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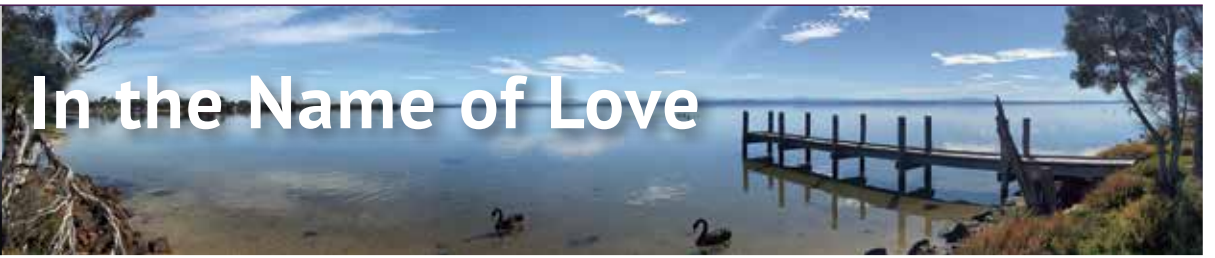


Celebrating The Rev'd Dr John Wright's 60 years of Ordained Ministry

Read more about this special occasion on pages 10 and 11.



In the Name of Love



Memphis Tennessee has long been a place of anticipated pilgrimage for me. I'm not much of an Elvis fan (though I hesitate to say that out loud in his native Mississippi, where we travel from time to time visiting family), but I do love the music of the 'deep south' – jazz, blues, soul, gospel, R&B.

Memphis's reputation as the birthplace of rock and roll stems from artists such as Elvis, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, Jerry Lee Lewis, Otis Redding, Mavis Staples, Howlin' Wolf, and BB King having either launched their careers from there or recorded albums at its iconic Sun Studio or Stax Records.

All of that history and innovation (a nice way to think of 'tradition') draws devotees of rockabilly and its successors – including rap and hip-hop – to this city nestled on the rollin' Mississippi River.

Fast forward musically to the mid-1980s and Irish band U2 are in their prime, also recording at Sun Studio with B. B. King on their sixth album *Rattle and Hum*. Like many of the fathers and mothers of the emerging genres of the 1950s and 60s, the Irish too knew something about oppression and injustice.

I was in my first year of university when one of the singles from an earlier record – *Pride (In the Name of Love)* – captured my uninformed imagination. The lyrics refer in passing to Jesus' betrayal, before lingering over the assassination of The Rev'd Dr Martin Luther King Jr in 1968 on the balcony Memphis' Lorraine Motel (now incorporated into a Civil Rights Museum): 'Early evening 4 April, shot rings out in Memphis sky, free at last they look your life, they could not take your pride'.

The phrase 'free at last' picks up on the African American spiritual Dr King cited as his closing words in the famous 'I Have a Dream' speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington on 28 August 1963: 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty we are free at last!'

This backstory, which I came more gradually to know, was the impetus for my pilgrimage to Memphis some 40 years on from first hearing U2's anthem. As I stood facing the balcony outside that ill-fated hotel room of one of the great prophets of our era, the song's refrain – 'what more



in the name of love?' – resounded within me, echoed by the psalmist's lament as redacted in another U2 track, '40': 'how long [O Lord] to sing this song?'

How long indeed.

The night before he was killed, Martin Luther King addressed a Civil Rights gathering at Mason Temple (Church of God in Christ). Something is happening in Memphis', he began, 'something is happening in our world.'

In this no less celebrated speech, Dr King stressed the inescapable biblical connection between maintaining hope in God's future salvation and challenging those present realities which are an affront to God's justice:

It's all right to talk about 'streets flowing with milk and honey,' but God has commanded us to be concerned about the slums down here, and his children who can't eat three square meals a day. It's all right to talk about the new Jerusalem, but one day, God's preacher must talk about the new New York, the new Atlanta, the new Philadelphia, the new Los Angeles, the new Memphis, Tennessee. This is what we have to do.

Several weeks prior to being in Memphis we attended midnight Mass in New York. There, some eight hours after night had descended and in sub-zero temperatures, the force of John 1:5 struck me anew: 'The light shines in the darkness

and the darkness has not overcome it.'

The stubborn triumph of fragile, flickering light is of the essence of our Judeo-Christian tradition. In 2025, the final day of Hannukah – a festival grotesquely marred by the prejudicial violence perpetrated in Sydney – fell on the northern hemisphere's winter solstice; the shortest, darkest day of the year. And still around the world the Menorah candles burned – defiantly, miraculously, expectantly – as they did in that desecrated Temple reclaimed in the face of ethno-religious hostility almost 2200 years ago.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Among Martin Luther King's final words spoken in public were these:

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead ... Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!

In a new year of grace, 2026, let us be people who walk in the footsteps of Moses and the prophets – ancient and modern – who have been shown God's promised future and had the courage to let it speak consequentially into the present.

Let us be people who never tire of singing the gritty songs of hope we are steeped in – the psalms of the Hebrew Bible, and the Gospel canticles – with innovation that both honours the shaping influence of their context, and gives them fresh voice in our own.

Above all, let us be people of light, ready for whatever more is needed in the name of love.

+Richard
Monday 19 January 2026
– Martin Luther King Jr Day (USA)



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.

■ Keren Terpstra

When you next come to the Cathedral and enter either through the main doors or the doors into the foyer, look up to the left and you will see: 20 + C + M + B + 26 written in chalk on the stone lintel/bricks. It's a great conversation starter. I also have inscribed the same characters on the Deanery front door, and visitors often ask me what it means – I relish the opportunity to explain, a great 'faith conversation' starter.

Chalking the doors is a practice that dates from Medieval Europe. It was done at Epiphany or during Epiphany-tide, as a way of seeking God's blessing for the home or church so inscribed for the coming year. At our Epiphany service, chalk was blessed and distributed along with a short liturgy folk could use at home. The letters C, M, B either stand for the traditional names of the three wise folk who came from the East following the star that announced the birth of the Saviour-King (Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar) and/or the Latin phrase *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, or *May Christ bless this home*. It reminds me of Passover: the blood of lambs daubed on the doorframes of the Israelites fleeing Egypt.

Not only does it express a prayer for blessing, but also a welcome and hospitality for the stranger and traveller – those who are far off coming near in curiosity to explore and inquire about faith – and to offer their gifts as they recognise Christ as the Light of their lives. The telling of the Christmas (and Epiphany) story sometimes occludes the reality that these wise folk, who travelled from the East after seeing and interpreting astrological signs, were not white Caucasian Christians (or even Jews), but likely ethnically diverse mages, the leading prelates of another religion, possibly Zoroastrianism. Epiphany celebrates this manifestation of Light to the Gentiles – that God's gift of Godself in the Christ-child, Emmanuel, God-with-us, is for all people.

So, chalking our doors, particularly the doors of our churches, is a way of reminding ourselves that the Good News is not just for us, but for all people. It brings us back to our core mission of making disciples of all nations and baptising them in the name of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit. It's also a reminder to us that God's realm is not contained in church buildings, but rather that the realm of God has no end and no limits. We so often want to define the 'innies'



Chalking the doors at Epiphany

A sign of blessing and welcome: Alan Rowe chalking the Cathedral doors

and the 'outies', those who belong and who don't belong (and unfortunately in churches, we can so often be cliquey, thinking ourselves welcoming while excluding those who are different from us). Throughout the course of the year, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that in God's realm there are no innies or outies, no slave or free, man or woman, Jew or Greek, but all are one in Christ Jesus.

Chalking the door means that, like the Old Testament Jewish people who were to inscribe God's law on their lintels to remind themselves as they went in and out of the covenant with God, every time we enter and exit the church we are reminded of our calling. As the Light of Christ burns within us, so we are to carry that into all the world, drawing stranger and pilgrim, seeker and lost into the embrace of the Light.

The Very Rev'd Keren Terpstra is the Dean of Sale.



Blessed chalk given out at Epiphany

A different Christmas journey for the Motisi family

■ Giles Motisi with an introduction by Jeff Richardson

Fr Giles Motisi and his wife Mother Julia, and their children Darol and Joana, spent their first Christmas in the Moe/Newborough Parish after making the long journey from PNG to Australia in March 2025. It was apt therefore that Fr Giles focused on the theme of *journey* in the Christmas story. Fr Giles opened Scripture to reveal God's plan, by unravelling the significance surrounding the journeys of Joseph and Mary, the Shepherds and the Magi, and in each journey a sign or signs that were used to bring these chosen people to encounter God's Son, Jesus the Messiah.

Fr Giles and his family, having themselves journeyed through their first Christmas and experiencing the liturgies for Advent and Christmas in this parish, said to his elder son in PNG:

It's pretty heavy like the Passion Week. We began the Advent with the lighting of the candles, worship together with the other local churches.

Christmas was busy with Carols on the 4th Advent Sunday night, morning Mass on Wednesday for those who could not come at night, the Crib Service, and then the evening and morning Eucharists. I hope that in all these preparations, and especially the Christmas liturgies, were meaningful and people received God's blessings, as I am certain God touched our hearts with the joy of his Son's birth. For me, I found leading the worship services deeply enriching and I can say this was the best Christmas I had ever had!

In PNG, we celebrate Advent and Christmas Seasons slightly differently. The Melanesian Brothers (a religious community made of young men), originally from the Solomon Islands, go about singing Christmas carols as early as the second Sunday in Advent. They organise themselves into three groups, made of six or seven Brothers, who are then sent to different parishes. They then move from village to village at night performing drama, singing carols, and offering reflections on selected Scripture passages. This is a special time, especially for the villages, as those who join the Brothers eventually learn the carols from the singing groups, which continue onto Christmas, even without the Brothers!

In the parish where I ministered, weekday Advent Masses were celebrated in the villages, while Sunday Masses were held in the chapels.



Father Motisi reflects on his first Christmas with the Moe/Newborough Parish

On the Carol Night (Christmas Eve), two singing groups moved around the parish singing carols in all the villages. In the morning, 200 to 300 people gathered to celebrate the Christmas Day Mass, and everyone attending church brought food for a shared feast.

A lot of relatives and families working in towns and cities would come for holidays bearing gifts of money, Bibles and hymn books, and donating them to the church, when we met together for meals (accompanied by lots of singing and dancing, often with traditional drums and songs).

Christmas in PNG for me is an incredibly happy time of celebration – they are some of the best memories I have of Christmas!

Fr Giles Motisi is Priest-in-Charge of Moe/Newborough.

Canon Emeritus Jeff Richardson is the TGA Representative at Moe/Newborough.



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A new face at the Registry – welcoming Wendy Eastgate

■ Rae Riley

Wendy Eastgate has joined the Registry Office as Office Allrounder (Administration & Finance), bringing more than 25 years of experience in the Australian Public Service across customer service, business support, payroll coordination, rostering, procurement and reporting.

Much of Wendy's career has been spent supporting teams and helping services run smoothly in complex, fast-moving environments. She has worked across multiple service delivery sites, contributing to clear systems, reliable administration, and responsive customer service.

Wendy says she is:

grateful and excited to be joining the team at the Sale Diocesan Office ... After over 25 years in the Public Service helping to support the Australian community, I look forward to putting all I have learned to good use at the Registry Office supporting the running of the office and in turn the needs of our parishes.

I look forward to meeting you all and assisting in any way I can.



Wendy is known for being organised, approachable and practical – a steady presence with a genuine commitment to supporting others. She has already spent time volunteering in the office and says she has enjoyed working in an organisation that values 'service, care, and connection within the community'.

Working alongside Joseph Gormally,

Wendy will contribute to the Registry Office's ongoing work to strengthen systems, improve processes and support the needs of parishes and diocesan organisations.

Outside of work, Wendy lives in Rosedale with her husband and a few hundred birds (his, not hers!). She enjoys gardening, learning new things through books and YouTube, and spending time with dogs. She also hopes one day to travel Australia in a camper van with her husband and their next dog.

Registrar Rae Riley said Wendy's experience and people-focused approach would be a strong addition to the team.

'As we start a new year, it's great to have someone with Wendy's background and practical approach joining us. Her thoughtful way of working and genuine enthusiasm will be a real asset as we support parishes across the Diocese'.

Rae Riley is the Registrar for the Gippsland Diocese.

OUR COMMUNITIES



■ Jan Down

These three young readers, Aria de Visser, Addiarna Finlay and Ollivander Finlay, have taken quite a haul at the Giant Book Fair, at St Paul's Cathedral in Sale. The fair attracted a steady flow of book lovers over three weeks in January, with some people visiting Sale just for the books.

The hall positively buzzed as people

browsed through the books. A small, dedicated group of helpers maintained a welcoming atmosphere and provided a skillful service. Book fair coordinator Christine Morris, along with several others, worked very long hours to have the doors ready to open on 1 January and to keep the fair stocked up each day.

Aria de Visser, Addiarna Finlay and Ollivander Finlay stocking up on school holiday reading

This service to the community is very much appreciated by the people of Sale and beyond.

Jan Down is Chair of ACTinG (Acting for Creation Together in Gippsland) and a TGA representative for the Parish of Sale.



Kneeling again at the manger

■ Joanne Stuchbery

Even a few months on, the images of our parish nativity service still speak warmly to us. Christmas may have passed, but the story it tells continues to shape our life together as a country church.

This year's nativity was a simple and joyful reflection of who we are. Leading the scene was a familiar local face, dressed as a Roman soldier, guiding the story with quiet authority and gentle humour.

Stacey played the role of midwife, adding tenderness and a sense of care to the scene, with the Three Kings following: local men entering the story, stepping into their roles with generosity

and good grace, offering laughter, dignity, and a sense of shared purpose. Other local men stepped forward as shepherds and townsfolk, taking their roles with honesty and quiet confidence. In their borrowed robes and crowns, they embodied the offering of everyday faith — showing up, participating, and giving what we have.

Our children brought the Christmas story to life with purity and delight — some playful, some shy, all deeply sincere. Dressed as angels and shepherds, they reminded us that wonder does not need polish to be powerful. They did not act; instead, they inhabited the scene.

L-R: Grant, Justin, Stacy, Isabella, Jasper, Adrian, Hugh, Peter, Barry and Craig in the Leongatha nativity service

In the busyness of rural life, Christmas can slip past too quickly. Yet this scene slowed us down. It invited us to kneel again at the manger and remember that God chose to come among us not in power, but in vulnerability and love.

As we carry the memory of Christmas forward into the year ahead, may it continue to draw us back to humility, hope, and the quiet presence of Christ among us — not only at the manger, but in the ongoing life of our parish and community.

Joanne Stuchbery is the
TGA representative at Leongatha.

Allansfield to close after four decades of ministry

■ Lloyd George

Allansfield has been an active centre for the ministry of healing at Rhyll in Gippsland for some forty years. It was established through the dedication and generosity of the Topliss family in the 1980s, and since 1990 has been under the auspices of the Order of St Luke the Physician.

In 1996 the accommodation was extended by the opening of 'Avalon Cottage'. However, with changes in circumstances and the retirement of the current hosts, the OSL Board has, after prayerful consideration, decided to close the centre from the end of February.

Accordingly, there will be an Open Day, as in previous years, on Saturday 14 March. On this occasion it will be a Celebration of Allansfield, and any interested people who have stayed at or have been involved with the ministry at Allansfield are invited and encouraged to attend.

It will be a time to celebrate and acknowledge the many gifted and dedicated people who have contributed



Allansfield at Rhyll: four decades of healing ministry in Gippsland

to the work at Allansfield over the years, including the local management committee. The day will be led by Dr Annette Rice, a former national chaplain of the OSL, and assisted by Rev'd Lloyd George, a former Victorian State Chaplain.

While the OSL has no current chapters in Gippsland, it retains an active presence through its many lone members. At the national level, the OSL is in the process of renewal and restructuring. The present national chaplain is Archdeacon

Andrea McDougall, of Adelaide. A national conference is being planned for Adelaide in September of this year.

If anyone wishes to offer any information, or has any questions, please contact Rev'd Lloyd George on 0427 460 485.

The Rev'd Lloyd George is the Chaplain of the Gippsland Chapter of the OSL.

When cultures meet in worship

A gift of song from our Solomon Islander friends at Korumburra

■ Sue Wilson

Advent 1 and the beginning of another Church year. St Paul's Korumburra was very pleased to welcome the Pastoral Care Team who minister to a number of Solomon Islanders working on local farms. Though the team originates from the Solomon Islands, they have come together from as far afield as Mildura and Shepparton. These 10 men have been making use of our parish hall the previous two nights, sleeping over.

Before the service commences, they have a quick word to Rev'd David Atkinson and our musicians are also consulted. There is a last-minute change to the service: we are to have two songs from the Solomon Islanders. They have brought their own recorded musical accompaniment, but it is the depth of their rich male voices and gentle harmonies that transform their songs, *There is a River* and *I Believe*. We are spellbound at this unexpected gem placed into the morning service. Love, faith and music abide in each of us.

As the doors of St Paul's closed on the Sunday service, the doors of All Saints Poowong opened for a special celebration of St Andrew's Day. Tartans decorate the interior and there is a Scots flavour to the music chosen. I learned that the bones of St Andrew himself were removed from a distant eastern European land and brought to Scotland

some 800 years ago. His rugged strength, courage and enduring faith have come to represent all that is best in the Scottish character. In his lifetime, St Andrew travelled to Eastern Europe, evangelising the people of Greece, Poland, Romania, Ukraine and Russia. Like other disciples, he was ultimately crucified for the glory of the Gospel. He requested that his cross be not the same as his Lord's, but be in the style of an X. And so, we see it today in the Scottish flag, a white X on a blue background.

The bagpipes were turned up loud as we moved into the kitchen for our Bring-and-Share lunch. Some of us had Scottish heritage, many of us recalled travels in Scotland, and I think all of us had watched the famed Edinburgh Tattoo at some time. Lots to eat and lots to talk about.

Thanks must go to Annie Brown

who carried the idea into reality, to the musicians and to the cooks who provided for us.

We all love travelling. That day we had been from the colourful and beautiful Pacific Islands to the craggy and historic countryside of Scotland.

Sue Wilson is the TGA representative at Korumburra/Poowong.



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A very noisy Christmas

Children's prayers and names hang on the Christmas tree

■ Susan Liersch

A very noisy Christmas was had by 112 Grade Prep, One and Two students from Inverloch Primary School on 12 December 2025, as they visited the Church of the Ascension in Inverloch in three class groups to hear the story of the very first Christmas.

Students, along with their teachers, engaged in games, song, dress-ups and crafts as they discovered how the first Christmas, far from being a 'Silent Night', was in fact a noisy affair.

As the story of the first Christmas was narrated, the sound of the Christmas

bells introduced a new character and a student was chosen to dress up as that character and given a unique noise to make in the finale as the Nativity Freeze was complete.

Gabriel said, 'Don't be afraid', Mary said, 'Hush little baby', Joseph said, 'I'll help Mary', angels sang, *Glory to God*, shepherds gasped in surprise, the star 'swooshed' across the sky and the wise men yelled, 'Follow that star', as a myriad of animals chorused in the background. It was indeed a very noisy Christmas, and every student and teacher enjoyed every minute of it.

The students of Inverloch Primary have been coming to the church since 2007. The Church and Community Christmas Celebration all started in 2006 under Rev'd Bruce Charles. Back then the church and hall were decked out in a multitude of Christmas-themed wall hangings, nativity scenes, Christmas stories and a Christmas tree.

The Inverloch community were invited to come and have a look. Many came, including a busload of elderly visitors. The Inverloch school heard about it and asked if they could come the following year and that is how the program with the school took off. Still today the church and hall are decked out in the same manner. In 2007 Grade Prep, One and Two attended and over the following years it built up until the whole school community joined in, with the principal very much in favour of the 'cultural excursion'.

Sadly, the program ceased due to the COVID epidemic in 2020. However, in 2023 post-COVID we were able to recommence, and the Preps, Ones and Twos have been coming ever since.

Each year children have shown great interest in the program content and the church, asking thoughtful questions and making encouraging statements. One little boy said, 'I believe in Jesus, but my mum doesn't'. What that little boy didn't realise was that parents have to opt their children into the program and this year 124 parents did just that. Contrary to popular belief, parents still want their children to know about Christianity.

Along with a take-home craft, children were asked to create a Christmas tree decoration with their first name on the front to hang on the church Christmas tree. They were given the opportunity to include a prayer on the back if they wanted to. One of my favourite prayers was, 'To God, pls bles the kids, animals and groneups'. Our plan is to pray for these children by name, a few at a time, over morning tea after church each week. What a privilege!

The team and I were delighted to receive an email from the school. They thanked us for a beautifully organised and engaging program which the children thoroughly enjoyed and said they were looking forward to participating again next year.

It was such an honour to plan, prepare and deliver this program to the children of our community and we are confident that our efforts will bear fruit, for we know that God's Word never returns void (Isaiah 55:11).

The Rev'd Susan Liersch is the Deacon (Youth and Families Minister) at Wonthaggi/Inverloch.



The Christmas Story at Warragul Anglican

L-R: Adele McArdle, Mel Nicholls, Lauren Davenport, Alistair McArdle

■ Carol Monson

Warragul Anglican Church always has a slightly different take on how to make the wonderful story of Jesus' birth appeal to a wide audience, while also encouraging regular churchgoers to reflect on their own understanding of this timeless and beautiful story of God's creation.

Stacey Kearney, Children's Ministry Leader, along with a dedicated team of church members, stimulated reflection from the time people entered the church to the time they left at the end of an amazing family service. Gone were the traditional rows of pews and seats, and in their place was a 'theatre in the round'. A circle of seats was set around a large open space in which a very non-traditional performance of the Nativity story took place. There were, of course, Mary and Joseph, baby Jesus, angels, shepherds, innkeeper and wise men, but also a businessman, homemaker, a retiree, modern-day wise men, and a curious array of props such as a briefcase, bowl and spoon, glasses, old person costume, backpack, cookies, food for donation, collection plate, and doors for knocking on.

The idea for the performance originated from *One Rehearsal Christmas Plays* by David C Cook. Stacey worked through and added the nativity sections, as well as more speaking lines, to ensure all kids had at least one line. She wanted to ensure that the younger kids actually engaged with the full story of Jesus's birth, add a message, and engage adults (always tricky but so well worth it).

The kids had two rehearsals leading up to the Sunday Family Service, and the team was able to reuse the costumes made last year. *Mainly music* families were invited to attend the program, with three families coming who don't normally attend Sunday services. The team added the *mainly music* Christmas songs into the service to ensure the kids and families felt familiar and included.

Opening performers, Magnolia and Charlotte, began with a discussion around the story of Jesus's birth, Magnolia trying to convince Charlotte to come to church with her, but Charlotte resisting because '... it sounds like a bore. I've heard the Christmas story before ... It's kind of like watching a rerun on TV. And besides, what in the world does any of that have to do with today?'

What a start to a Nativity play. Can you imagine the ensuing debate and performance? People were captivated.

Carol Monson is the TGA representative at Warragul.

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Advent to Epiphany

A season of celebration and mission in Bass/Phillip Island

■ Ruth Hanlon

What a busy and rich time we've had in the parish this season! On the first Sunday of Advent we enjoyed a combined parish service, welcoming the Red Frogs who were using our hall for their annual mission of caring for the Schoolies in Cowes, and we celebrated the ministry of Rev'd Dr John Wright. As well as being the first Sunday in Advent, it was also the feast of St Andrew, the day John was ordained as a Deacon in New Zealand 60 years ago!

John is one of those quiet, wise, caring pastors and a gifted teacher. As well as parish ministry, John spent many years teaching Old Testament and languages in the UK, New Zealand and Australia. For the past 20 years he has been living in retirement with his wife Michaela on Phillip Island. At the age of 85, John

decided not to renew his licence (PTO).

And so, it was fitting on the 60th anniversary of ordination for him to celebrate the Eucharist for the last time with the combined parish and members of his family. It was a very special and emotional time. Thank you, John, for your inspirational example of servant leadership. We know you will still be quietly serving in many ways, but as Bishop Richard said in his tribute to you, *'maybe PTO might stand for Permission to Turn Off for a bit? Which would actually be a PTOfab'*.

The island has been very busy over Christmas and New Year and our services have been joyously full to overflowing. On Boxing Day the Scripture Union Theos team arrived for their annual summer mission operating out of the parish hall. It was wonderful to partner with them

again, and we pray for fruit from seeds sown and New Testaments given to hundreds of people! We pray that many will read them and have an 'epiphany' and meet Jesus perhaps for the first time as his word speaks to them. Already one local has stepped into church (something he vowed he'd never do), as he experienced God's grace in his life.

The Theos team might have departed on Epiphany Sunday, but we continue God's mission, shining the light of Christ in our communities. We are excited for what God has in store for 2026 as we faithfully and prayerfully seek to grow his Kingdom – to God be the Glory!

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

The Red Frogs caring for Schoolies in Cowes

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Celebrating 60 years of Rev'd Dr John Wright's ministry

Bp Richard's message to The Rev'd Dr John Wright on his 60th anniversary

John, my beloved in Christ, greetings!

As you gather with family, and your Parish household, to celebrate 60 years since your ordination as a Deacon in the Church of God, be assured of my prayers for you and Michaela, and of the gratitude of all Gippsland Anglicans for your fruitful and generous service in this Diocese, where since 2007 you have held a PTO (Permission to Officiate).

On a personal level, I give thanks for your calm and good-humoured presence at Trinity College, when I was a very 'green' and rough-around-the-edges young theological student. Your gentle wisdom in our weekly Ministry Formation sessions was something I especially appreciated, and you cultivated my love of the Hebrew Bible, even though I never took a class with you.

It was two Jesuits (of blessed memory, and very different temperaments!) – Fr John Scullion and Fr Tony Campbell – who taught me Old Testament as an undergraduate in those heady ecumenical days of the United Faculty, as it was then.

Around that time, of course, my fellow 'resident theolog', Peter Stuart, was taking a shine to Nicki, and your son-in-law has since become a close episcopal colleague; another valued point of connection with you.

60 years ordained – wow!

Having just reached 60 years of age, it is hard to imagine having spent that entire life's span in diaconal and priestly service to God's people in the church and in the world. And, needless to say, your retirement from active ministry and prayerful discernment not to seek a renewal of your PTO does not in any way diminish the grace of holy orders or the charisms that you have brought to your vocation these many years.

In fact, I find that retired people – including clergy – are among the busiest people I know, and your baptismal ministry – lay and ordained – will no doubt continue in ways that will surprise and delight.

In the meantime, perhaps maybe 'PTO' might stand for 'Permission to Turn Off for a bit'? Which would actually be a 'PtTOfab',

but Anglicans love our Three Letter Acronyms, or TLAs as we like to call them!

In any event my dear brother and teacher, we are enormously thankful for your ministry, which has taken you from Aotearoa New Zealand to Manchester, to Sydney and Newcastle, to Melbourne, and latterly to beautiful Cowes in the Parish of Bass/Phillip Island, where you and Michaela are much loved members of our community.

Bless you mightily in your 'second retirement', enjoy the affirmation the day brings, and may St Andrew, St Philip, St John, and all the saints pray for you, as we will all continue to do.

Shalom,
+Richard (30 November 2025)



Fr John celebrates with Michaela and their four children



Gippsland Grammar to showcase ELC-VCE learning at 2026 Open Days

School Captains Himesh Rajapakse and Gracie Millington
with Foundation student Izzy McMillian

Gippsland Grammar will open its doors across all three campuses in early 2026, inviting families to experience first-hand the advantages of an ELC-to-VCE education grounded in the school's commitment to helping students Learn, Live and Lead.

Across February and March, families will have the opportunity to tour classrooms, meet teachers, speak with current students and discover the diverse academic and co-curricular opportunities available at the leading independent school.

Principal Dr Paul Walton said the Open Days are a much-anticipated moment in the school calendar: 'The Open Days are a great opportunity for us to welcome families to our campuses and share with them the wonderful array of learning experiences our students enjoy,' Dr Walton said. 'We look forward to showcasing our learning environments, the successes of our students and what makes Gippsland Grammar a special place to learn, live and lead.'

Gippsland Grammar's Open Days will be held at the Sale campuses on Saturday 28 February, beginning at St Anne's Campus (ELC-Year 6) from 9–11am, before continuing at the senior Garnsey Campus (Years 7–12) from 11:30am–1:30pm.

The Bairnsdale Campus, which also includes an Early Learning Centre offering three and four-year-old kindergarten programs, will welcome families on Saturday 28 March from 9–11am.

Families will also be able to explore the School's highly regarded ELCs, both of

which are rated as exceeding the National Quality Standard. At Garnsey Campus, families can learn more about signature offerings including the Year 9 Program, Rowing, Performing Arts and the School's Boarding House, Blackwood House.

Regional families interested in boarding for their child will also be able to learn about the school's newly launched Rewarding Boarding incentive, an initiative designed to support families during the current economic climate.

From 2026, families who commit to full-time boarding from Year 7 through to Year 12 will receive their child's final year of boarding fees completely waived – an initiative the school describes simply as: 'Pay for five, receive one free.'

Dr Walton said the initiative reflects the school's commitment to ensuring boarding remains accessible and enriching.

'This initiative recognises the long-term commitment families make and

ensures that boarding remains accessible and rewarding for students who choose to complete their journey with us through to Year 12,' Dr Walton said. 'It's such a great opportunity for families, regardless of the distance they live from our School.'

Gippsland Grammar's 2026 School Captains Gracie Millington and Himesh Rajapakse will play an important role across the Open Days, welcoming families and speaking about their own school experiences.

Gippsland Grammar has more than 1100 students enrolled across its three campuses in Sale and Bairnsdale and includes a Boarding House with full-time and casual options and private daily bus options for students from East Gippsland, Latrobe Valley and Yarram district.

Gippsland Grammar is also currently offering substantial scholarships. For more information visit www.gippslandgrammar.au or phone 5143 6388.

2026 OPEN DAYS

St Anne's Campus (Sale): Saturday 28 February, 2026 from 9–11am

Garnsey Campus (Sale): Saturday 28 February, 2026 from 11:30am–1:30pm

Bairnsdale Campus: Saturday 28 March from 9–11am



St Paul's Principal Cameron Herbert with the St Paul's 2025 Dux, Hanqing (George) Huang, who received an ATAR of 99.35

The 2025 Dux of St Paul's Anglican Grammar School is Hanqing (George) Huang, from Morwell, who received an ATAR of 99.35. Hanqing scored a perfect 50 in Literature, as well as study scores of 48 in English, 46 in Health and Human Development and 43 in Chemistry. Other impressive performers with an ATAR above 98 were Omkar Joshi of Traralgon with an ATAR of 98.8, Thomas Prestidge of Warragul with an ATAR of 98.65, including a perfect score of 50 in Legal Studies, and Estelle Dieu of Darnum with an ATAR of 98.45.

Other very high achievers included: Philippa Steenholdt of Warragul with 97.6, Aru Korula of Traralgon with 96.1, Haridu Kahandawa Appuhamillage of

Warragul with 94.2, Aaron Cromie of Poowong with 93.55, Anna Sterling of Ellinbank with 93.1, Troy Aitken of Churchill with 92.75, Riley Pyke of Moe with 92.5, Sydelle Isaacs of Warragul with 91.55, William Blackwood of Warragul with 91.55, Sarah Weeks of Warragul with 91.3, Lucia Trenton of Neerim East with 90.45, Dylan Wilson of Warragul with 90.2 and Giaan McConville Plant of Warragul with 90.2.

Year 11 student Husni Fahmi achieved a perfect score of 50 in Biology. Year 11 student Asmi Pathania also achieved a 50 in Biology, in addition to the 50 she achieved in General Mathematics in 2024.

Study scores of over 40 were achieved in Biology, Legal Studies, English,

Literature, English Language, History Revolutions, Visual Communication and Design, Food Studies, Health and Human Development, Physics, Philosophy, Art Creative Practice, Product Design Hard Materials, General Mathematics, Chemistry, Psychology, VET Sport and Recreation, Maths Methods and Accounting.

The School is incredibly proud of the way our Class of 2025 embraced every opportunity they were presented with both in and outside of the classroom. They have applied themselves to their studies in a dedicated and enthusiastic manner and balanced this with involvement in a wide array of co-curricular pursuits.

In all, 15% of students achieved an ATAR over 90 and 35% of the cohort achieved an ATAR over 80. The fact that St Paul's does not stream students out of Year 12, or offer a VM stream, means that these results are truly indicative of the quality environment of learning and teaching that St Paul's offers.

This year's cohort have a variety of plans for the immediate future, from tertiary study in areas such as health, commerce and law, as well as employment opportunities such as apprenticeships and Australian Defence Force traineeships. We are pleased to note the increasing number of students who have already secured conditional places in tertiary institutions prior to the completion of Year 12. We are equally proud of the number of students who secured employment as soon as their studies concluded. We look forward to continuing to work with the Class of 2025 and helping them find a post-school pathway which allows them to pursue their potential.

We are incredibly proud of the Class of 2025 and wish them the very best for the future.

Do you have
a question,
comment or
concern?

Let us know!

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Anchored in faith

Traralgon & Morwell Families Camp

■ Sarah Gover

Rachael and Caroline enjoying kayaking

The camp began under stormy skies, reminiscent of the biblical story where the disciples, rowing across the lake mistook Jesus for a ghost as he walked toward them on the water. This coincidence set a meaningful tone for the weekend, which was themed 'Anchored in Faith', and drew inspiration from the story in Matthew, woven throughout the camp's Bible studies and activities.

The three-night, four-day camp was held at The Abbey and was made possible by a generous grant from AIRS and the Ansvar Insurance Grants for Good 2025

program. On the way to Raymond Island, campers stopped in Sale for morning tea and filled book bags at the Cathedral 'Giant Book Sale'.

We had over 30 campers from nine families, representing both the Parish of Morwell and Traralgon, as well as the wider community. Some braved the elements in tents, while others enjoyed motel-style accommodation. Notably, one family whose children were initially reluctant to sleep in tents ended the camp considering buying a family tent for future adventures.

For two teenagers, the camp was a hands-on learning experience. They worked alongside the camp cook from Sydney's St Barnabas Anglican Church, gaining valuable skills in cooking teamwork, flexibility, and problem-solving – redesigning menus to meet individual needs and when things didn't quite go to the original plan. Their generosity and adaptability flowed out to the rest of the camp.

When asked about their highlights, the campers said:

Meeting other parents. I was surprised at how easy this was, as our kids were similar ages. The kids were always busy, and I could have a conversation with other adults in a way that wasn't time-pressured.

My favourite thing about camp was meeting people and making friends. I am hoping to keep those friends, as we are now going to be going to the same high school.

I loved the craft activities, like the melty beads (Hama beads), jetty jumping, swimming, and kayaking.

Meeting other families, as we are all dealing with similar ideas, and it is reassuring.

The Bible studies. They were short, but God spoke to me through them. I'm still thinking about them.

Several parents discovered existing connections, sparking discussions about ways to stay in touch, especially as the children bonded so well. Ideas for a new regional monthly family worship service, family picnics, and another camp are already being considered, with a growing list of new families to invite.

The Traralgon and Morwell families' camp was a celebration of faith, community, and connection, and, with prayer, will be the start of something new.

The Rev'd Sarah Gover is Parish Deacon at St Mary's Morwell.



Maelah learning to appreciate different perspectives



From the Abbey – February 2026

■ Cath Connelly

With the sheer privilege of living in this most beautiful place, I pause several times a day, just to notice. Such beauty – the lake, trees, the noisy koalas (it’s mating season!), the soaring sea-eagles, pelicans, tourists, cormorants, grasslands, echidnas, kayakers, waves, shoreline ... I find myself swept up in a sense of awe that reaches beyond the merely physical. I find myself giving thanks in the knowing that the Sacred One is both transcendent and fully present upon Earth. The landscape is not just a backdrop, but a living expression of the sacred: every gum tree, every wave, and every cloud not only exists within the universe, but also shares in a deeper, spiritual reality that transcends it.

The Christ is fully revealed as rock in a rock, as tree in a tree and as human in you and me. In these moments of reflection, of pausing to notice, I am reminded that the boundaries blur, and the beauty of nature invites a feeling of connection to something greater – a sense that the divine pulses through all creation, both immanent and infinite. I have never seen the face of God – except for five thousand times a day.

May 2026 be the year in which we move ever deeper into knowing how intimately the Sacred One is present in all things.

Save the date

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

FEBRUARY

1	Brigidfest
12	<i>Hush Quiet Day:</i> Music that has Moulded Us Facilitator: Sue Newcombe
15	Adriano Sangineto harp concert
17	Chat and chew – come share a simple lunch together
20–22	Weekend retreat: Women’s Storytelling Facilitator: Lee Palumbo

MARCH

12	<i>Hush Quiet Day:</i> Using collage to tell our hidden story Facilitator: Jenny Wicking
15	Josh Layne harp concert
17	Chat and chew – come share a simple lunch together
23–26	Midweek Retreat: Journeying

APRIL

9	<i>Hush Quiet Day:</i> Ethos, Pathos & Logos: Three Lenses for Meaningful Communication Facilitator: Kevin Broughton
21	Chat and Chew – come and share a simple lunch together

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Vatican Media

Anglican Commission on Unity, Faith and Order attend papal audience

Members of IASCUFO meet Pope Leo XIV during a papal audience in Rome

Bishop Richard is a Commissioner with IASCUFO and attended the recent meeting in Rome. The following article was first published in *Anglican Communion News Service*: www.anglicannews.org/ and is reprinted with kind permission.

The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order (IASCUFO) held its annual meeting in Rome from 7 to 11 December 2025. The Commission's role is to promote the deepening of communion between Anglican churches, and between Anglicans and other churches, including with regard to ecumenical dialogue co-operation and agreement. Members include bishops and theologians from around the world.

On Wednesday 10 December, the members of IASCUFO attended the Pope Leo XIV's General Audience in St Peter's Square. Many of the commission members greeted the Holy Father.

Pope Leo's address to the pilgrims gathered was entitled: 'Jesus Christ our hope. The Resurrection of Christ and the challenges of the contemporary world. The Pasch of Jesus Christ: the final answer to the question of our death.'

In an excerpt from the address, the Pope said: 'The event of the Resurrection of Christ reveals to us that death is not opposed to life, but rather is a constitutive part of it, as the passage to eternal life. The Pasch of Jesus gives us a foretaste, in this time still full of suffering and trials, of the fullness of what will happen after death.'

It concluded:

The Risen One has gone before us in the great trial of death, emerging victorious thanks to the power of divine Love.

Thus, he has prepared for us the place of eternal rest, the home where we are awaited; he has given us the fullness of life in which there are no longer any shadows and contradictions.

Thanks to Him, who died and rose again for love, with Saint Francis we can call death our "sister". Awaiting it with the sure hope of the Resurrection preserves us from the fear of disappearing forever and prepares us for the joy of life without end.

Anglicans and Catholics meet together at the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity

Following the Papal Audience, IASCUFO attended a meeting at the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity. Following greetings from the Prefect, Cardinal Kurt Koch, and the Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion, Bishop Anthony Poggo, a discussion between IASCUFO and several officials of the Dicastery took place. Among the topics discussed was the Anglican Communion's response to the Dicastery's study document on The Bishop of Rome and IASCUFO's Nairobi-Cairo Proposals on the renewal of the Anglican Instruments of Communion, which are due to be presented to the Anglican Consultative Council in 2026. The meeting was facilitated by Rev'd Fr Martin Browne OSB,

the Dicastery's official for relations with the Anglican Communion.

IASCUFO's week of dialogue

The meeting with Pope Leo and the dicastery was an important feature of IASCUFO's programme in Rome. A major focus of the weeklong meeting was discussion on *The Nairobi-Cairo Proposals*. These have been drafted by IASCUFO, following a commission by ACC-18 in 2023. The purpose of the proposals is to look at the structures of the Communion and offer ways to address divisions and disagreements in the Anglican Communion. Published in Advent 2024, the proposals will be discussed at ACC-19 in Belfast in 2026.

In Rome, IASCUFO considered responses from member churches and other Anglican bodies to the proposals and noted that further responses are anticipated. Their communique noted that supplementary work was explored in preparation for reporting to ACC-19.

The IASCUFO programme was also supported by Bishop Anthony Ball, Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome and Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Holy See.

The Dicastery for the Promotion of Christian Unity was used as a source for some of the article.

Modawa Institute updates



Pascol Jogioba on the job painting

■ Jeffrey Driver

Building work continues

The past 12 months on the Modawa campus have echoed the sound of hammers and saws. Our team of 'tradies' has been expanding lecture spaces, renovating housing, and building new residential accommodation.

The major project has been the construction of two dormitories for female students along with an amenities block and cookhouse. The first dormitory cottage was opened in late September and the second reached lock-up stage in time for the Christmas break. There is still a lot of fit-out to be done. Utilities and septic need to be fitted, along with internal painting and the addition of furnishings. In the end, we will have accommodation for about 50 female students.

In the meantime, containers have arrived with another lecture theatre and a residence, all in kit-form awaiting assembly. The library is already too small and the Department of Higher Education (DHERST) is encouraging us to look at a co-located Learning Centre.

The sounds of hammers and saws will be part of the background noise at Modawa for some time yet!

For your prayers and support

The development of the Modawa Institute of Higher Education has come about by the contribution and commitment of many, both in PNG and with our international stakeholders. But it is still an infant in swaddling clothes, full of potential but very fragile. It will continue to need the support of friends and partners if it is to fulfill its potential.

We continue to look to our supporters to provide student scholarships, in either ministry training or teaching (\$1500, or \$750 for half). Most of the students have no support from their own dioceses and struggle for the very basics of life.

Your support can be given through an account set up within the Anglican Deposit Fund, Diocese of Gippsland.

Account name: Newton College

BSB: 705 077

A/c: 00041107

This is for online banking only (Giving Code: *student support*).

Or you can contribute to the Building Fund. This can be done through the Diocese of Gippsland Account, but please make the purpose clear (Giving Code: *building*). The capital works needed to accommodate these new disciplines is an investment in the present and the future!

Finally, you can choose to assist and renovate a student house (This can be done through the Diocese of Gippsland Account. Giving Code: *shouse*)

This could be a project for a parish that might extend over a couple of years. We need to renovate each of the student houses, including better reticulation of water and renovation of septic toilets. \$5,000 over two years will make a big difference to one house.

You can also support ABM's ongoing operational grants to the college by visiting: <https://modawa.institute/>.

Please remember our students. Each week they face basic challenges such as the provision of an adequate diet for their families, access to healthcare, or items like school uniforms. They rely almost entirely on the small allowance we provide of K150 a month for a family (about \$AUD55) for all of their extra needs.

They make great sacrifices to train for ministry. Can you make a small sacrifice to support them?

Bishop Jeffrey is the Acting Principal of the Modawa Institute.

Information sourced from Bishop Jeffrey Driver's newsletter.

For more information head to: <https://modawa.institute/>

Have your say in TGA!

Send your letters* of up to 350 words to editor@gippslandanglicans.org.au



* Please include your name and town for publication. Letters may be edited in the interests of clarity or space.



Journeying in faith

One family's call to mission

John, Connie and Emily Sherlock: answering God's call to serve abroad

■ Sarah Gover

On Saturday, 29 November, the Ridley College Chapel was nearly filled, as Semester Two graduates of the CMS Missionary Training School gathered with friends and supporters for their graduation ceremony. These graduates, including all the children who had been residing at St Andrews Hall, were given certificates to acknowledge the work they had all completed over the last five months, and prayed for, as they start the next part of their journey of being sent out as missionaries.

The ceremony featured an address by Canon John Lovell, who spoke from Mark 9.30-37, reminding all present of the call to serve others and welcome children as central to the mission of the church.

Among the five families recognised were John and Connie Sherlock, along with their daughter Emily, aged twelve, who are preparing to serve with NZCMS and the Anglican Church in Rwanda. John Sherlock, an ordained Anglican priest with a Masters in Theology, will focus on theological education

and mentoring church leaders – a need articulated by Bishop Manasseh. Connie Sherlock hopes to support children's and family ministry initiatives in the community. The Sherlocks will leave their two grown sons in New Zealand.

They are intending to begin their service in Gahini in February, with their first year dedicated to language learning. An American family, the Webbers, eagerly await their arrival, especially their six children who look forward to welcoming Emily and showing her around the village.

Currently, the Sherlocks are travelling throughout New Zealand, visiting parishes to strengthen prayer and financial support. Their journey will soon take them to Melbourne in early February, followed by a brief visit to Gippsland to connect with the Corner Inlet Parish before they depart for Rwanda.

Bishop Manasseh and many in the diocese of Gahini are keen for the Sherlocks to arrive, and are thankful that they have answered God's call to serve and make a difference in a community like Gahini, far from their home.

The Rev'd Sarah Gover is Parish Deacon at St Mary's Morwell.

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The Gippsland
Anglican

A chapter closes – farewell to *The Melbourne Anglican*

■ Krista Mountford

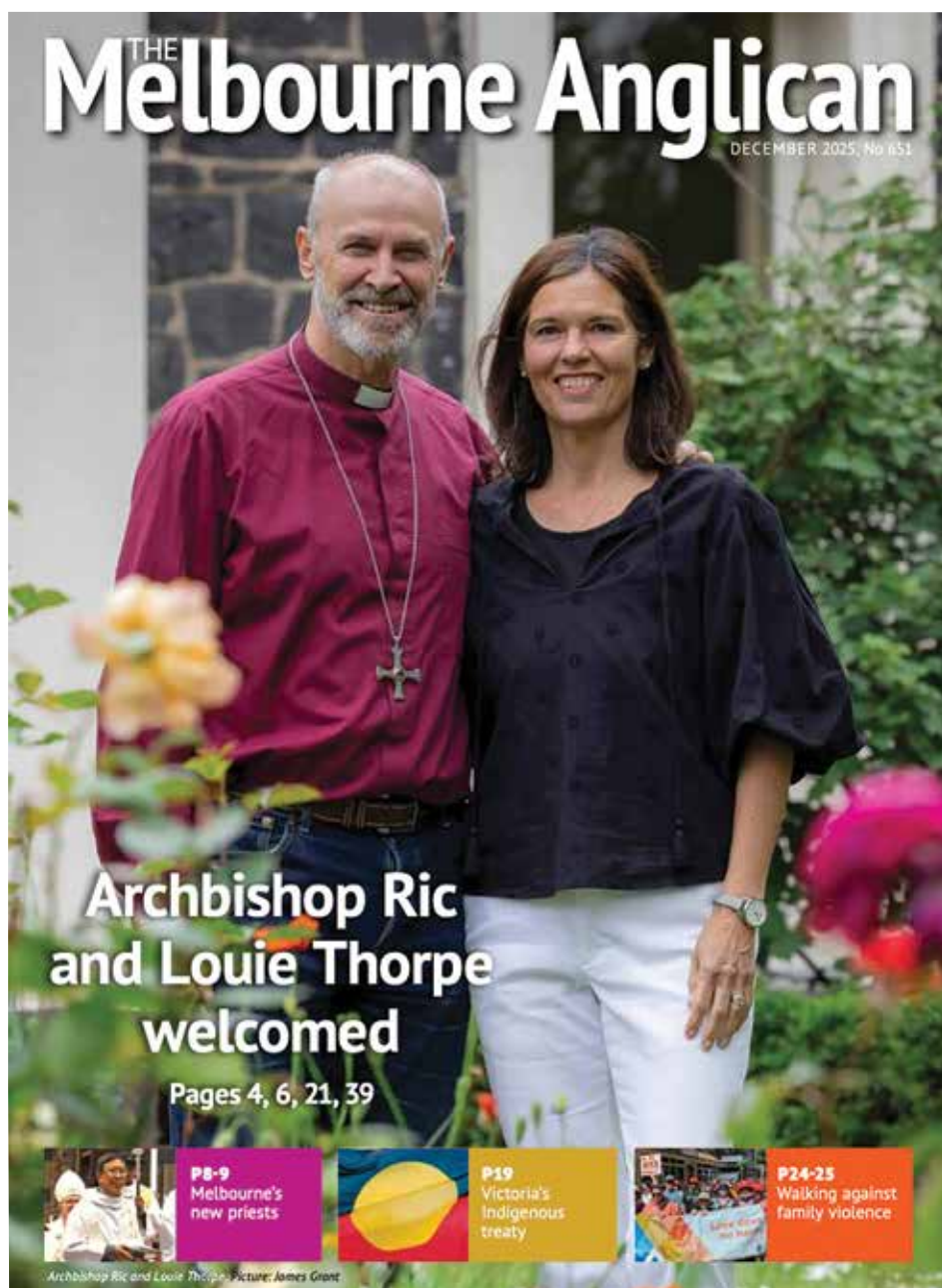
After more than three decades of faithful service, *The Melbourne Anglican* (TMA) has ceased publication. For many across Gippsland, this news carries particular significance. Since 2013 *The Gippsland Anglican* has co-published with TMA, and our readers have received copies of TMA alongside our local diocesan news. TMA's closure marks the end of a remarkable chapter in Anglican communications in Victoria.

In a statement released in early January, the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne confirmed that the decision to cease TMA was made in the context of wider financial challenges facing the diocese. A statement from Matthew Crichton (Interim CEO, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne) on 8 January stated:

This brings to a close a publication that began in 1994 and continued a much older tradition of diocesan newspapers stretching back to the 1850s ... For around 170 years, Melbourne Anglicans have sustained a regular newspaper presence reflecting faith, life and witness – a legacy that deserves deep gratitude.

Over its lifetime, TMA (and its predecessor *See*) earned a strong reputation for fair-minded journalism and thoughtful engagement with social, ethical and spiritual issues. Its quality was recognised nationally through multiple Australasian Religious Press Association awards.

The Melbourne Anglican website will remain accessible for a time, preserving a valuable archive of articles and resources. Future communications from the Diocese of Melbourne will now be shared through its central website and social media channels.



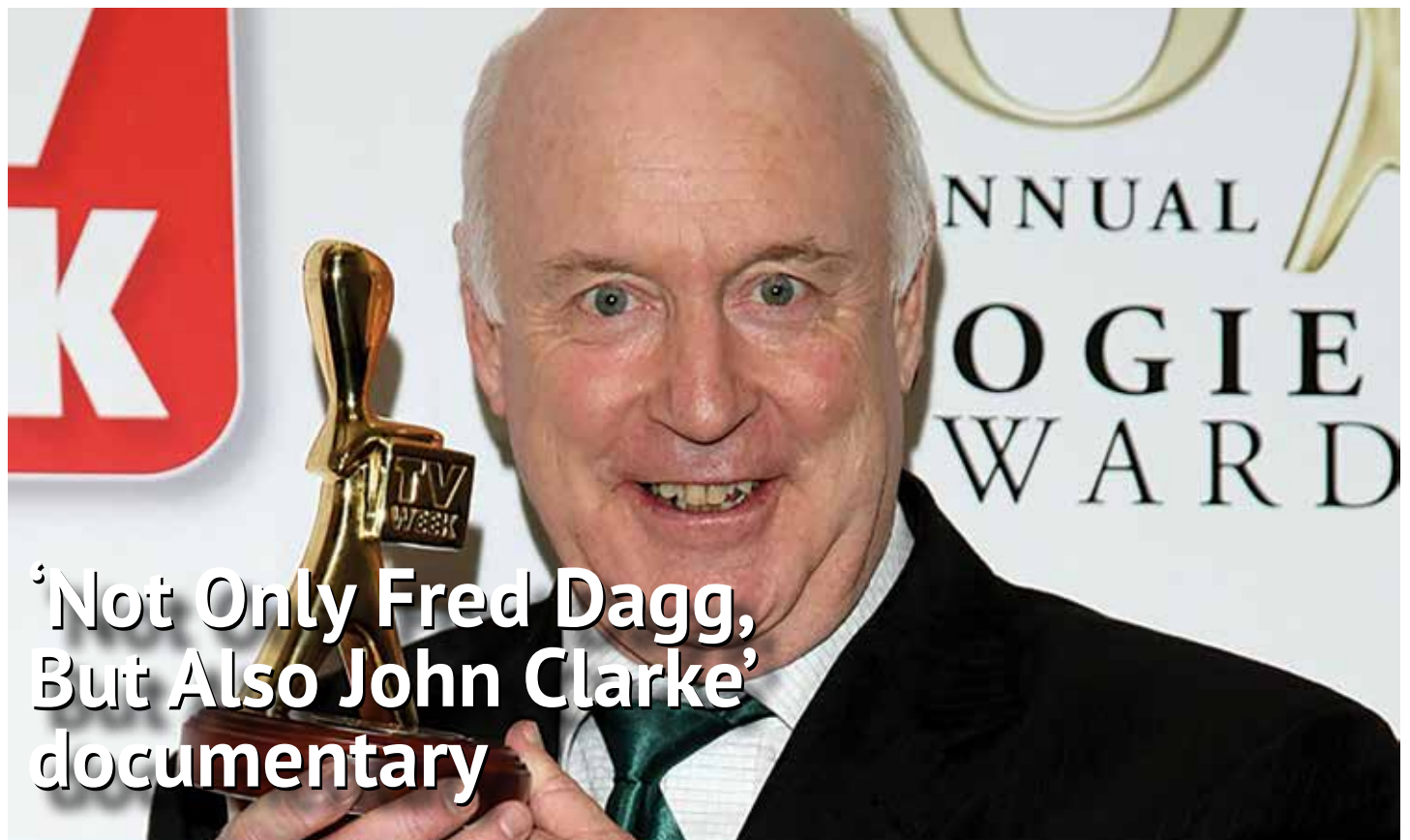
For TGA and our readership, this moment invites reflection. Stories matter. They connect parishes, share witness and encourage faith. Whether in print or digital form, telling the stories of our diocesan life remains an essential ministry. *The Gippsland Anglican* will continue to gather and share these stories – celebrating local communities, recording God's work among us, and strengthening our sense of belonging in Christ.

As *The Melbourne Anglican* closes this chapter, we give thanks for every voice that shaped it, every story it carried, and every reader who shared in its journey.

Krista Mountford is the TGA Editor and Diocesan Development Officer.

Photos sourced at:
<https://tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/>





John Clarke inducted into the Logie Awards Hall of Fame in 2008

■ Dean Spalding

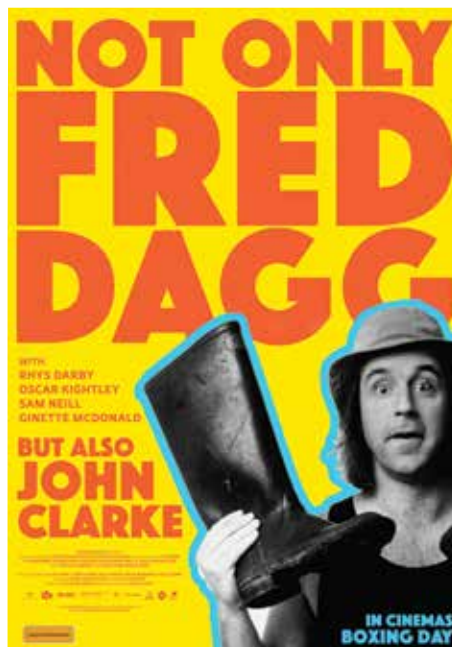
There are already plenty of excellent reviews of *Not Only Fred Dagg, But Also John Clarke* (Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian, The Guardian to name a few) – the biographical documentary of the late John Clarke. And this article is not so much a review, but a reflection on Clarke's capacity for truth-telling through the medium of satire.

I want to suggest that John Clarke was a prophet – and that Clarke's genius was born out of what is dubbed today 'Post Traumatic Growth'. I also want to ask specific questions associated with the life of prophets, which I believe this documentary goes a long way to answer.

The questions are threefold. Why are prophets often rejected in their 'hometown'? What is the nature of the calling, or vocation, of a prophet? How do prophets get their message across effectively and sustainably?

The forging influences on Clarke could all be classified as resulting in 'Post Traumatic Growth'. PTG is an acknowledgement that with some people, trauma results not only in stress, pain and disorder, but also creates opportunity for the development of positive attributes.

Three traumas are identified in Clark's life, in the account given by the documentary – there may have been others, but these seemed central. Firstly, John had parents whose own backstories were complex and challenging and made their family life problematic. Much of this



complexity and challenge is traceable to the event of the Second World War. Clarke's father saw service that induced PTSD, not that it bore that title in the days of Clarke's childhood. Clarke's mother lost two fiancées in the war years. The marriage of Clarke's parents was not a happy one – John was bullied by his father, who perhaps thought it was a merciful building of resilience to toughen his son – the mistreatment did perhaps create courage but not malice. Just as John's father provided endless

disapproval, John's mother offered perpetual and uncritical praise of her son. Neither responses to John as their son were reliable. Astonishingly John worked out the dynamics and chose a compassionate response to both his parents. Perhaps explaining the high regard he had for a particular poem by A J Cronin:

With the exact length and pace
of his father's stride the son walks,
echoes and intonations
of his father's speech
are heard when he talks.

Once when the table was tall
and the chair a wood,
he absorbed his father's smile
and carefully copied the way
that he stood.

He grew into exile slowly
with pride and remorse,
in some way better than his begetters,
in others worse.

And now having chosen, with strangers,
half glad of his choice
he smiles with his father's hesitant smile
and speaks with his voice.

The second 'forged-by-ordeal' influence on Clarke's life was Scots College in Wellington. As with his father's mistreatment, the brutality

and bullying John experienced at Scots had an uncommon result — a lifelong loathing of the misuse of authority and a determination to ‘call it out’. The way Clarke found to express this contempt was free of malice. Clarke determined to find a way effectively to call out abuse of authority.

The third influence was Victoria University, Wellington where Clarke met three life-long friends — Sam Neill, Simon Morris and Michael McDonald. Clarke’s academic transcript demonstrates a polymath tendency but also little regard for the formality of consistent attendance or submission of assessments! Clarke embraced the breadth and depth of everything that was available at the university, but his transcript doesn’t evince the thoroughness with which Clarke drew great value from his university years.

Clarke’s employment by the NZBC was both a forum to discover his way of communicating effectively with the world, and it provided a rare opportunity to watch film archives of comedy like that of Dudley Moore, Peter Cook and Spike Milligan. The availability of films and the means to watch them allowed for a close-grained study and the honing of John’s comic and satirical talents. Clarke invented a character, ‘Fred Dagg’, who became an icon in New Zealand. The character allowed for an ability to broach serious political inconsistencies and foibles under the accessible guise of a humorous portrayal of a down-to-earth farmer. One description of Fred Dagg was ‘Paul Hogan for the thinking man’.

The NZ government of the day was not always amused. Clarke’s arrows often found their marks. Clarke was blind-sided by a call for his resignation at the height of Fred Dagg’s popularity. He sought the advice of a trusted confidant who recommended ‘get out’. And so John Clarke flew ‘across the ditch’ with his young family and became — after a period of studied cultural adjustment — a gift to Australia. The one ‘witness’ we don’t get to hear in the documentary are the voices of those who called for Clarke’s resignation. A retrospective account from former NZBC executives would have provided a great insight about where their fears were situated when they called for Clarke’s resignation. What did they then make of the meteoric rise of *Clarke and Dawe* (across both a private and national government network — Nine and the ABC) and of *The Games*? A response from those witnesses may have provided a deeper understanding of why a prophet is often rejected in their ‘hometown’.

I have suggested that John Clarke was a prophet because he revealed the truth about authority and the misuse of authority and power. Clarke revealed the worst of our nation’s Post Traumatic Deficiencies: our fears, our xenophobia, our susceptibility to ‘popularism’, our superficiality, our lack of integrity and rationality. A prophet is called to reveal truth to others. But there is one other aspect that made Clarke an effective prophet.

How do prophets get their message across *effectively* and sustainably? A prophet does not just speak the truth, there is an act of genuine love for

the hearer that calls the prophet to communicate with their hearer effectively, in a way ‘understood by the people’. That extra dimension varies from prophet to prophet. Some prophets use engaging storytelling. Some prophets accomplish a temporary distancing or ‘disarming’ that makes their message more palatable, in the first instance. I think good prophets also respect the intelligence of their hearers and leave some dots to be joined by the hearer — they don’t explicate everything. This means their hearers are actively engaged in receiving the message and therefore are more likely moved to authentic transformation and action. Clarke used his comic and satirical skills to great effect. It was truthful, and kind, even when it was delivering us a severe critique of our own corporate folly.

The method chosen by a prophet must not only communicate effectively, it also has to function as a way of delaying being silenced too quickly by opponents, buying enough time to communicate effectively. Tact, humour, code, confusion, ambiguity, irony, storytelling (parables) are among the many and varied methods that prophets can deploy to lengthen their opportunity for ‘broadcasting’ their message.

I would recommend the documentary to anyone interested in how to communicate transformation and reform in a world afflicted by superficiality, ‘silos’ of homogeneity, and intolerance to hearing different opinions.

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



John Clarke and Sam Neill starring in *Death in Brunswick*

Into The Wild

Jon Krakauer

p/b, Pan Books, 1998, (2007)

New York

■ Richard Prideaux

An exceptional story of a young graduate from Emory University named Christopher McCandles. He came from an affluent but dysfunctional family in Washington DC in which the father effectively lived an illegal life with two women. The father was a highly regarded American scientist involved in majorly important inter-space activities, but his family was a disaster zone.

Although very close to his sister, Christopher walked away from his family immediately after a college graduation dinner in August 1990. He changed his name, gave away the entire balance of a \$24,000 dollar savings account to charity, burned all the cash in his wallet, and walked away from the family. They would never see him alive again, although he communicated with his sister from time to time.

His family had no idea where he was or what had become of him until his remains turned up in the Alaska Taiga, in a disused old bus in August 1992.

Christopher had spent many months wandering around the United States and Mexico, getting by with small amounts of money from various short-term jobs and also friends that he had made on his travels. He was highly regarded by those he met on the way and enjoyed many adventures including canoeing along some very large rivers.

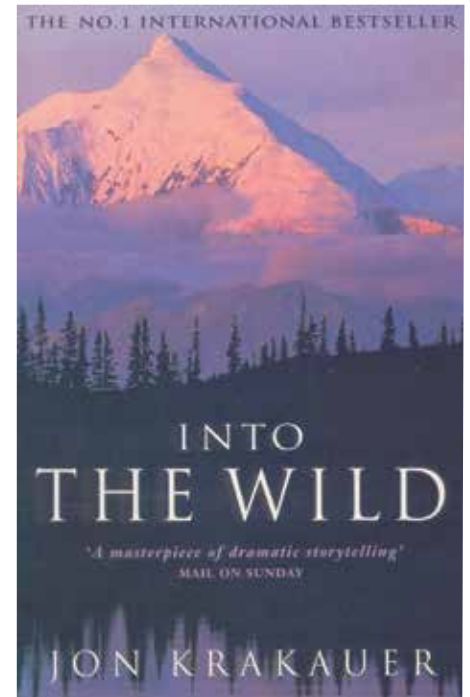
Eventually Christopher turned north towards the mighty Alaskan Tiega, travelling with his now longtime friend Stuckey who had worked hard to encourage Christopher about his Christian faith.

They arrived at Whitehorse, the capital of the Yukon Territory, with Stukey desperately trying to persuade Christopher to communicate with his parents without success.

With Christopher still driving, they arrived at Fairbanks where he parted company with Stukey. At the Fairbanks University, Christopher, still the bookworm, found and bought a scholarly work on edible plants in Southcentral Alaska, along with ten other books! He also bought a used semiautomatic .22-caliber Remington with a 4-x-20 scope, and 100 round boxes of hollow-point long rifle shells from a nearby gun shop.

He then hitched a road to the nearby George Parks Highway which would take him to the Stampede Trail ... his Alaskan snow adventure was about to begin. The trail is travelled by a handful of dog mushers, ski tourers and snow machine enthusiasts, but only until the frozen rivers begin to break up ... Christopher was travelling at the wrong time!

Crossing the Teklanika River on his second day Christopher was forced to wade across but he had not accounted for the wildness of the river in full flow in two months time. He found the bus and set up camp and had success with his hunting and enjoyed his solitary life for two months, but also began to be aware that he had lost a significant amount of weight with his limited diet. He had decided to withdraw and even perhaps return home. But when he came to the vast fast running river, he could not believe it and realised



after one failed attempt that crossing the river was not possible.

Arriving back at the bus he seems to have lost his sense of purpose and hunting and began to feed on edible plants, but here he ran into error despite his books and became desperately ill, which led to his untimely death.

This is a sad story in many aspects, including the distress he had within himself over the behaviour of his parents. It is also a warning to those who seek adventure without careful knowledge of the dangers and the need for good communication. John Krakauer has produced a powerful and important story. Five stars.

Richard Prideaux is a Diocesan Lay Reader in the Parish of Bass/Phillip Island.



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From the Editor



Bound together in hope

As we enter 2026, a time for reflection and New Year's resolutions, we hope to embrace fresh beginnings and bring positive change to our lives and our community.

At the same time, we carry the weight of recent events – moments that remind us how fragile life can be. The tragedy in Bondi last December shook many of us. Lives were lost, families were left grieving, and a sense of safety we often take for granted in Australia was broken. As I write this (11 January), parts of Victoria are ablaze, with over 130 homes destroyed and at least one life lost.

It is hard to make sense of such violence or the forces of nature, and even harder to know what to say.

However, even in the midst of sorrow, we see quiet acts of care and love: neighbours supporting each other, communities coming together, and people reaching out with compassion. These gestures remind us that hope never disappears, even when grief is close.

We cannot undo the past, and we cannot prevent all suffering – but we can choose how we respond. I hope in 2026 we can nurture hope, deepen our community bonds and make love visible in our small, faithful acts.

Krista Mountford

The Gippsland Anglican



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Jeremiah's reply to Forest November 2025

Dear Forest,

These are the hardest questions you have asked me. Prophets are generally melancholy by nature. Maybe it's knowing what could be if those who are proclaiming to actually did the will of God, rather than just paying lip-service or even worse deliberately living in opposition.

However, your existence shows that some took steps to work against the prevailing culture they were living in. I am old enough to remember the promise, never fulfilled, of the 1960's where young adults protested against the system and vowed to change it. Sadly, the system changed them, not the other way around.

The difference, this time, is that the very youngest are aware of how we are destroying the environment and are demanding that changes are made now, even before they are old enough to be decision-makers. A trite saying is 'children are the future', maybe in my time this is playing out in a new and unprecedented manner, where the historically powerless youth are pointedly speaking to those in power saying, 'we want a future, so you need to act now!'

In my time several groups are educating Christians in ways to live more appropriately on our planet and to encourage others to do likewise. Manna Gum, A Rocha Australia, Common Grace, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, Resilience.org, Anglican Communion Environmental Network and in this diocese, ACTinG.

Nor should I neglect many non-religious and other religious groups raising awareness of the urgent (in my time, let alone the following centuries) need for change. So many ... but those who care ... will easily find them either by seeking them on the internet (still working in my time) or local groups via their local libraries.

Few might be willing to make the seemingly radical changes, but enough of us have to ensure you exist. I don't know what is in my immediate future and I hope humans made non-selfish choices before circumstances forced them.

This time I have referred to God, although our familiar human words across various traditions struggle to name the reality you refer to as Spirit. Perhaps with time we will learn to be more open and inclusive, and not argue over language but join together in caring for our common home, where we meet the creator at work.

Peace, love and light be with you and the world you live in.

I have confidence that I will meet you in eternity.

Jeremiah



Wednesday Weekly Bible Study

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

Bec Hayman is the Anglican priest in the cooperating Parish of Churchill/Boolarra/Yinnar.

For more information or to receive the Zoom link contact Bec by telephone 0467 023 363 or email becca_mike@yahoo.com

Light in the shadow

Krista Mountford

In the shadow of flame and wave,
we've cried out by sea and mountain.
Bondi's shore fell silent,
Victorian forests burned and wept,
and hearts across the nation trembled.

Yet in the darkness, light was kindled –
hands clasped, prayers whispered,
strangers sheltering strangers.
God of mercy, breathe upon this land;
heal the scorched earth,
soothe the broken-hearted,
teach us to walk together in compassion.

From ashes, let new life rise.
From sorrow, let hope be born.
Bind us as one people,
held in Your steadfast love.

The Gippsland Anglican

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