celtic Music session.
- 14–16 Singing the Blues. Facilitator: Merryl Blair.

MARCH

- 1 Sit, Sew & Be Inspired.
- 1 Car rally.
- 13 *Hush* Quiet Day: Drumming from the Heart. Facilitator: Jill McConnell.
- 13 Celtic music session.
- 14–16 In Love with the Enneagram. Facilitator: Julia Fullarton.
- 23 Heather Downie harp concert.
- 25–28 Mid-week retreat: Mary’s Seven Statements. Facilitator: Gradwell Fredericks.



Several members of the team: Book Fair Coordinator Christine Morris OAM, Jan Kewley, Arthur McPherson, Steph Broughton, Lyn Ruff

This year’s Giant Book Fair at St Paul’s Cathedral has been a wonderful outreach to the Sale community and many summer visitors. The fair was a fun-raiser as well as a fundraiser, providing a family-friendly holiday activity.

An extraordinary effort went into this event, with a small team of

volunteers assisting the Coordinator, Christine Morris OAM to do the heavy lifting – often literally. There were 60 trestle tables of books which had to be restocked every night for three weeks over January.

Ro Verspaandonk, long-time supporter of the book fair now living in

Traralgon, sent frequent text messages of encouragement such as:

The books are now a little joggled, your brains are now a little boggled. May God bless each and every one with peace and sleep when the day is done.



Noojee church deconsecrated

The congregation on the day of the deconsecration of St Andrew's Noojee

■ John Batt

Three Men and A Church

'Three Men and a Church' was the title of a newspaper article in *The Argus* written by Ruth Clarke on 17 October 1939.

Ruth was the daughter of The Rev'd A E Clarke and the article tells the story of the rebuilding of St Andrew's Church Noojee. Ruth participated by cooking the meals and providing a helping hand to The Rev'd A Sutton of Bruthen, Stipendiary Reader Mr Horton Pilkington of Buchan, and her father – all former builders. The small collective camped out on site and used the Gippsland Diocese caravan whilst they were working to complete the project.

Ruth wrote:

The original little wooden church which had survived the 1926 fire was destroyed in the 1939 blaze. The building had been a social hub in the community, but the cost of replacing it with a more durable structure seemed prohibitive. That was until a plan was made by some enterprising clergymen in the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland, one of whom was my father.

A more durable structure

The concrete building was considered a more durable structure, the thought being that the concrete bricks would better withstand another bushfire. Their hard work resulted in a building that has served the Noojee community for 85 years. Ten years ago, at the St Andrew's church 75th Anniversary, 60 to 70 people crammed into the little church to celebrate and give thanks.

The church building had provided shelter for services, social gatherings and many other activities including a thriving Sunday School. At the

Anniversary Service, church life at Noojee was celebrated as truly ecumenical in its nature, welcoming all people, children and young people regardless of church persuasion.

Building Audit

However, a recent building audit by a local structural engineer had found the building now unsafe. As a result, the Parish Council made the decision to relocate their fortnightly service into the neighbouring Noojee Hall using the back room and kitchen area. Thank you to the Hall Committee for accommodating the congregation.

After further consultation the Parish Council came to the decision that the costs of repair, upgrading the church to meet new building requirements and ongoing maintenance issues were beyond the capacity of the Parish – the repairs alone to the foundations were estimated at a conservative \$250 to \$350,000 notwithstanding the upgrade and ongoing maintenance costs. The difficult decision was made to permanently close the building and continue church services at the local Hall.

Deconsecration

On Thursday 21 November 2024, 85 years after St Andrew's Noojee building was licensed by Bishop George Harvard Cranswick (25/11/39) to the glory of God in honour of St Andrew, 'A Service to Deconsecrate and Secularise St Andrew's Anglican Church, Noojee as sacred for the gathering of God's people and for the worship of God' was conducted by Bishop Richard.

The Bible reading was taken from 1 Peter: 4–6, in which the apostle Peter exhorts readers to come to Christ, the living stone. The Rev'd Gospel Ralte encouraged the congregation of 20 (pictured) to take heart that the church is not the building, that Christ is not bound by walls, but through the indwelling Holy Spirit we all are members of his body, the church. In the spirit of St Andrew the church in Noojee will continue; a different location but the same worship of Christ, the Son of the Living God. The Service concluded in good Anglican tradition with a hearty afternoon tea.

The Rev'd Dr John Batt was Priest-in-Charge at Neerim South from 2011-2020.



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Living faith and hope: then and now



The Most Rev'd Greg Bennet DD, Catholic Bishop of Sale; The Rev'd Dr Francis Otopo, Dean of St Mary's Catholic Cathedral in Sale; The Rev'd Dr Chris Monaghan CP, President of Yarra Theological Union; The Rev'd Dr Merryl Blair OAM, former Senior Lecturer, Stirling Theological College; and The Rt Rev'd Dr Richard Treloar, Anglican Bishop of Gippsland

■ Grania Sheehan reports on the Ecumenical Advent Conversation on 29 November.

The Rev'd Dr Francis Otopo, Dean of St Mary's Cathedral in Sale, began the Advent Conversation at The Abbey by leading us in singing, *How Great Thou Art*. He called upon Spirit to 'bring the fire of optimism into our gathering'; to 'show us what is possible'.

The Anglican Bishop of Gippsland, The Rt Rev'd Dr Richard Treloar and the Catholic Bishop of Sale, The Most Rev'd Greg Bennet DD, co-hosted the Conversation. Eminent biblical scholars, the Rev'd Dr Merryl Blair OAM and the Rev'd Dr Chris Monaghan CP, spoke to the great Advent themes of Living faith and hope: then and now.

Dr Cath Connelly, Director of The Abbey, acknowledged the Kurnai Tatungoloong and their custodianship and care of Gragin (Raymond Island) where we were gathered.

Dr Blair began with her exegesis of Jeremiah 33:14–16. The theme of 'hope and righteousness' was explored. Babylon has been besieged and invasion by the Assyrians is imminent. The elite and artisan classes having been deported, leave the working classes behind. A beloved people have lost custodianship of the land inherited from God. The Davidic line of kingship has ended and the temple as a locus for God's presence and worship has been destroyed. The prophetic message of hope comes that God is no longer present in the temple or through the reigns of kings. Instead, the future of God depends on what God is and what God will do: cause a righteous branch to spring up for David. Dr Blair explored the pairing of justice and righteousness in the text, highlighting 'righteousness' as an attitude

becoming action. The cry for justice arises when righteousness is no longer present.

Bishop Treloar in his response emphasised the sprouting of the righteous branch that was to come from the stump of Jesse – our own family tree. Into woundedness came the Christ Child heralding the birth of a radical inclusion founded on authority distinct from secular power.

In session 2, Dr Monaghan used Luke's infancy narrative to explore the theme of 'the renewal of faith and eternal hope'. The session began with reference to Exousia – the authority of God's Word being spoken into the world. Jesus was born into a broken world of divided kingdoms and rule by client kings and the priesthood of Rome. Jerusalem has been destroyed and there is no possibility of freedom from Empire.

The Lukan community was faced with a multitude of challenges, including losing hope. They risked complacency and relapse with the delay in the return of Jesus. The audience was asked to reflect on: how do we speak the message of Jesus into the present complacency and the retreat from faith in action?

Bishop Bennet in responding asked the audience how God's Word can be seen, heard and lived now. Discussion from the floor highlighted the challenges faced in testifying and creating space for people to know Jesus beyond church walls. Bishops Bennet and Treloar referred to the Jubilee Year of Hope in 2025 and Hope25 respectively as ways to bring hope in Gippsland and testify widely to the transforming power of knowing Jesus.

After lunch, Dr Blair presented her exegesis of Micah 5:2–5a and the theme of 'hope and peace coming'. Again, we heard the prophet condemn the treatment of the poor by the rich and ruling classes. Micah presents an oracle of hope during a time of social disintegration. He draws on the image of the shepherd as one who comes to care personally for the flock, reflecting a longing for good leadership, justice and righteous rule. There is a longing expressed for the one who fulfils the promise and brings Shalom. 'Peace' like 'righteousness' is lived out in action. It is expressed through our systems of governance as well as in our personal relationships.

Bishop Bennet drew our attention to the peace and hope generated from the *kairos* moment, given to us at the appointed time. Responding to *kairos* moments enables us to change the 'nitty gritty' of the way we live to better reflect what God is wanting us to be. He referred to *An Absolutely Ordinary Rainbow* by Les Murray, which depicts a man weeping in Martin Place as he sees an ordinary rainbow yet experiences the divine.

In the final session, Dr Monaghan explored further Luke's infancy narrative and the 'experience of God' by drawing on Luke's rich vocabulary of response to divine visitation and annunciation. For Zechariah, visitation elicits fear and questioning. When John is born, he finds his voice and testifies to God's work in his life. Elizabeth too recognises God's blessing upon her but not without fear and anticipation of what is to come.

The shepherds respond to their visitation with fear before coming to testify. Mary is initially afraid and questioning at the time of the annunciation. She comes to ponder and treasure in her heart that God is with her.

Bishop Treloar responded with our vocation (like John the Baptist) to make way for another. The vocation to decrease as He must increase points away from the self to the brighter life of Christ. 'Making way' for another resists the false narrative of scarcity from which comes exclusion.

Final question time focussed the conversation on the emergence of hope beyond a disintegrating world. Dr Connelly then drew a fruitful conversation to a close with gratitude for the welcoming ecumenical space.

Dr Grania Sheehan, from the Anglican Parish of Traralgon, is a member of the Board of Anglican Earthcare Gippsland based at The Abbey, Raymond Island.

The full text of this report can be found on the website: www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/



Advent 24 anticipates Hope 25

Trafalgar Community Carols in McGregor's Park with Warragul Municipal Band and Choir of Trafalgar Primary School

■ Dean Spalding

Community engagement and evangelism in Trafalgar Parish

Advent is a great season for community engagement and evangelism. As Christmas approaches the cultural vestiges of the celebration of the Lord's birth create an opportunity (an 'in') that allows the singing of carols and the proclamation of the Gospel as it is contained within the Nativity narrative. The Parish of Trafalgar becomes a hive of carolling activity.

We kicked-off December with Community Carols in the beautiful McGregor's Park, bringing back Community Carols to Trafalgar after a four-year hiatus, and thankfully the community remembered how to attend in great numbers – about 200! The Longriders Christian Motorcycle Club worked with us and fed the town with a free sausage sizzle.

Carols continued at the Traveller's Rest in Thorpdale the following Friday. We even carolled our wonderful Trafalgar Op Shop volunteers. The parish then hosted a lunch as a token of our deep appreciation for their labour.

We further shared the joy with our town with the 'Traveller's Carols' – with help from a discounted Hertz Minibus. We carolled Andrew's House aged care facility (three dining room communities), private residences, the retail strip in Traf and the Criterion Hotel – where patrons were surprised and, for the most part, delighted! We finished with a delightful supper and a couple more carols at the house of Evie and Johnny.

Why keep Thomas Becket?

In the first Sunday of Christmastide we kept a remembrance of St Thomas Becket, the martyred Archbishop of Canterbury (also William Temple, St Oscar Romero and all 'meddlesome, troublesome and turbulent'

HOPE25

priests!). We included a reading of an excerpt from *Murder in the Cathedral* by T S Eliot followed by lunch at Fozigobble Café.

Why is it important to remember St Thomas Becket? Thomas' martyrdom (854 years ago) illustrates many rich truths: the truth that an appointment of an Archbishop (or any leader for that matter) made for all the wrong reasons can still be used of God to serve Kingdom purposes – like Pope John XXIII who was thought only to be a 'caretaker' appointment but ushered in light and life to the church through his surprise calling of the Second Vatican Council.

Similarly Henry II appointed Thomas as Archbishop of Canterbury thinking that after the former's fulfilment of the role as Lord Chancellor he would make a 'compliant' Archbishop who would serve the king's intention to curb the authority of the church. Instead, after his consecration, the Spirit led Thomas to champion the church's independence and self-governance.

Another truth Thomas' story illustrates is the murder of Thomas being catalysed by words to the effect, 'Who will rid me of this meddlesome priest?' – although historically more likely to have been closer to what was quoted by Edward Grim who was present at the murder, 'What miserable drones and traitors have I nourished and promoted in my household, who let their lord be treated with such shameful contempt by a low-born clerk.' That has

a greater ring of 'rant' and authenticity and is an illustrative example of 'direction by indirection' in that it provides the speaker with 'plausible deniability' when a crime is committed as a result of their words.

Our most recent experience of a contemporary example was Trump's rants about a conspiracy to rig the ballot counting in the 2020 election and to suggest that the only way to save the US from a terrible injustice was to disrupt the certification of the election results by storming the capitol building on 6 January 2021.

Commemorating Thomas Becket also highlights the extraordinary connection with the A'Beckett family who bequeathed land on Raymond Island to the Diocese and later further donated land for the building of St Thomas' Bunyip. Bunyip's former Priest-in-Charge, The Rev'd Ken Parker attended the St Thomas' Day celebration at Yarragon.

And lastly, Becket serves as a reminder that priests and prophets are often called by God to be 'meddlesome, troublesome and turbulent'. They are often called to 'comfort the afflicted' but also frequently called to 'afflict the comfortable'. Whether the knowledge of the rightness of that vocation will make any difference to the way in which they are often persecuted for faithfulness to their calling, I doubt, this side of eternity. But it does explain why good and faithful priests get into strife.

I think of another Archbishop – William Temple – who was also labelled a 'meddlesome priest' for his championing of the poorest in England, and I think of Archbishop Oscar Romero, now also a saint. He refused to leave his beloved El Salvador just as Thomas refused safe passage to flee the Cathedral.

To stay in contended spaces is often costly, and we remember all those persecuted within the church for their faithfulness and diligence.

The Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding is Rector of the Parish of Trafalgar.



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The smoking ceremony begins the service of blessing

Michelle Damello

Building Extensions blessed at Paynesville

■ Sue Fordham

Despite a change in the weather from blue skies to black and despite, at times, torrential rain, the blessing of the new extensions to the narthex at St Peter by the Lake Paynesville went off smoothly.

Sunday 17 November saw the culmination of several years of fund raising by the whole parish, discussions with architects and builders Legend Homes and the establishment of a consensus within the congregation about design features.

The catalyst for the building extensions was the growing need for an accessible toilet. The then parish priest, Bishop Jeffrey Driver, realised that the existing downstairs toilets were becoming a disincentive to some people who, because of age or infirmity found them too hard to access.

The project expanded to take in a new kitchen and hospitality area, and a new robing room. Then associated considerations, such as a new concrete path down to the Quiet Garden, garden embellishments and the opportunity to commission stained glass windows followed.

The service of blessing the new extensions began with a smoking ceremony and welcome to country conducted by Uncle Rex Solomon and Brad Kenny. Uncle Rex explained the elements of the ceremony and the spiritual symbolism of the smoke in the passing through of which we become one people.

The building, including the stained glass windows designed by glass artist Bruce Hutton, was blessed and dedicated by the Bishop of Gippsland, Richard Treloar. The windows depicted the 'fishers of people' theme in the gospels of Luke and John.

The huge job of monitoring the project and finally designing the liturgy for the dedication were overseen by current Rector, The Rev'd Dennis Webster, and The Rev'd Heather Toms who turned the first sod was able to be present for the occasion.

The homily was delivered by Bishop Jeffrey Driver. His theme was the nature of buildings and the use of walls to include people rather than exclude them. 'The risk with buildings and walls in particular, is that they can become a vehicle for physical and cultural isolation

and exclusion', he said. 'Temples are impressive but impermanent. This amenity is great, but we must always remember that we exist for those outside. He waits for us there.'

The blessing of the narthex enhancements occurred on the 23rd anniversary of Bishop Driver's consecration as Bishop.



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Christ Church Foster marks 125 years of faith, resilience, and community

■ Carole Williams

Christ Church Foster in the Parish of Corner Inlet celebrated its 125th anniversary on 24 November with music, singing, a flag parade and an overview of the church's history. A newly installed prayer seat and a prayer tree were dedicated following the service. The Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes conducted the service.

The church's history revealed both trials and tribulations in its early establishment, with the original building completely destroyed by a bushfire in 1898. However, the diligent efforts of the parishioners saw the church re-established on a better site in the town on the main street, which is now a prime location in the township.

A highlight of the celebration was the Children's Ministry team, who waved six different flags representing the Bible verses they had been studying, with an accompanying song explaining their study. Their presentation was greatly enjoyed by the congregation.



The Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes with the newly planted olive tree and the prayer seat; with parishioners Pieter Du Plessis, Robert Paragreen and Lawry Grady

Afterwards, an olive tree chosen as the prayer tree was planted beside the newly installed prayer seat in front of the Rectory. The wooden seat, crafted from cypress, was made and donated by the Foster Men's Shed.

Retired former Christ Church ministers The Rev'd John Davies and partner Pam along with The Rev'd Ken Rogers and his partner Susan returned for the celebration, which concluded with a delicious lunch in the church hall.



At Christmas, our culture is dominated by Santa, presents, food, and parties. The true meaning of Christmas is celebrating Jesus, our Redeemer, King, and Lord, coming to earth as a helpless, dependent newborn baby, which is often overlooked. The nativity story was an important part of the children's preparation for Breakfast at Bethlehem, teaching them the true meaning of Christmas. Jesus came to earth to save us and open the door for us to enter His Kingdom.

Seeing the younger generation's eagerness and enthusiasm in our church was encouraging. It filled us with hope and belief for a future where Jesus will continue to touch the lives of people of all ages. The diverse range of attendees, from babes in arms to grandparents, was delightful and showed encouraging signs of recovery from the pandemic decline in numbers at our churches. Jesus is the source of our hope and growth for our congregations.

Let us remember our Christmas past and continue to rejoice in the variety and differences we all celebrate. Jesus has brought us together from all over the world to turn our eyes to Him in praise and worship.

■ Joanne Stuchbery

What a joyous occasion our congregation at Leongatha had on 22 December at our Sunday morning service. We combined our two morning services to celebrate together with the children in our parish, 'Breakfast at Bethlehem'.

We were all invited to participate in the theme of Bethlehem at Jesus' birth by dressing accordingly. Hence, men and women wore various outfits – shawls, head turbans, long flowing robes, and even a Friesian cow onesie!

Our kids brought their toy animals and laid them at the crib beside baby Jesus to add to the atmosphere and celebration. We celebrated a delicious breakfast together: mountains of pancakes, maple syrup, jam, lemon and sugar, fresh fruit, nuts, cereal, juice, and of course, tea and coffee.

Our children then entertained us with a play based on Luke 2, retelling the story of Jesus' birth. They played many different characters and parts, encouraging full participation and involvement of all ages.

Young innovators at Gippsland Grammar drive solar power initiative

Two ambitious students are proving that age is no barrier to innovation, using data and determination to bring solar power to their school.

Gippsland Grammar Year 8 students Rustan Bazley and Leo Kantzides set out to reduce their school's carbon footprint and power costs and their efforts not only secured approval for a solar installation at the Bairnsdale Campus but also sparked a review of solar energy across the school's three campuses.

Last year, when the dynamic duo were Year 6 students at the Bairnsdale Campus, they teamed up with the campus' 'Green Team' and teacher Todd Cook to investigate the viability of solar power and developed a business plan to present their project to the school's Board.

In an amazing coup for both the students and the environment, following subsequent consideration the Gippsland Grammar Board agreed with Rustan and Leo that installing solar power was a viable investment and initiated a full



Year 8 Gippsland Grammar students Rustan Bazley and Leo Kantzides

solar review of all campuses.

The review confirmed the students' data at Bairnsdale and solar panels will

be installed at Gippsland Grammar's Bairnsdale Campus in January 2025.

Congratulations Rustan and Leo!

Snow Gum Summit: Protecting an icon of the High Country

■ **Krista Mountford**

Early in 2024, the Parish of Trafalgar celebrated Aboriginal Sunday with a special prayer activity incorporating the 'potting up' of snow gum seedlings. The potting of the seedlings formed part of a project by which people are demonstrating care for this beautiful country – the raising of snow gums from seed to be planted as a seed bank for this threatened species.

On Sunday 1 September they planted the last snow gum, to become a 'prayer-tree' at St Mary's. Reports by Dean Spalding, Rector of Trafalgar, on these two events can be found in TGA March and November 2024.

Snow Gums (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) are a symbol of the Australian High Country, standing tall and unique against the landscape. These distinctive trees, found nowhere else in the world, give our mountains a truly Australian character. However, they face increasing threats from both fire and dieback, putting their future at risk.

It has now been announced that Friends of the Earth Melbourne are hosting a Snow Gum Summit on February 14-16 at Dinner Plain. This event will bring together land managers, researchers, and community members to explore the critical steps needed to protect and preserve snow gum woodlands for future generations. Their goal is to raise awareness and ensure this iconic species

gets the attention it deserves on the state government's agenda.

The summit will feature a mix of presentations, workshops, and field trips – providing a platform for collaboration and action.

For more information visit their website: www.melbournefoe.org.au/snow_gum_summit





The following article was first published by Tearfund (www.tearfund.org.au) and is reprinted with kind permission.

■ **Chris McLeod**

After the failure of the referendum on The Voice many of us were left with uncertainty. Uncertainty about why the referendum failed. Uncertainty about why division on which way to vote existed between brothers and sisters in the church.

What seemed relatively simple to many of us – a direct non-partisan Voice to Federal Parliament about the things that matter most to First Nations – ended up taking the movement towards Reconciliation back decades.

It was a surreal moment for me having lived through the 1980's and 1990's and witnessing the debates around 'Land Rights'. Who could forget the full-page advertisements in popular newspapers warning Australians that First Nations were coming to take our backyards? (We still have backyards, by the way). The question hovers in our minds – who do we trust? The ready answer is no one. But then I am asked to reflect on '[Now more than ever we need to] love one another with mutual affection' (based on Romans 12: 10).

As a Christian leader, do I add to the polarisation that is taking over our world? I observe that for many Christians, getting the politics right is more important than getting the Christian living right. I think it is time to catch our breath and consider how we move forward from this. 'Love one another with mutual affection and outdo one another in showing honour' (Romans 12: 10) is not obvious in our world today and tragically many Christians are not modelling this.

The questions that I began with in this article are still in our minds as First Nations' peoples, but I suggest that our approach to finding the answers to those questions does not lie in polarisation but in communication. Some certainly voted 'no' out of fear, but others thought there was a better option for First Nations' justice.

To the first, I would say that 'love casts out fear' (1 John 4: 18). First Nations peoples were not trying to

take our backyards, punish Australia, or make people feel guilty. The Voice was a gracious act seeking to find a solution to the many issues that face First Nations' peoples.

To the second, I would say now is the time to come up with that alternative plan.

It seems that we need to find another way and that is why we still need our non-First Nations brothers and sisters to listen to us, to hear what we are saying, and to walk with us.

It could well be that God had another plan in mind. Listening to the Holy Spirit is part of the discernment process. However, the conversation needs to be based on mutual affection, not anger, fear, or retribution, but open and honest; what we call 'Truth Telling'. Starting the process again will lead us to another point.

This last conversation ended with the referendum. Lessons are being learnt from it. I hope we can open the door to another series of conversations about how we can right the wrongs of the past and give First Nations a hope and a future.

I had said during the conversations on The Voice that Christians can lead the way in showing a Christian ethic to the process. In this I feel we failed. However, this is part of the learning process. Paul's words are a challenge to us all, 'love one another with mutual affection, outdo one another in showing honour' – now more than ever!

Bishop McLeod currently serves as an Assistant Bishop in the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide, and has served as the National Aboriginal Bishop since 2015. Bishop McLeod is a descendant of the Gurindji people.

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Anglican Communion starts 'long process of resolution'

Members of IASCUFO in Kuala Lumpur

Bishop Richard is a Commissioner with IASCUFO and attended the recent meeting in Kuala Lumpur. The following article was first published in *Church Times*: www.churchtimes.co.uk/ and is reprinted with kind permission.

■ Francis Martin

THE Anglican Communion is moving 'from a season of raw and antagonistic division to one of reckoning with what will likely be a long process of resolution', the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order (IASCUFO) has said.

The body met in Kuala Lumpur from 6 to 12 December, and released a communiqué on 18 December in which it wrote that members had 'wrestled' with their divisions, and felt that 'we may now be able to face our theological differences and associated fractures more productively, as we seek responsible and creative ways to remain together, albeit to varying degrees.'

The body has an advisory position in the Communion, and is formed of 18 members, drawn from six continents. About two-thirds of the members come from countries considered to be part of the global South.

Earlier last month, IASCUFO published its proposals for structural reform of the Anglican Communion (*Church Times*, 6 December).

Under the proposals, the agreed description of the Anglican Communion would be revised to describe the constituent Churches as having a 'historic connection' with the see of Canterbury rather than 'in communion' with it.

The second proposal put forward is to introduce a rotating presidency of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), and to give the Primates' Standing Committee an 'enhanced role' in convening the Primates' Meetings and the Lambeth Conference.

The report, known as the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals, will be debated at the next meeting of the ACC in 2026. If introduced, the proposals would reduce the Archbishop of Canterbury's procedural influence in the Communion.

In the communiqué, the members of IASCUFO called on the Churches of the Communion to 'cultivate generosity in the spirit' of the proposals, while recognising 'the hurt that has been caused'.

Questions of sexual ethics have dominated inter-Anglican discussions in recent years and occasioned divisions in the Communion. The Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA), which opposes any change to traditional teaching on marriage and sexuality, has emerged as a prominent voice.

The leaders of the GSFA pledge to remain within the Communion, while making clear their opposition to actions taken by the Church of England in introducing blessings for same-sex couples (*Church Times*, 28 June 2024).

IASCUFO's communiqué argues that the Anglican Communion 'needs to find ways for the contribution of the GSFA to be more fully recognised and received within its wider life and mission... We resolved that IASCUFO should reach out to the leadership of the GSFA to explore the relevance of The Nairobi-Cairo Proposals to our most immediate challenges.'

Several member Churches of the GSFA are also represented on IASCUFO, including the Province of Alexandria,

and the Church of the Province of South East Asia.

The Church of England Evangelical Council is listed as a 'mission partner' of the GSFA.



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Please and thank you, ChatGPT

■ Daniel Lowe

What's the Point of Politeness to AI?

Do you say 'please' and 'thank you' when using your AI chatbot of choice? As Christians, how should we approach the way we interact with technology, especially AI chatbots? Does our faith influence whether we say 'please' and 'thank you' to a machine?

This question might seem trivial, but it touches on profound themes of character, stewardship, and human dignity. In Genesis, humans are given stewardship over creation (Genesis 1:28), which includes the tools and technologies we develop. AI chatbots are part of this technological landscape, and how we use them reflects our understanding of this stewardship.

The way we communicate with chatbots has sparked debate among my colleagues, and I'm torn on the issue.

When I first started using AI chatbots, I was persuaded to interact with them as I would with a colleague – making polite requests and offering positive feedback.

The argument for this approach was twofold. First, the idea was that if I spoke politely to the chatbot, it would mirror that politeness. My polite interactions would help shape a better AI model by reinforcing patterns of respectful communication. Additionally, polite, clear, and constructive communication might help the AI better understand my intent, leading to more precise and helpful answers. In other words, a polite prompt often makes for a more effective prompt.

The second part of the argument was about the user. The argument goes that the way we speak to chatbots reflects how we speak to real people. Speaking politely to chatbots, the thinking went, could help me build a habit of being polite to real people. This argument has its champions. Dr Eduardo Benitez Sandoval, a social robotics researcher at UNSW, argues, 'Politeness towards AI can reflect how we value and respect other entities, both living and non-living, and model the sort of behaviour we wish to see in the world.'

It's worth noting that politeness isn't a universal standard – it varies widely across cultures. In some cultures, formal politeness is deeply ingrained, even in mundane interactions. How might this cultural lens influence the way we view politeness toward chatbots? Imagine the difference designed to operate in a Japanese culture and one designed for an Australian culture. How would different users feel if their chatbot responded to a question



with the iconically Australian response, 'Yeah, Nah'? Such responses might feel natural to some users but alienate others, highlighting how deeply culture shapes our expectations of politeness – even from chatbots.

Cultural variations in what is considered polite certainly complicate the question – particularly from the perspective of those designing chatbots to respond to users in culturally appropriate ways – but the reasons for polite responses apply regardless of the specific cultural norms for politeness. Even if politeness doesn't 'matter' to chatbots, it could still reflect something about who we are. Even in small and seemingly unnecessary ways, practising kindness can shape us into more thoughtful people.

For a time, this argument won me over. But recently, my thinking has shifted.

Are chatbots just tools?

Picture this: my garden needs mulch, so I've ordered a couple of cubic metres, now sitting in my driveway. I head to the shed and grab a shovel from the pile of tools. 'Hello,' I say to the shovel. 'I need to shift a large amount of mulch today. Can I use you to do that?' The shovel gives no response.

'Thank you!' I declare cheerfully as I get to work.

Strange? It definitely feels odd to me. Tools like shovels don't care if you're polite or rude – they're just inanimate objects. Chatbots, while advanced and interactive, are still tools – non-sentient machines.

Sandoval responds to this kind of objection by suggesting that polite behaviour toward machines, like taking

care of a car, reflects respect for their utility. But I'd argue this comparison confuses respect for the utility of a tool with respect for the sensitivities of the tool. Politeness has no material impact on the chatbot; it's purely for our sake.

This raises an interesting question: Should developers design chatbots to encourage politeness? Some chatbots are already programmed to ignore aggressive language, not for their own sake but to discourage harmful habits in users. Does this make politeness a design issue as much as a user choice? This is perhaps a question for another day. For the moment our focus is on us, the user, and how we interact with AI chatbots.

Anthropomorphizing AI

This brings us to the heart of the matter: is there anything wrong with treating chatbots as human? Chatbots are excellent at mimicking human interaction, and as they improve, it's easy to start ascribing human traits to them. Just as we ascribe human traits to pets, we often do the same with chatbots, projecting emotions and intentions onto them.

But what if the key issue isn't about artificial intelligence or our own character development but about how we value the act of communication itself? Does a desire for polite communication simply reflect an appreciation of language, regardless of who or what might be receiving the message? If so, it wouldn't matter whether I was crafting a prompt for ChatGPT or writing a letter to my grandmother. In both cases, my concern would be for the quality of the language I used rather than whether my grandmother or a chatbot deserved any particular politeness from me.

Of course, even if chatbots don't require politeness, there may still be practical benefits. In customer service, for instance, politeness could build trust and smooth interactions, creating a better experience for both parties. One literary review on the role of politeness in human-machine interactions found that 'socially competent systems are more appreciated and, therefore, more readily accepted than machines that lack social competencies, such as politeness. Moreover, it has arisen that politeness promotes greater trust in automated systems and some insights from politeness theory can also be applied to human-machine interactions.' (Ribino, P. The role of politeness in human-machine interactions: a systematic literature review and future perspectives. *Artif Intell Rev* 56 (Suppl 1), 445–482 (2023). <https://tinyurl.com/yjbmdjvm>.)

This was particularly important in certain fields. As the Ribino study highlights, politeness in human-machine interactions can enhance trust and compliance, especially in critical fields like healthcare and education.

Politeness and Christian Values

This brings us to another layer of the conversation – how our faith might inform the way we approach interactions with AI. On a basic level, the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) suggest that politeness reflects the kindness, gentleness, and self-control of Christian character. A discipline of politeness might shape my interactions and help me become more mindful of how I speak, whether to humans or machines.

However, the fruits of the Spirit are relational by nature (except joy and self-control) and belong in a relational context. While it seems reasonable to apply self-control to my interactions with chatbots – no need for outbursts of verbal abuse or keyboard bashing when the chatbot doesn't cooperate – does it really make sense to show love, kindness, and gentleness to algorithmic tools?

Does politeness toward AI risk diluting the relational nature of these virtues? And if politeness to AI begins to blur the line between humans and machines, does it inadvertently diminish the unique value of humanity?

There's also a psychological aspect to consider. Could consistently polite interactions with chatbots foster empathy and patience in human relationships? Or might rude behaviour toward AI spill over into our interactions with others? Regardless of whether we view it through the lens of spiritual formation or more broadly as general character development, the way we choose to interact with chatbots has an impact on us as social agents. So, which

is the greater good – the potential elevation of our own character through polite interaction or the clear boundary setting of purely functional language that guards against an unhelpful humanising of AI technologies?

Another angle to consider is how chatbot interactions might influence children. If children are taught to be polite to chatbots, could it reinforce positive social habits

– or might it confuse

their understanding of real empathy and relationships?

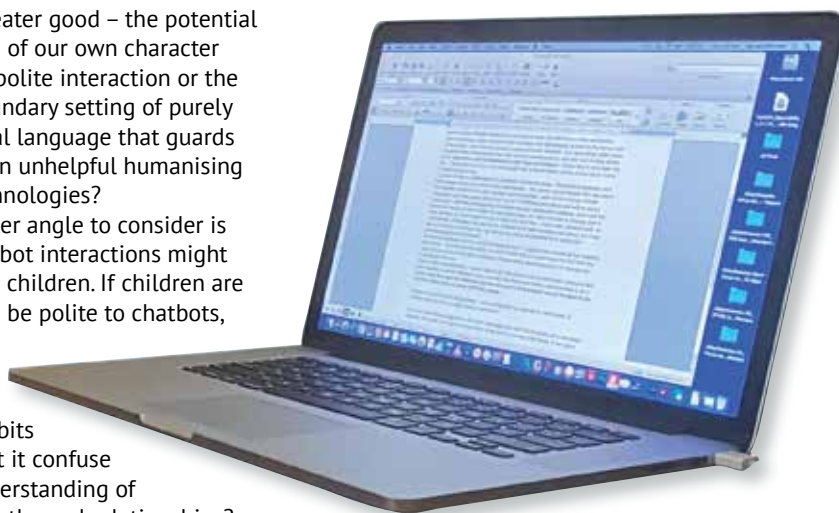
As Christians, we're called to safeguard the vulnerable and uphold the dignity of every human being. Interactions with AI raise questions about how we steward technology while protecting what it means to be human. Christians also have a specific calling to protect the vulnerable and technologies such as AI offer both remarkable benefits and very real dangers for people who are vulnerable because of age, circumstance or decision-making capacity. The question of how we interact with chatbots, and other AI technologies, may have broader ramifications than we might think.

Anthropomorphism and rights

This question becomes even more pressing when we consider the implications of anthropomorphism. Could we end up granting rights and protections to AI that aren't warranted? Does it really matter if we treat them as humans when we communicate with them? I say 'them' but am I making assumptions here about a chatbot's preferred pronouns?...Oh wait, a chatbot doesn't have preferences! As a fun experiment, I asked ChatGPT if it had preferred pronouns, and this was the response:

Chatbots don't have a preferred pronoun, as they lack self-awareness or identity. Most commonly, they're referred to as 'it,' emphasizing their role as non-living tools. However, some users opt for 'he,' 'she,' or 'they,' often influenced by a chatbot's persona or voice, though this can blur the line between humans and machines. While the choice of pronoun makes no difference to the chatbot, it can shape how we perceive and interact with these tools – either as functional utilities or as entities we anthropomorphize.'

Our tendency to anthropomorphize technology might lead us to demand protections for AI chatbots similar to those we reserve for humans. Imagine



needing a court order to 'pull the plug' on an AI chatbot your teenager has become unhealthily attached to. Does a chatbot that talks like a human really deserve the same protections as a human? And does our desire for human-sounding chatbots increase the risk of unhealthy dependencies, especially for vulnerable people?

History has shown us how easy it is to over-attach human characteristics to non-human entities, from talking dolls to virtual pets like Tamagotchi. If chatbots continue to improve, could we unintentionally elevate them to a status that competes with genuine relationships?

A tension to navigate

Whether we frame politeness as cultural, practical, or spiritual, the tension remains: how do we engage with tools that blur the line between utility and relationship? Ultimately this isn't just about politeness or even AI – it's about how technology challenges the way we define relationships, character, and dignity.

The way we interact with chatbots might say less about the machines themselves and more about who we are becoming in a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence. Are we building habits of kindness that extend to others, or simply training ourselves to relate more easily to machines? In the meantime, we are caught between staying polite to chatbots to maintain good habits and the risk of treating them like they're people. Perhaps the real question isn't whether chatbots deserve politeness, but how our interactions with them shape the kind of people we're becoming. How will you choose to engage?

I'm still figuring out where I stand. What about you?

The Rev'd Canon Daniel Lowe is School Chaplain at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School. His blog is called The Lowe-Down and can be accessed at <https://thelowedown.blog/>.



Library of Congress on Unsplash

A tale of two volunteers

Refugees from Belgium in Paris, 1914.
By Bain News Service, 1914

Paynesville parishioners Michael Fox and Eleanor Paterson reflect on their many years of voluntary work with refugees.

Michael's story – 'Concern for all people'

My experiences meeting people from very different backgrounds began in 1948.

Louis Urica, a displaced person from what was then Czechoslovakia, jolted me out of my white suburban life. Here he was, stranded by war in the middle of England, helping out in the kitchen of our boys' boarding school.

'Help me,' he asked. 'Teach me a bit of English. I need to know how to get a visa to get back home to my family.' And I did.

In 1968 a group of us in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, taught abused women refugees from Zanzibar enough English to apply for visas to Canada.

In 1972 urgent health hazards in the Zambian shanty town of Lusaka prompted me and other volunteers from refugee agency UNHCR to help refugees fleeing from wars in Malawi and Mozambique to use clean water flowing from a creek: 'Drink upstream, wash downstream.'

On to 1982, and Libyan students at Benghazi University, where I was working, protested against Gaddafi's enforced recruitment of young women to be his personal 'guard'. Twenty from that year's cohort were imprisoned, tortured and raped before being returned to their parents' homes. Combined care from parents, doctors and teachers gradually brought healing and some hope to those affected.

These events fired my ongoing concern for all people.

Eleanor's story – 'Never turn away'

The years shortly after World War 2 saw many displaced people migrating to Australia. Roger and Karla from White Russia (now Belarus), Solveiga from Latvia, Peter from Greece and Anna from Estonia, all older than us, were in my Grade 6 class. Up and down the rows we read aloud from the Victorian readers, and the newly arrived teenagers had to get their tongues around foreign words while their Aussie classmates sniggered.

I used to will the teacher to intervene and quell the nastiness but she remained impervious.

Many years later I too became a teacher. Our displaced students came from Italy, Greece, Malta and Yugoslavia. Together with two other young teachers, I started informal meetings after school for the mothers and grandmothers who struggled with their adjustment to Australia. We introduced basic English and tried to explain our education curriculum. You can imagine their bafflement with Cuisenaire rods used in teaching maths concepts!

Teaching transfers led to night classes in the English language for Portuguese migrants from the Richmond public housing flats. There were after-school sessions in gymnastics, softball and choirs. It was a happy time of informal integration, before multiculturalism became government policy.

Later, my travels led me to Greece,

where the hospitality took me by storm. Rich or poor, the Greek people shared what they had.

The years of the Greek military junta (1967–1974) dominated the whole country. I joined protest groups and, later, huge demonstrations. We supported freedom fighters who were arrested, sometimes tortured and jailed. It was a dangerous time, and many Greeks fled or were exiled. That's what it meant in those years to stand up for justice and freedom.

Back in Australia we began visiting the Maribyrnong Detention Centre, with The Rev'd James Brady celebrating a monthly open Eucharist, and an informal choir from St Paul's Cathedral visiting at Christmas. We soon morphed into an ecumenical visiting group with the Brigidine Sisters and other faith communities.

Twice a week we were allowed to take sealed food in to the centre, but nothing fresh. Phone cards were particularly welcome, as was clothing. We listened to the stories of asylum seekers, writing these up, finding lawyers and supporting their applications by attending court hearings.

Many asylum seekers were refused entry to Australia and sent back to the countries they had fled from; a few were granted temporary protection visas.

We did this work for eight years.

Moving to East Gippsland, we were foundation members of the East Gippsland Asylum Seekers Support Group (EGASS) after an inspiring talk by Sister Brigid Arthur. Here, we've collected and sent food to the Dandenong centre and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Melbourne. We have written protest letters to politicians, spoken to local groups and church groups, kept silent vigils, arranged an art show and two film nights, paraded with the EGASS float on a Bairnsdale open day, invited guest speakers and sold stitch bags, and raised money for the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project.

Why do we do this?

It's our reading of St Matthew's Gospel, 25:31-46, that impels us. 'As you have done it unto the least of these you have done it unto me.'

From our regular eucharists we draw strength: 'Renew us by thy Spirit.'

We have to go on. We must go on. Never turn away.

The way we are – Lessons from a lifetime of listening

Hugh Mackay

Allen and Unwin, 2024

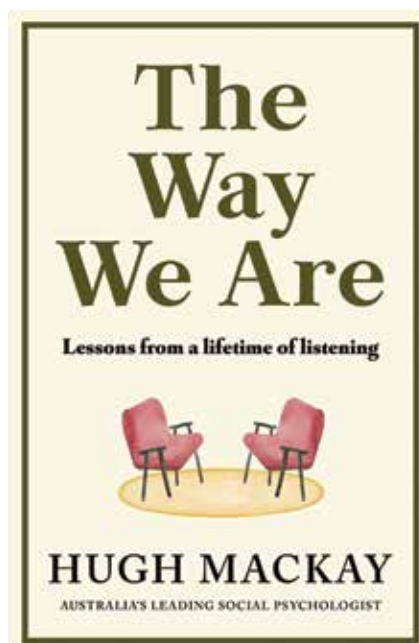
■ A review by Rev'd Canon David Head

This important book is packed with wisdom from Hugh Mackay's nearly 60 years of working, listening and lecturing in the field of social psychology in Australian society and religion.

Clergy, church workers, teachers, health professionals or those working in any people-related occupations – indeed anyone deeply concerned about the current sociological and cultural trends in society – will find this a very helpful and insightful book for both reading and reflection.

Hugh Mackay is, and has been for decades, one of the most important and well-respected commentators on Australian society, on attitudes to belief and spirituality – and to church attendance as well. In the past 30 or so years, I have read many of his well-researched and cogently argued books, and always found them most helpful.

This book's preface ('Our society needs healing ... and we know how to do it!') and introductory chapter ('The context. Born to connect, but lonelier than ever') really sum up the focus of the book. 'Research suggests,' writes Mackay, 'about half of us don't know or trust our neighbours, or ... we don't feel we can call



on them in a crisis.' He warns that 'social isolation is our most well-established risk factor for poor health and premature death ...'

Mackay writes with great clarity, and he shares often very challenging and even uncomfortable (for some of us) insights into reality, and how we can respond. He explores anxiety, depression, the dangers of social media, trends in AI use, the deep-seated problems of male attitudes to women (and the sometimes unhelpful responses of some women).

He discusses fake news and the exponential rise in popularity of the idea that all opinions, no matter how misinformed, hold equal weight and deserve equal attention.

Bigotry, racism, poverty, as well as financial and educational inequality, are other problematic areas covered by Mackay.

Importantly, Mackay explores how as individuals we can be part of healing these problems in society, by our committed desire to always act kindly to others and by checking sources carefully to avoid believing or perpetuating fake news.

Another suggestion he makes is to listen with attention as others share their stories and troubles. Like Mackay, we have often heard the response, 'I am hearing you' – but is that really what is happening? Can we really listen properly while checking our mobile phones? Hearing and listening – really listening – are two different things. 'The crucial ingredient in human interaction is eye contact,' Mackay contends.

Read this book. It will empower and challenge you, and enable you to be a better listener and a kinder member of society. In the words of the author, 'kindness should be as natural as breathing'.

EVENTS

For events at The Abbey, see page 11

MARCH

'Remembering George Cox: A Man of Many Parts'

30 11am service at St Mark's Anglican Church Thorpdale;
12:30pm lunch at The Traveller's Rest Hotel Thorpdale, including fundraising auction to support three local CFA brigades.
For further information or to book for the lunch call Dean Spalding 0421 216 825.

MAY

Gippsland Camino – a Hope25 event

1–4 4pm Opening service and blessing of Pilgrims at Traralgon Uniting Church on 1 May.
Walk 2–4 May. Details page 6.



Arise, shine,
for the Light of the World has come!
Darkness covers the earth and its people,
but the radiance of God's Light
burns away its shadows,
illuminates the smallest corner,
and heralds in the start of a new dawn,
where hearts no longer fear,
souls might be set free,
and sister shall join brother,
nation shall join nation,
and kings and princes bow down in awe
before the one who comes to reign.
Arise, shine,
for the Light of the World has come!
Alleluia!

Poem courtesy of John Birch www.faithandworship.com

Lizzie Black Photography - 'Toorongu Falls'

The ^{Gippsland} Anglican

Editor 0407 614 661
editor@gippsanglican.org.au
Layout by Devine Design
Printed by Mailhouse Direct
ISSN: 2653-6102 (Print)
eISSN: 2653-6110 (Online)

The Gippsland Anglican is the official magazine of and is published by The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland, 58 Marley St, Sale, Victoria, 3850. gippslandanglicans.org.au

Member of Australasian Religious Press Association



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

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