



P6
A joyful Easter
gathering
at Cowes



P13
One
tree's
transformation



P14
The inaugural
Gippsland
Camino

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The Gippsland Anglican

Published in Gippsland Diocese since 1904 JUNE 2025

Michelle Axford – St Paul's, Korumburra

Hope





Making Room

+Richard's homily at the Synod Eucharist 'Making Room' along with the full text of the Presidential Address can be viewed on the diocesan website: www.gippslandanglicans.org.au.

Excerpts of Bishop Richard's Presidential Address to the First Session of the 41st Synod.

We rejoice with Bishop Greg Bennet and our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters in Gippsland and around the world on the election of Pope Leo XIV, and pray for him at the time of his Inauguration. His predecessor, Francis, of blessed memory, addressed a gathering of Roman Catholic educators in January of this year thus:

You are called to develop and transmit a new culture ... based on the encounter between generations, on inclusion ... a culture of responsibility, both personal and collective, to face global challenges such as the environmental, social and economic crises, and the great challenge of peace. At school you can 'imagine peace', that is, lay the foundations for a more just and fraternal world, with the contribution of all disciplines and the creativity of children and young people.

As cited in the papers for the Diocesan Assembly, Catholic Diocese of Sale, February 2025

A high calling indeed, and we must never lose sight of the contribution made to our outreach by our teachers and our chaplains – school, university, prison, hospital, police, ambulance, and ADF.

Our parishes continue to be vibrant centres of formation in faith and discipleship, where people of all ages and stages of their Christian walk are being raised up for baptismal ministry. This year's diocesan Discernment Group has around ten people actively asking what God might be calling them to do and be in the church.

Add to that around half a dozen in MDP (Ministry Development Program), from as many parishes, and I can look forward to signing more licences for Lay Readers and clergy in the years ahead – a privilege that remains one of my chief joys as bishop.

As I move around our beautiful region I see people who were not in church last time I visited that centre, including younger people. I see people putting their hand up for ministry, and for Bible study, and for rites of passage; committed in Christ. I see clergy and lay leaders working together, attending to their local context, and trying new ways to connect in service. I see a willingness to hold tradition lightly

– which, as I like to say, is the church's technical term for 'change' – so as to be authentically Anglican in our breadth and diversity yet always as a pilgrim people, creative in spirit. I see The Abbey breaking new ground, making room in its programs and its facilities.

In all of this there is great cause for encouragement. As one of the Cardinals in the film *Conclave* bravely ventured, 'The Church is what we do next.'

Yes, there are challenges; there are cultural headwinds, compliance headaches, and resourcing issues; our church workers experience fatigue, and in some cases burnout; our ministry centres are not immune from conflict, and clergy and lay leaders can sometimes find themselves having to deal with aggressive or threatening behaviour. We need to continue developing strategies and policies that make our churches safe places for all, and safe workplaces for employees and volunteers alike.

We've been doing some work around these issues at recent Clergy Conferences, and that will continue in June, alongside a gentle refresh of the diocesan vision. The progress we're making in the Ministry Wellbeing and Development space is also helping to equip our people to meet the demands of ministry in our time and place.

'Subsidiarity' refers to how the centre of an organisation can support its work at the edges – in our case the local church, where the missional action is – by taking point centrally on those things which would be burdensome locally, and maximising decision-making and initiative at the local level. The recent transformation of the Registry team has increased our capacity as a Diocese to operate by this principle.

The second half of last year was a little unsettling, as – for a range of good and timely reasons – we farewelled from the Registry staff team Annette Hollonds, Richard Connelly, Kevin Broughton, Libby Willems, and *The Gippsland Anglican* Editor Sally Woollett – talented and generous servants of the Diocese, each and all.

For a little while there, we were getting through a fair bit of sticky tape holding

things together thanks largely to Kate Campbell and Dave Perryman, with Tim Gibson in the archives and Jan Down back at TGA desk for a time, and I would pay high tribute to those colleagues in particular for their unstinting dedication.

Heraclitus famously said that you can't step in the same river twice, but I don't think Heraclitus had met Brian Norris! Brian returned as Acting Registrar in November and his sure and steady hand helped to chart a course into the new year.

And then in an avalanche of divine providence, Holy Spirit blew four wonderful people our way in Rae Riley (Registrar), Joe Gormally (Finance Officer), Jules Lanham (Clearance Officer), and Krista Mountford (Development Officer and TGA Editor). At the same time, Anglicare Victoria engaged Wendy Mawoyo to work with us in Parish Partnerships. Under Rae's leadership, the Registry Office is working hard to respond to your needs – both as they arise and as we can anticipate them – in order to best serve you.

Again, there are challenges. Having clawed back somewhat from a long-term deficit position – thanks largely to the performance of our investment corpus and a significant grant for Aboriginal Ministry – Bishop-in-Council finds itself unable to present a surplus budget to Synod this year, or for the foreseeable future. A Budget Working Group has been established by Council to address this concern.

The transition to the OSCA platform for safe ministry clearances is arduous, notwithstanding the best efforts of the team at Kooyoora and our Safe Ministry Authority, and the pastoral approach of Jules Lanham. It will be great when we get there – transferable clearances between dioceses, five-yearly renewals, less trawling back through one's life story once in the system – but getting there is hard work for everyone, and – frankly – expensive.

Insurance costs and other financial burdens on parishes continue to rise, even as we make every effort to keep parish contributions among the lowest in Victoria.



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.

Getting the right people in the right places requires an investment in our mission that we make gladly, knowing that 'nickel-and-diming' ourselves to the point where too few are doing too much is a false economy, with its own high costs for individuals and for the organisation as a whole.

On that score let me acknowledge the incredibly faithful and fruitful work of the existing Diocesan Staff team in Graham Knott, Lyndon Phillips, Keren Terpstra, and – until recently – Sue Jacka, supported by the Registrar and now buoyed and enriched by the inclusion of a new Archdeacon and three new Regional Deans in John Webster, Fran Grimes, Daniel Gebert, and Sue Newcombe.

Of course, the energy and skills brought to these ministries, so that others might be well supported in theirs, is matched by scores of volunteers at every level of our life and work, for whose generosity we could not be more thankful.

In a recent pastoral letter, our Primate quotes Cathy Ross and Jonny Baker from their book on mission [*Imagining Mission with John V Taylor*, 2020]: 'Imagine that church is not the point of church? Rather, church exists to participate in the healing of all things – the world, its people, the planet itself'.

Thank you for your participation in the work of governance – not for the church's sake, but rather that we might release the gifts of all the baptised in the service of God's healing mission to the world in Christ.

Just a fortnight ago we learned that our Primate and Archbishop of Adelaide, The Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith, will be retiring from both offices later this year. The Diocese of Melbourne is in the process of making a new appointment, and we look forward to an early opportunity to welcome our new Archbishop to Gippsland. Scott Lowrey's consecration in February as Australia's newest bishop was the 24th since my own – that's around half of the College of Bishops renewed in just seven years. The face of leadership in our Church is changing, with more women in episcopal ministry, and greater diversity in terms of ethnicity, language, and cultural background, and the rate of this welcome change is accelerating.

The same diversification is at the heart of the Nairobi-Cairo Proposals published by IASCUFO – the Inter Anglican Standing Commission on Unity Faith and Order – in December, as reported in *TGA* in February – another expression of 'making room' in our historically male and 'anglo' structures within the worldwide Communion.



This work was the focus of the meeting of IASCUFO in Cairo at the end of 2023, which was my first on that Commission.

The Nairobi-Cairo Proposals start from the premise that in our post-colonial context the leadership of the Communion should *look* like the Communion. To this end, they make a number of suggestions as to how the presidency at Anglican Communion gatherings might be shared with the Archbishop of Canterbury by Regional Primates.

Of at least equal import, if taken up by the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) next year in Belfast, is a proposed description of the Anglican Communion which adapts the classic 1930 Lambeth Conference definition, so as to better accommodate our current theological differences. Significantly, the proposed revision does not refer to being 'in communion with the See of Canterbury'. Instead, it lists 'historic connection with the See of Canterbury' as one of four binding characteristics of the Anglican fellowship of Churches.

For Churches or dioceses that have declared themselves not to be in communion with Canterbury or the Church of England in light of recent developments, or experience that communion as impaired, this re-working of the 1930 statement provides room for disagreement over the presenting issues, and enables us to walk together – *syn hodos* – to the highest degree possible; to make room for each other.

Twelve months on from the Yoorrook Justice Commission hearing at which Bishop Genieve Blackwell and I appeared on behalf of the Anglican Province of Victoria, the evidence provided by Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Uniting Churches – both written and oral – has been focussed mainly in the media through a land justice lens.

Having shared at the hearing our diocesan policy at the time of distributing 1.5% of proceeds from land sales to Aboriginal Ministry, I wrote in February's *TGA* of the theological imperative to lift this figure above a level that I could only describe in my testimony that day as 'woefully inadequate'.

Bishop-in-Council retains 20% of the funds generated by the sale of land held in trust, with the vast bulk of that (18.5%) having been put aside to meet redress obligations and the remaining 1.5% supporting Aboriginal Ministry. At its February meeting, Council adopted a recommendation to raise this figure from 1.5% to 7%, around one-third of the 20% retained, with a further 7% (or one-third) to be applied to redress claims (a reduction of the previous allocation) and the remaining 6% being for the Gippsland Ministry Fund.

This change has no material impact on the disbursement of land sale proceeds to parishes. It does however bring our attempts as a Diocese to offer some reparation for the injuries caused by our colonial history into parity with those caused by historic abuse.

Bishop-in-Council's resolution also provides for proceeds of land sales to be directed to First Nations organisations outside of our ongoing commitment to funding Aboriginal Ministry, cognisant of the loss of language, culture, and connection to Country as a result of the policies of segregation and assimilation in which our Church was an agent of the state in places such as Lake Tyers.

Whilst the uplift from 1.5% to 7% is a step in the right direction, it is no cause for self-congratulation. We have a long way to go on this journey, and the recommendations of the Commission will be an important reference point as we continue to seek more just outcomes for First Nations peoples following on from the necessary and painful prior step of truth-telling.

At our worship during Synod we'll experience several offerings from a hymn-writing workshop in March – just one of a host of Hope25 activities undertaken or underway around the Diocese – and we have a panel discussion devoted to telling and celebrating some of those stories.

At the recent bishops conference we were asked to bring a poster highlighting some of the Hope25 activities in our dioceses, and I was quietly proud of what I was able to share from Gippsland Anglicans for 'show and tell', including a Camino booklet; not that it's a competition, of course! Yet how good that we might spur each other on in proclaiming the Gospel – the hope we have in Christ – including by gathering around the scriptures together in the Hope25 Lenten Study.

Surely that's what Synod is really all about: walking together as God's pilgrim people, spurring each other on in that proclamation – for the glory of God, which is the healing of all things.

+RM



Faith in action: The Walk of Witness at Mathison Park

■ Ruth Place

Following Christ's path in the Walk of Witness at Mathison Park

Cathie Halliwell, our UCA Minister, had prepared the church with a display around the altar, depicting the symbols of the Easter story. The large cross was lying on the ground in front of the altar, on black cloth.

Members of the Churchill Christian Fellowship joined our congregation to participate in the service.

The service began with the acknowledgment that Jesus knew what was ahead of him, yet he did nothing to stop the intended outcome. Jesus died a painful death – humiliated and scorned, whipped, spat upon, and wounded by thorns in a crown meant to demean.

It was a death that showed God's unending depth of love for us. It was a death that overcomes death; a love greater than hate, a love that can restore all things.

The service and script of the Walk of Witness highlighted our lack of love for others – the times we forsake Jesus and God, and when we ignore the suffering of others to pursue our selfish ways. The script also asked us to consider the pain, anguish, grief, and steadfastness of Jesus in his quest for our redemption.

It invited us to put ourselves in the position of Christ, his disciples, his mother, and his close friends, as they

witnessed how much Jesus was suffering and enduring for us.

We were bidden to live the life of love that Jesus gave us as an example.

The Walk of Witness was held at the thirteen stations around Lake Hyland in Mathison Park. It was a different way to witness our faith. The Churchill Christian Fellowship, Lumen Christi Parish, and our congregation shared the walk. Our UCA Minister, Cathie Halliwell, prepared both the service and the walk.

Ruth Place is the Parish Secretary of Churchill/Boolarra/Yinnar.

Holy Week Reflections from Korumburra

■ Sue Wilson

Our Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services at St Paul's, Korumburra, were particularly faith-growing and heartwarming. We were privileged to welcome Bishop Richard to preside.

We were delighted to have in place our Sign of Hope (see front cover) above the entry. Its neon light is very eye-catching, especially for an evening service.

As always, there was chatter and welcome as the congregation arrived, and then a growing silence as the musicians took up the melodies of much-loved hymns. Bishop Richard was already seated, but also very approachable, with a smile and welcome for us all. The Rev'd David judged the moment to commence, with the church bells ringing. The Maundy Thursday evening service had a special feel, as evening comes early now and darkness was upon us. Bishop Richard re-told the Gospel story of the woman washing Jesus' feet with expensive perfume and wiping them with her hair. In the telling, it became her story, with her voice, and

as though we were there, we watched and waited.

On Good Friday, the Bishop once again took us on a journey back to the Gospels. From afar, in the shadows, we watched Nicodemus tentatively approach Jesus under cover of darkness. Although we understood his fears, we knew too that his faith would overcome them. Bishop Richard reminded us of the saying, 'seeing is believing', but at the foot of the cross, Nicodemus is more wont to ponder that 'believing is seeing.'

We were hugely blessed in both services by The Rev'd David's presentation and Bishop Richard's presence with us.

Later on Friday morning, some of the congregation joined with Christians from other churches in

Korumburra and gathered at the crosses by the side of the highway to bear witness to the truth in words and music. To be praising God outdoors on a warm and windy morning is a joyful thing, but it was oh so pleasing to slow holiday traffic in the process!

Sue Wilson is the TGA representative of Korumburra/Poowong.



Combined churches gathering in Korumburra



The light of Christ has come into the world

■ Graeme Liersch

With the dawn of Easter Sunday 2025, those present at the Wonthaggi-Inverloch Inter-Church Council event at the 'Eagle's Nest', Inverloch, were clearly reminded of the Hope we have in Christ.

With the sun streaming over the top of the cross at dawn and the 'Hope Banner' standing beside it, it was as though Christ Jesus was saying, 'I keep my promises to you, including your redemption.'

The Uniting Church led the service with The Rev'd Graeme Liersch from the Anglicans sharing hope.

Graeme commenced with reference to the dawn, 'What a glorious way to celebrate a new day. Christ was dead and now He has risen. Hallelujah!'

He went on to say, 'I'm sure the devil thought he had it made. The devil's logic would probably have gone something like this: God will probably send His son, so I'll appeal to His goodness so He can't deny himself. When that happens, I'll have him cornered and then killed.'

With the crucifixion completed and Jesus buried, what a victory it must have seemed to the devil.'

'And then, with the dawn of a new day all changed in an instant, Jesus wasn't dead, He was alive, risen, and the devil had forever lost. He is defeated. That's what we Christians believe and know.'

Graeme then went on to challenge our belief. 'But do you really believe this? Do you have doubts and questions? Do you think to yourself or listen to the devil's lies and say, "This is just a fictitious story"? And what is the real evidence of Christ's resurrection, if any?'

Without going into detail, Graeme answered these questions noting that there are far more surviving early manuscripts that identify Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ and that He rose from the dead, than any other manuscripts on any other single person in history from that era and since. And this was before printing presses.

Uniting in faith and fellowship at daybreak on Easter Day

And as Gamaliel the Pharisee and teacher said,

But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.

(Acts 5:39)

The fact Christianity, based on the resurrection of Christ, has remained since the 1st century CE, is an indication enough that the resurrection was real.

What then does this mean for us? What does this mean for the world we live in?

It means that we can have a personal relationship with the living God.

It's not by merit; it is by His grace that we now walk with Him and talk with Him. Such a promise gives hope to all whether we realise it or not.

So, believe!

The Rev'd Graeme Liersch is the Rector, Wonthaggi-Inverloch parish.

Bass churches unite for Good Friday



Carrying the cross through Bass

■ Les Ridge

This year's Good Friday service was a deeply moving and unifying event, beginning at St Joseph's Catholic Church and continuing through to St Paul's in Bass.

The service at St Joseph's focused on the stations of the cross, with members of both congregations taking turns to read various parts. Most of the congregation then marched the rough wooden cross through Bass to St Paul's. It was here that traditional hymns and readings from the lectionary were shared in this ecumenical event. This shared Good Friday journey has now become a cherished tradition in the Bass community, marking its seventh consecutive year.

Les Ridge is the TGA representative for Bass/Phillip Island.

Worship at sunrise: A joyful Easter gathering in Cowes

James Millward

■ James Millward

A total of 114 people, young and old, gathered together to joyfully celebrate the Risen Lord Jesus at the Combined Churches of Phillip Island Easter Dawn Service. This special service was held at Erehwon Point in Cowes, beginning at 6:30am – just before the sun had risen.

The Rev'd Ruth Hanlon led a simple yet meaningful communion service, where bread and juice were shared as symbols of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection. Gentle and reflective music was provided by Travis on acoustic guitar, helping to set the tone of worship and reflection.

Combined Churches of Phillip Island Easter Dawn Service

A heartfelt thank you goes to all the Combined Churches involved – Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Uniting, Equip, and Surf Church – for their participation and support. Remarkably, it was only as we were packing up that a few drops of rain began to fall, holding off until everything was complete.

Later in the morning, an Easter Day Service was held in the Parish Hall in Cowes, also drawing a large gathering of more than 100 people. It was wonderful to see the hall almost full, with many visitors and families in attendance, including lots of children at both services.

On Anzac Day, The Rev'd Ruth also attended the Cowes dawn service, where she led prayers as part of the community commemoration. Later that morning, she led the march from the church grounds to the Cowes War Memorial, in an event organised by the local RSL branch. There, she laid a wreath on behalf of the Parish and once again led the community in prayer.

James Millward is Administration Assistant for the Parish of Bass-Phillip Island.



James Millward

The Rev'd Ruth leading the Anzac Day march

Do you have
a question,
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Holy Week, Great Triduum and Easter at St James Traralgon

■ Emily Beaverstock

The Parish of Traralgon's Lenten theme was *The Path to Salvation*. During Holy Week, this theme was reflected in the various services conducted. On the Monday and Tuesday of Holy Week, the fourteen Stations of the Cross were prayerfully reflected on – Monday evening the first seven stations, and Tuesday evening the last seven.

The fourteen depictions of the stations showed beautiful Aboriginal art by Uncle Richard Campbell. The lay readers contextualized their prayers, and The Rev'd Gradwell gave short homilies on the chronological events of Jesus' encounters during the course of that final week before his crucifixion.

On Wednesday in Holy Week, we had a Taizé and Tenebrae service, reflecting on the seven prayers of Jesus. The congregation were anointed with the new oils for healing and service.

On Thursday evening, we had a Seder Meal with a difference ... *Meeting Jesus in the Passover Meal*. The narrative of the Passover Meal was shared and portrayed by Di Popof, The Rev'd Janet Wallis, and The Rev'd Gradwell.

The meal started off with the liturgy of the Washing of the Feet, the Passover Meal, Jesus instituting the Eucharist, and at the end of the meal all silently retreated to the church for the stripping of the altar and solemn reading of Psalm 22. The leaving of the church in silence set the tone for the Good Friday services, which were conducted by The Rev'd Brenda Burney, assisted by lay reader Sarah Gover at St David's in Toongabbie, and The Rev'd Gradwell at St James, assisted by lay readers Grania Sheehan and Peter Wallis.

Easter Day began with St James' Service of the Light at 6am, with The Rev'd Marilyn Orbesby presiding and The Rev'd Gradwell preaching. The Rev'd Janet Wallis conducted the 10am service at St James, with The Rev'd Gradwell conducting a service at St John's in Glengarry. The renewal of baptismal vows was made at all Easter Day services.

Throughout Holy Week, the musicians did a sterling job upholding the liturgy with fitting hymns and songs. Thank you to Michele Stevens, Trish and Graeme Ingledon, and Mark Woods.

Emily Beaverstock is the TGA representative for Traralgon.

Washing of the Feet

Seven churches in Walk of the Cross

■ Jan Down

Seven churches joined in the ecumenical Good Friday Walk of the Cross in Sale this year: St Mary's Catholic Cathedral, St Columba's Uniting Church, Sale City Builders Church, Riviera Christian Church, Flooding Creek Community Church, Sale Salvation Army Church, and St Paul's Anglican Cathedral. At each location there was a Bible reading, a prayer and a hymn, then the walkers set off again, following the cross through the streets of Sale.



Bearing the cross through the streets of Sale



Two stories of Baptism and Renewal

The Easter baptisms of Joel and Adrian

■ Joanne Stuchbery

Some of us remember our baptism – we made the decision to follow Jesus of Nazareth as adults. Some of us don't remember the time, because our parents chose to cover us with the waters of the Spirit as babies.

We all have our faith stories to tell, each unique, individual, and special. In different ways, we have chosen to follow Jesus and make Him our Lord and Saviour, to follow the Christian way.

This Easter Day, St Peter's Leongatha was truly blessed to witness, support, and celebrate two men who have chosen to follow Jesus and be baptised into the Church of God.

Adrian, Joel, and their sponsors chose Easter Sunday to affirm, 'they have turned to Christ and rejected all that is evil.'

We, the congregation, witnessed the age-old sacrament and tradition of the Church: repentance of sins, rejection of selfish living and all that is false and unjust, and renouncing Satan.

They each proclaimed to 'strive to live as a disciple of Christ, loving God with their whole heart and their neighbour as themselves, until life's end.'

We promised to support them and 'pray that the fruit of the Holy Spirit would grow and flourish in their lives.' We witnessed the flowing water over their heads to bring new birth by water and the Spirit.

The sacramental prayers for baptism within the APBA are magnificent and we celebrated the baptism with finger food and lunch in the parish hall.

I caught up with Joel and Adrian and asked them what had led them to want to be baptized at Easter.

Joel replied that, over the last ten years, God has been like water – drip-drip, drip-dripping into a cup that has now been filled and is overflowing – an excellent metaphor for baptism, I thought!

He was raised an agnostic/atheist; however, when he was a support worker in Melbourne he used to take his clients to a drop-in centre at a church. That was his first experience of the church.

He was further challenged to investigate Jesus' way when his daughter, who was 10 at the time, was baptised. Joel stated that she had always had a relationship with God and wanted this deepened through baptism.

Over a few years, he was able to discuss faith and the journey with a Christian friend. Joel said she never forced God on him but always answered his questions and was very patient.

Joel is politically minded, believes passionately in advocacy and justice, and feels this is the next step in his life journey.

Adrian has his own story. He has been reading the Bible and discussing it at length with his friends, including his sponsor, Zoe. He is part of the Alpha Program at St Mary's Mirboo North and decided Easter Day was the right time to take a step forward for baptism in water and Spirit.

In a society where men and women, on Sundays, are usually interested in markets, football games, and social gatherings, it is refreshing, uplifting, and encouraging to meet two men who have decided to follow Jesus.

Joanne Stuchbery is the TGA representative for Leongatha.



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Celebrating a fruitful April Parish Partnerships Grants round

■ Wendy Mawoyo

The April Parish Partnership (PP) Grants Round was a strong success, following two months of planning and parish visits across the Diocese. These visits revealed just how widespread the challenges are: shortages of volunteers, rising food insecurity, homelessness, family violence, and poverty.

In the face of these needs, parishes responded with creativity and compassion. One highlight was Phillip Island's bold step in partnering with churches, community organisations, and local council for a winter shelter – an inspiring example of working beyond parish walls to serve those most in need.

We received eight excellent applications, each addressing real issues in their local context. While funding was limited, we're pleased that every project received at least partial support. The strength of these proposals shows just how vital parish ministry is in the lives of local communities.

APRIL GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

Traralgon

Heating for their op shop warehouse to support volunteers, increase output and reduce poverty.

Drouin

Playground upgrade to expand playgroup outreach and connect with local schools and community organisations.

Churchill

Food support for university students experiencing hardship and/or during exams – improving connection and mental health and wellbeing.

Westernport

A new mothers' group for young families, in partnership with the council – a much needed service for connection in Lang Lang.

Trafalgar (Thorpdale)

Allergy-aware food support for JAFFA's after-school program – for community outreach.

Moe/Newborough

A community garden to draw on their new priest's skills and to foster local connections.

Phillip Island (San Remo)

Launch of a local food bank to meet urgent community needs.

Phillip Island (Bass Coast Winter Shelter)

A collaborative winter shelter project to address homelessness.



Wendy, Tracey and Sharron attending the breakfast program at Lang Lang Primary School

A big thank you to the PP Sterring Committee for your thoughtful discernment, and to the parishes for your vision, effort and care. It's heartening to see such intentional outreach being nurtured across Gippsland.

To those still considering a project, the October round is ahead. Now is the time to connect with your community, dream big, and prepare to act.

I'm looking forward to visiting those parishes I have not had a chance to connect with as yet, and I enjoyed meeting more parishioners and clergy at Synod.

Well done to all involved – and thank you for being the church in action.



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VCC EM training is a comprehensive training package designed to equip members of faith communities to support affected residents through their participation in VCC EM deployments. The training course is a 2 stage process involving: • Self paced learning and completion of the workbook. • Face to face training day. • If Face to Face is not permitted at the time this will be done by zoom with a short face to face when permitted. Successful registration will require the completion of safety checks and referee reports and will occur after the training has been completed.	This training is essential for all in the faith community intending to respond to emergencies and disasters in Victoria. The Victorian State and Local Governments are continually tightening the requirements for people entering disaster areas. The VCC EM is authorised by Government to coordinate an integrated faith communities' response when disaster occurs.

Compassion in times of crisis
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VCC Emergency Response Chaplain Training

The value of well-trained, supportive, and engaged chaplains – ready to reach out to those who are hurting at times of crisis and disaster – can't be overstated. Here in Gippsland, we were reminded of this especially during the Black Summer bushfires in 2019–2020, when many VCC chaplains, billeted temporarily in Bairnsdale, reached out to victims and first responders across the region, offering support and pastoral care.

The Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry (VCC EM) provides its services through volunteers from several religious and cultural groups, including Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh, and Hindu. These volunteers are trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA), Emotional Spiritual Care, and personal support to respond to all affected persons following disasters and emergencies.

VCC EM is offering a training workshop for all those interested in being part of this ministry at St John's Maffra on 21 June, 9am–4pm.

For more information, please contact Marie van der Weert, the VCC EM Training and Education Manager, at marie.vanderweert@vccem.org.au or just come along on the day.



L-R: Finn Wendt, Sophia Hoggard, The Rev'd Canon Daniel Lowe, Anneke Beamish and Noah McIntosh standing with their new St Paul's Anglican Grammar School Bibles

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School Year 7 students have been presented with special Bibles to use in their Christian Studies throughout their secondary school journey.

In a meaningful and unique moment, each of the presentations to the classes was met with cheers, as students

displayed enthusiasm and curiosity – which doesn't often happen for a school-assigned textbook! What makes the St Paul's Bible extra special is that it is a keepsake, personalised with the school values, school song and prayer, and a message from the Chaplaincy team.

In their classes, students will have the

opportunity to explore the Bible as a source of history, poetry, and ethical teachings that were written on a page many years ago.

Much like in an English class, over time students will learn to interpret the meaning of the texts and be able to discuss how ancient texts continue to shape modern life.

Meaningful connections across campuses

A strong connection is growing between St Paul's Anglican Grammar School's new Drouin Campus and its Warragul Campus through meaningful cross-campus collaboration.

Recently, whole-school Year 12 leaders were warmly welcomed by students from Prep to Year 3 during a visit to the Drouin Primary Campus. The younger students proudly guided their visitors around the new campus, shared time in the playground and sandpit, and hosted an engaging Q&A session.

One of the standout initiatives is the Buddy Program, which pairs Drouin students with Year 5 buddies from Warragul. These budding friendships are helping younger students build confidence while offering older students valuable opportunities to develop leadership skills and form lasting connections.



Year 5 Warragul student Zoe Rowe, with her Drouin Prep Buddy, Rusty Habgood



Easter reflections in nature's chapel

Enjoying harp music from Abbey Director Cath Connelly

Students and staff from Gippsland Grammar's Bairnsdale Campus gathered at The Abbey on Raymond Island for a memorable Easter service, surrounded by the natural beauty of bushland, birdsong, and beach.

'It was a magnificent autumn day,' said Head of Campus Virginia Evans. 'We have so much to be grateful for.'

With the support of Anglican clergy, the school community came together to reflect on the Easter story in this stunning

setting. The peaceful atmosphere and shared sense of purpose made the occasion especially meaningful for all involved.

It was a day to remember – rich in spirit, scenery, and gratitude.

From Maffra to medals: Tara Lambert's hockey success

Gippsland Grammar Year 9 student Tara Lambert has returned to school from the recent holidays with a bronze medal from the national hockey championships held in Adelaide.

Tara was one of two goalkeepers selected to represent Victoria's Under-16 top side at the tournament. Her team played multiple matches against teams from across Australia, with Victoria winning the bronze medal match against NSW.

Tara's role as goalkeeper is vital in defence, and at this tournament, she successfully blocked multiple attempts on goal, helping to secure the win.

This is Tara's fourth national event, having been selected to represent Victoria since 2022. Her goalkeeping skills have grown and developed each year – from representing Victoria's Development Squad over the past three years to being chosen this year for the top state team.

She said her most memorable moment representing Victoria was meeting Hockeyroos goalkeeper Jocelyn Bartram

at last year's national tournament in Perth.

Tara also said she is looking forward to continuing to represent Victoria, in

addition to playing for Melbourne team KBH and her local side, Maffra Hockey Club, this coming season.



Tara Lambert defends the net

Turning of the sod at St Paul's



Back L-R: Head of St Paul's Drouin Junior School Rowan van Raay, The Hon Harriet Shing MP, St Paul's Board Chair Darren Jennings and St Paul's Deputy Principal Gordon Oldham. Front: Evolet Wiggett and Raven Philp

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School's newest campus, which opened its doors in Drouin in January, is making significant progress with its building program. The school recently marked a key milestone with the formal *Turning of the Sod* ceremony for the Stage 2 development of a Primary School Learning Centre to accommodate growing enrolments.

The Centre will feature six paired learning areas that open out onto a collaborative learning 'street' for shared specialist programs, seamlessly integrating with the natural environment under an extended roof to incorporate outdoor play-based learning activities.

The St Paul's Drouin Junior School Learning Centre project is supported by the Victorian Government's capital grant of \$6M through the Victorian School Building Authority's Building Fund for Non-Government Schools – Independent Schools, which will assist with the construction of the Centre.

The ceremony was led by the school's Deputy Principal, Gordon Oldham, with distinguished guests including The Hon Harriet Shing MP (Member for Eastern Victoria), St Paul's Board Chair Darren Jennings, as well as staff and students.

Winter at The Abbey – I absolutely love it!

■ Cath Connelly

This is my happy place: a wild beach, wind whipping against me as I walk the shoreline. There's something deeply invigorating about it – especially when I reach that beach after hiking through open countryside. It's the rawness, the feeling of being fully exposed to the elements, immersed in the vastness of nature. I welcome it.

The Desert Mothers and Fathers understood this kind of experience – that deep connection with the Divine found not just through struggle against the harshness of nature, but also within it. While Paul of Thebes is often named as the first hermit monk to venture into the desert, it was St. Anthony who truly began the movement. Around 270 CE, Anthony heard a sermon that spoke of achieving spiritual perfection by giving up all possessions, serving the poor, and following Christ. He didn't stop there – he withdrew into the desert, seeking total solitude.

For Anthony and those who followed his path, the desert became their sacred space. The silence, the austerity, the raw exposure to nature – it was all a way to encounter God, an alternative to martyrdom, and a deep form of devotion.

I'm not saying The Abbey is a desert, or that we're being called to the same level of sacrifice as those early seekers. But I do believe there is deep wisdom in setting aside time, stepping away from the familiar, and entering a space made for prayer and reflection.

So, if the thought of solitude in winter's wild embrace stirs something in you, come. Spend time here. Let The Abbey meet that longing, and reveal to you, in its own quiet way, the presence of the Sacred.

Save the date



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

JUNE

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

JULY

- 10 *Hush Day* – Three Celtic Saints: Cuthbert, Columba & Aidan.
Facilitator: June Treadwell
- 10 Celtic Music session
- 11-13 Coming of Age: Stepping Boldly into Elderhood. Facilitator: Janet Munro

AUGUST

- 8-10 Circle Dance Retreat.
Facilitator: Robyn Sussems
- 14 *Hush Quiet Day* – Maximillian Kolbe: Saint, Reformer, Influencer or Disrupter?
Facilitator: Dennis Webster
- 14 Celtic Music session
- 30 Abbey Feast



One tree's transformation

Blessing of the altar-table at St Barnabas Chapel, The Abbey

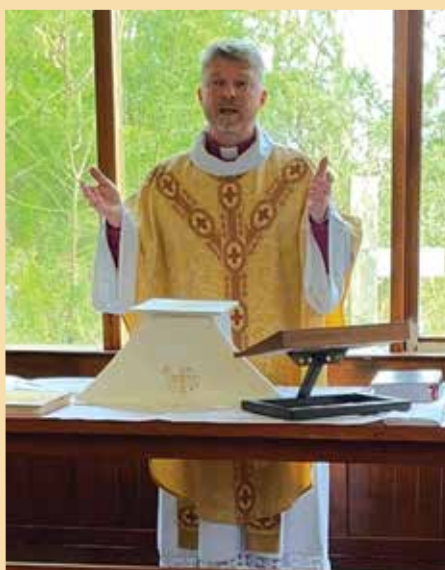
■ Eleanor Paterson

Two years ago, the Abbey Priest at that time, Edie Ashley, was traversing the grounds of the Abbey alongside a stand of stalwart River Red Gums when she heard an almighty CRACK, and then a CRASH, as a sturdy bough fell just outside the chapel. Undeterred, she arranged for it to be stored out of the weather, where it seasoned naturally.

Edie retired and moved to Sydney. The idea of the transformation and repurposing of the fallen bough as the altar table evolved and was approved by the Abbey Chapter. The cost of its construction in 2024 was donated by Archdeacon Emeritus Edie Ashley (Abbey Priest 2012–2023).

The inscription on the table reads: 'In memory of Bishop John McIntyre (1951–2014).'

On Wednesday 23 April, the handsome altar table was consecrated by Bishop Richard in the chapel of St Barnabas. He dedicated the altar table and anointed it with the oil of Chrism. He said,



What happens at this and every altar-table, in Gippsland and beyond, is always for everyone, whether in here or out there; indeed it is for the whole world – for creation itself as our Chapel's new

The Ven Edie Ashley, Bishop Richard and Jan McIntyre

windows suggest – an action whose cosmic significance is concentrated at the altar-table for a moment: here where God's grace meets human need; where God's coming kingdom breaks into the realpolitik of our world; and where the ancient stories of God's people are told so as to transform our living in the present.

And so, we sensed the divine presence in this place and made our Eucharist with great joy.

The Abbey today holds a precious place in the hearts of Gippslanders, some of whom travelled from interstate to attend the dedication. Jan McIntyre even interrupted her globetrotting to participate in the service.

We celebrate this latest addition to the fabric of the Chapel, and wait upon God for new challenges. To God be the glory.

Eleanor Paterson is a parishioner at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville.

The inaugural Gippsland Camino 2025

Part of our **HOPE25** celebrations



Bishop Richard with Michael and Jan Down

■ Sharron Lane

Glorious weather, beautiful crisp mornings, stunning scenery, sunrises and sunsets, and a group of pilgrims who traveled more than 67 kilometres across three days. A pilgrimage, no matter how small, provides a moment to still ourselves, to reflect, to marvel, to rejoice, to grieve. If we allow ourselves to let go, we can truly be brought into a closer walk with the Trinity and God's love for us all. For some, such a journey is more collegial and provides the opportunity to discuss things that 'make our hearts burn within us.' Such was the opportunity, and many more spaces and places besides, for those brave souls who gathered for the inaugural Gippsland Camino.

DAY 1

Their first stop was a reflective 'Blessing of the Pilgrims' service held at the Uniting Church in Traralgon. It was during this service that our pilgrims were invited to choose a specially polished agate stone from the Avon River to take as a companion on their journey. It was a lovely coming together, and the volunteers were also well represented. A note must be made of the heroics of the Bishop, who made it to the service after arriving off a plane early that morning. What a blessing!

DAY 2

Early Friday morning, we marked off all those who were walking on the first day,

and they set off from Burnet's Road. They made really good time and caught the first road marshal on the hop at Glengarry but used their visit to collect their first prayer cards from both the Glengarry Anglican and Uniting Churches, which were open and staffed by local volunteers. This was to be the pattern at each small town we pilgrimaged through.

Next stop was Toongabbie and another pretty Anglican Church, and again a welcome from the local church representative. A couple of painkillers for a couple of sore pilgrims from one of our fabulous First Aiders, a lunch stop, and then they were off once more.

At their final stop, everyone was commenting on how early they finished walking. We were so blessed to have the hospitality of the Catholic Church at Cowwarr. Our happy campers set up their tents, which had been faithfully delivered to them earlier that afternoon. Our group of twenty did somewhat overwhelm the kitchen staff at the Cowwarr Pub that night! Again, this was such a lovely time of celebration of the day with stories and reflections, big and small.

DAY 3

From Cowwarr, the group was joined by three new walkers, including Bishop Richard, and also some enthusiastic little people on their bikes. Despite a rather impressive stack at the end of the journey, it was a delight to have the First Aiders'

children join our happy support team and our pilgrims. Any walk such as this is not easy, and watching on, it became clear that some were finding the journey harder than others.

The next stop was Heyfield. Here, most were very excited to check out the delights of the Anglican Church's Market Day. Many (like me) enjoyed an amazing morning tea with sweets and treats to tempt us. The town was humming, and a few hours were spent by most pilgrims wandering the various sites before once more finding their way back to the rail trail and continuing their journey.

Tinamba is a 'blink' and you could miss this little town with a great pub that was unfortunately hosting a wedding on Saturday night. The pilgrims were able to take advantage of the Heyfield Railway Hotel's transport minibus and arrive safely for another dinner event.

DAY 4

Suddenly it was the final day, the penultimate push. Our intrepid pilgrims once again set off in the misty haze of a five-degree morning. The sun did not let us down, however, and by the time I caught up with the pilgrims in Maffra, most had been treated to the hospitality of Maffra's Anglican Church. They made a beeline to the church, knowing from experience the previous day that our Gippsland Anglicans can bake! Maffra is a beautiful town, and the autumn season is just beginning to show itself. And so, for the final, and hardest push ...

This leg was the toughest for most pilgrims. There were blisters and sore muscles and tired feet. By the time the pilgrims began to slowly make their way into Apex Park, most were waddling rather than walking. While afternoon tea was provided once more, The Rev'd David Perryman offered the pilgrims a foot washing service ... complete with a foot massage and moisturizer. Most of our exhausted pilgrims accepted this gratefully. Many stories were shared as we sat waiting for all to finish their journey. Some had to leave, photos were taken. Many of the pilgrims were already musing about where we'd have our pilgrimage 'next year,' which was crazy brave.

So, our final destination was to the Cathedral in smaller numbers to wait for our 5pm reflective service led by Dean Keren. We were not sure how many would still be upright for the service, and for most, the sheer exhaustion (and stiffness) had now set in. As the sun shone through the beautiful stained-glass windows behind the altar, we finished our journey. The Lord is good.

Sharron Lane is a Warden for the Westernport Episcopal District.

Camino Reflections

■ Heather den Houting

Over the weekend of the 1–4 May 2025 about 25 Pilgrims came together to walk from Traralgon to Stratford along the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail as the Gippsland Camino 2025. A special aspect to this Pilgrimage was that we had asked all the churches along the way to open their doors to the Pilgrims, for prayer rest and water. They did this with much delight!

The nature of a Camino journey is always so individual. Each person brings their full self to the way, and the physical practice of walking until exhaustion means that much of your daily trappings are stripped away. I chose to camp in church grounds for the same reason, I wanted the challenge of moving into places of discomfort (it was cold and there were no showers) in order to bring forward that which was most important to me.

I am also someone who prefers to walk on my own, as I am very comfortable talking in all places and spaces, and the discipline of staying in a silent space is very powerful for me. However, the gatherings together with other pilgrims and support workers over an evening meal was an absolute delight as we compared photos, stories and the state of our feet and stiffness of our legs!

This is the third time I have done a Pilgrimage, and as on previous walks, I got to know my body better than I did before and as usual was astounded by its capacity to respond to the physical challenge. I also now know not to come with any agendas to the walk, but to let God speak the path for me. This time around, my insight was to set those things aside that I was so deeply invested in, that I could not make space for other things.

So many things happened in this process that delighted me again, especially the care, generosity and enthusiasm that people can bring to you when you are truly authentic with them. I was cared for, prayed for, fed and watered and in one final grand gesture had my sore, dusty and smelly feet bathed, anointed and dried at the end of the walk. Instead of embarrassment I experienced absolute blessed relief from this experience.

I would like to thank all those who planned, supported and contributed to the Gippsland Camino 2025. Every moment of this journey seemed to be a holy moment, where God, who can make the impossible possible, granted small and wise encounters along the way. What a blessing. Buen Camino.

The Rev'd Heather den Houting is the Minister at Traralgon Uniting Church.

■ Susan Liersch

At the outset of Hope25, our parish council decided to set up a parish working group to steer the parish in initiating events involving the community. This team was made up of some of our newer parishioners, as we felt this would give us a fresh perspective for looking at ways to outreach into our community. One of those newer members was Ellen Hubble, whose contribution has been both creative and invaluable.

As encouraged by the National Hope25 executive, we started by seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit, and this led to our first event: a gospel music open mic. Ellen shared with the team that she and her husband ran a monthly open mic at the local Goods Shed, a community centre for the arts in Wonthaggi.

Each month, a theme is set which aims to guide participants in what music to present. Ellen had been praying for some time that the open mic would be a space where Jesus was present, and she felt that this could be an event where hope in Jesus could make an appearance, and so the idea of having a gospel music theme at an open mic within the season of Hope25 was born.

The team enthusiastically embraced the idea, and a date was set for Palm Sunday, with the view in mind of capitalising on Easter and promoting our Easter services. There were some real advantages in choosing this kind of event.

Firstly, it would take our church and its members into the community, raising our profile with the unchurched and not expecting those who were unfamiliar with church to come into a church environment.

Secondly, by tapping into an existing group of people, we did not have to



Naomi singing *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

expend a lot of energy in advertising and encouraging people to attend, for attendance was already a given.

Thirdly, Ellen was able to be the conduit between this group in the community and our church members.

As a congregation, we provided afternoon tea for the event, using the Hope banner that Ellen had painted as a backdrop. We also encouraged congregational members to get involved, either by forming groups and singing or just attending and engaging with other attendees.

In the lead-up, we equipped our congregation with skills in sharing their faith story (you can access this video training, *Writing Your Own Story*, on the Diocesan website Hope25 page under Resources).

In total, five small groups from our congregation presented a range of songs – from well-known hymns to contemporary songs, as well as a Messianic Jewish song. Each gave a short testimony about the song and why it was chosen before presenting it.

One of our young adults at church, Naomi, decided that morning to attend and sing *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* a cappella. Everyone watching was blown away by her

effort. Christians from other churches also joined in.

The Rev'd Graeme also offered a brief talk on the hope of Easter, linking it to the previous two songs presented by one of the regulars and to Psalm 150. Two regulars who attend a drumming group with me said of the event, 'That was the best attended open mic we've had. It was so encouraging.' (There were over 30 people in attendance.) One also said, 'I felt out of my comfort zone singing gospel songs,' then in the next breath said, 'I think we should have a gospel theme more often.'

One of our team members, Elaine, became aware that one of the regulars was reluctant to come in because of all the 'religious' people at the event. She was able to engage with the lady, listen to her story, and share how God had given her strength to get through the tough stuff in her life. This exchange had a positive effect and led the lady to join in with the event.

Ellen was asked a few days later by one performer what had given her inspiration when she painted the banner. She was able to share that she drew her inspiration from her Christian faith.

Some of us are planning to continue attending the open mics so as to make stronger connections with those in this musical community. As a team, we felt that the Holy Spirit worked through us as we willingly put ourselves out of our comfort zones to share the hope we have in Jesus through song with musicians in our community.

The Rev'd Susan Liersch is the Youth and Families Minister of the Parish of Wonthaggi/Inverloch, and Convenor of the Diocesan Hope25 Facilitation Group.



Staff and students of the Modawa Institute after shared morning devotions

Modawa Institute officially recognised

The Modawa Institute of Higher Education, led by previous Bishop of Gippsland, Jeffrey Driver, and supported by many within the Diocese of Gippsland, has finally gained Government recognition as a higher education provider.

News of the official registration came through to the institute in the days after Easter. It represents about five years of work by Bishop Jeffrey and the team at Popondetta, trying to improve the amenities and systems of what was Newton College to comply with new quality standards.

Bishop Jeffrey described his eight years involvement with Newton College and development of the Modawa Institute as a 'journey towards institutional resurrection'.

'Nearly eight years ago, the House of Bishops invited me to come to Papua New Guinea to advise them whether Newton College could be saved. It was a bit of a wreck, with buildings falling down and no money for wages'.

'I was asked to come up for seven or eight days, and it turned into seven or eight years. For much of that time, I have been the principal. Working with the rest of the team, including Fr Giles Motisi, we virtually had to do a rebuild from the ground up. And the work is far from over. In granting registration, the Department of Higher Education also specified a list of further improvements that have to be addressed,' Bishop Jeffrey said.

'This institute is still a baby. It will need much care and nurture from the Church in PNG and from its partners to ensure that it grows and succeeds.'

This year, the institute had its first intake to the David Hand School of

Teaching. There was a small cohort of about 20 students, who are working towards a B.Ed. in Primary Teaching. This has meant the recruitment of additional staff and the expansion of amenities. About 1000 new books on education were added to the library this year. The institute is also developing its ICT, with students in the School of Teaching all being issued laptops.

'Major building development planned includes a boarding house for women, an amenities block and a new lecture theatres complex. This is *b bikipela gro ap*,' Bishop Jeffrey said.

After eight years, and approaching his mid-seventies, Bishop Jeffrey has decided it is time to step back from the intense role of leading as principal.

'As the institute grows, it needs its principal full time on the ground. I no longer feel that I can sustain the hours in PNG necessary. I am happy to step back to a more supporting role,' Bishop Jeffrey said.

'But the joyful and faithful people of PNG will always stay in my heart.'

For more information and to support The Modawa Institute visit:
<https://modawa.institute/what-can-i-do%3F>

The Rt Rev'd Dr Jeffrey Driver is the Diocesan Missionary to the Modawa Institute.

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Open doors, open hearts: Welcoming St Paul's to the Warragul Mosque

■ Baw Baw Islamic Network Australia Inc (BINAI)

On Wednesday 30 April, the Warragul Mosque was filled with the energy of more than 100 Year 9 students from St Paul's Anglican Grammar School – Warragul Campus – as part of a faith excursion focused on fostering interfaith understanding and respectful dialogue.

This special visit was organised in collaboration with the Baw Baw Islamic Network Australia Inc (BINAI), and our team was proud to host the students and staff for a morning of learning, discovery, and connection. BINAI President Fahad Zakaria, Secretary Abdul Mohsi Khan, and committee member Sahrish Rafat were present to welcome the visitors and guide the experience.

After a short welcome speech introducing the mosque and our guest speaker, interfaith educator Syed Waseem Razvi from the Islamic Research & Educational Academy (IREA), students

were invited to explore the space freely. Around the prayer hall, they discovered a series of 'Did You Know?' posters designed to share surprising and insightful facts about Islam – such as the recognition of Jesus and Moses as prophets, the unchanged preservation of the Qur'an for over 1400 years, and the emphasis Islam places on charity, kindness, and community care.

A resource table offered students a chance to sample Zamzam water and dates – items of deep spiritual meaning in the Islamic tradition – along with free English translations of the Qur'an and educational booklets for those wishing to take their curiosity further.

The students' respectful curiosity was a joy to witness. Their questions were thoughtful and sincere, and their openness created a wonderful atmosphere of shared learning.

After their initial exploration, the group sat down for an engaging and interactive presentation by Waseem Razvi,

who guided them through the Five Pillars of Islam, daily practices like prayer and fasting, and frequently asked questions about Islamic beliefs, lifestyle, and values.

Feedback from the school was deeply encouraging. Jack Deen, Head of Year 9, remarked, 'It was a fantastic experience that helped our students better understand their world and grow as global citizens. Your efforts made a real impact.'

At BINAI, we believe that moments like these are not just events – they are investments in the fabric of our shared community. Our mosque stands as a beacon of welcome, where people of all backgrounds are encouraged to ask, explore, and connect.

We extend our sincere thanks to the students and staff of St Paul's Anglican Grammar School for visiting and sharing this experience with us. We look forward to more opportunities to walk the path of understanding – together.

The Warragul Mosque is located at 72 Victoria Street, Warragul.



WE'RE HIRING: Part-time Op Shop Manager

Are you passionate about community, sustainability, and making a difference?

We're looking for an enthusiastic and organised individual to lead the day-to-day operations of our Op Shop and Donations Warehouse, who wants to be part of a volunteer team that gives back to the community while supporting our church's outreach programs.

Location: Both sites are in Drouin

Hours: Approx. 3 days per week (negotiable) with flexible working hours

Apply now: request the position description and/or email your resume and cover letter to jobs@anglicanparishdrouin.org.au by early June.

Our commitment to a safe church

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

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



Telephone: (03) 9416 1008 or 1800 135 246

Email: contact@kooyoora.org.au

julie@kooyoora.org.au

PO Box 329, Canterbury VIC 3126



‘Psalms: From Personal Angst to Global Politics’¹

■ Associate Professor Matthew Anstey

The first trial in the Anglican Church of Australia of my new liturgical translation of the Psalms, now called *The Anstey Psalter* commences on Sunday 15 June 2025 and runs for seven weeks. So far about 40 Anglican churches and schools have registered for the trial and we expect more to join.

I have been working on this project for several years and it is anticipated it will take another five or so years to complete. You can read more about the project, and parishes/schools can register to participate, at www.ansteypsalter.com.

The psalm for each Sunday Holy Communion service is always chosen as a response to the first reading, typically an Old Testament reading. Together, all the readings follow a three-year cycle, and this cycle is followed by most churches around the world.

There are ten psalms in total, because 22 June has two psalms (42/43), and on the third week, there are three options from which to choose:

honesty and frankness. Take for instance the famous words of Psalm 42.1-3 (using hereafter excerpts from my translation²):

- 1. As the deer longs for streams of water: so longs my soul for you, O God.
- 2. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: when shall I appear before your face?
- 3. My tears feed me by day and by night: ever saying to me, ‘Where is your God?’

Psalms range over much more than just personal angst; they encompass thoughts and fears, doubts and questions, hopes and aspirations, as in Psalm 42.9-11:

- 9. Let me say to God, my rock, ‘Why have you forgotten me?: why must I walk in darkness, oppressed by an enemy?’
- 10. With death in my bones, my foes taunted me: ever saying to me, ‘Where is your God?’

- 3. Send out your light and your truth, let them lead me: let them guide me to your holy hill, your dwelling place.

Yet it would be a mistake to think the psalms deal only with personal or private matters of faith, for many have in their horizon the whole creation and the ways in which it speaks of God.

At times, this language is highly dramatic, as in Psalm 77.16-18:

- 16. The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and seethed: indeed, the very depths trembled.
- 17. The clouds poured out rain and the sky thundered: your lightning flashed back and forth.
- 18. Your thunderclaps roared in the whirlwind, your lightning bolts lit up the world: the earth quaked and shook.

And at times the place of humanity within the cosmos is brought into sharp focus, as in Psalm 8.3-5:

- 3. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers: the moon and stars, which you have set in place,
- 4. What is humanity, that you remember them?: who are mortals, that you consider them?
- 5. You have made them little less than God: and crowned them with glory and honour.

Of particular interest, given our own Federal election and the upheavals seen in the USA this year, is also the political dimension of many psalms, in which we find prayers for, or against, or about, earthly rulers. Psalm 52 is particularly striking in this regard and is worth a more fulsome exposition.

It commences with strident criticism of a corrupt political leader:

- 1. Why do you boast of evil, O mighty one?: for God’s steadfast love never ceases.
- 2. Your tongue plots malice: like a sharpened razor, O devious one!
- 3. You love evil more than good: lying more than speaking the truth. *Selah*
- 4. You love the words that devour: O tongue of deception!

Date	Lectionary	Psalms
June 15	Trinity Sunday	8
June 22	Ordinary 12/Second Sunday after Pentecost	42; 43
June 29	Ordinary 13/Third Sunday after Pentecost or Peter and Paul, Apostles and Martyrs	77.1-2, 11-20 87 or 34. 1-10
July 6	Ordinary 14/Fourth Sunday after Pentecost	30
July 13	Ordinary 15/Fifth Sunday after Pentecost	82
July 20	Ordinary 16/Sixth Sunday after Pentecost	52
July 27	Ordinary 17/Seventh Sunday after Pentecost	85

A number of churches still follow the practice of singing a response to the psalm and some, especially cathedrals, have choirs which sing the psalm of the day, in a form we call ‘chanting’. The practice of chanting the psalms stretches back into the mists of time, to ancient Jewish practices of chanting the Scriptures. This reminds us of how Jews and Christians across the ages have found in the psalms all the colours and hues and shades of the life of faith.

Prominent in this panoply of experience is the emotional highs and lows of life, with many psalms displaying a surprising

- 11. Why are you downcast, O my soul? why are you troubled within me?: hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, my saving presence and my God.

In the darkest moments, even God is scrutinised and questioned, as in Psalm 43.2-3:

- 2. You are the God of my refuge, so why have you abandoned me?: why must I wander about in darkness, oppressed by an enemy?

The phrase 'words that devour' is a potent and evocative image, yet the psalmist manages to find hope in God's disempowering of this 'mighty one':

5. God will defeat you forever,
dragging you from your dwelling:
uprooting you from the land of the living.

And in response, those who have been suffering will take heart:

6. The righteous will see this and fear:
they will laugh at you and say,
7. This one did not take refuge in God:
But trusted in great wealth to their ruin!

And from this denouement emerges a poignant metaphor of wellbeing:

8. Yet I am like an olive tree
flourishing in the house of God:
trusting in God's steadfast love
forever and ever.
9. Always will I give you thanks,
for you have acted:
with all your faithful people,
I will hope in your name, for it is good.

Another strongly political psalm from the trial is Psalm 82 (week 5 of the trial), which Zenger calls 'one of the most spectacular texts of the Old Testament':

Here the psalmist turns their attention to 'the divine assembly', and then presents to us the voice of God addressing 'other gods', accusing them of being unjust and calling them out:

1. God stands in the divine assembly:
passing judgment in the midst
of the gods.
2. 'How long will you judge unjustly:
and set the guilty free?
3. 'Give justice to the poor and orphaned:
vindicate the afflicted and broken.
4. 'Rescue those living in poverty:
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Not satisfied with this opening critique, the psalmist then declares that God dethrones these 'other gods' entirely, mocking their inadequacy:

5. 'They do not know, nor understand,
they wander about in darkness:
as all the foundations of the earth
are shaken.
6. 'I hereby declare, 'Though you are gods:
children of the Most High, all of you,
7. 'Yet you will die like mere mortals:
like one of the leaders you will fall.'

This psalm is deeply political because in the ancient world, the leaders of nations were often thought of as divine. So the 'other gods' could well be imagined as human rulers who behave as if they are godlike.

In the current climate, many people of faith will find such prayers to be a vital ballast against despair and paralysis in the face of earthy leaders acting as if they have divine sanction.

So may we join with the psalmist who concludes Psalm 82 with these words:

8. Arise, O God, and judge the earth:
for all the nations belong to you.
And all the people said, 'Amen'³.

1. An earlier version of this article first appeared in *The Tidings*, the quarterly newsletter of St Theodore's Toorak Gardens, SA, where Matthew is parish priest.
2. *The Anstey Psalter* © 2025 Matthew P. Anstey. All rights reserved.
3. Readers may wish to compare these excerpts from *The Anstey Psalter* with the psalms in *An Anglican Prayerbook of Australia*, which were taken from *The Cambridge Liturgical Psalter*, © 1977, 1977, 2013, David L Frost, John A Emerton, Andrew A. Macintosh.

Primate and Archbishop of Adelaide, The Most Rev'd Geoffrey Smith, to retire

Archbishop of Adelaide and Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, The Most Rev'd Geoffrey Smith has announced that he will retire from both roles later this year.

Archbishop Geoff has served the National Church as Primate since 2020, deftly presiding over the 2022 General Synod, and as Archbishop of Adelaide since 2017.

In his pastoral letter to the clergy and people of Adelaide the Primate wrote, 'The time is right for Lynn and [me] to reconnect with family and friends by moving back to Queensland...where we will settle [on the Sunshine Coast] and look forward to becoming involved with the local church and community.'

Archbishop Geoff will step down as Primate on 31 October and lay up his pastoral staff at a service in St Peter's Cathedral Adelaide on 1 November. The Board of Electors will meet in Sydney on 19 July to elect the next Primate who will commence in office on 1 November ahead of General Synod 19, in August 2026.



Primate and Archbishop of Adelaide, The Most Rev'd Geoffrey Smith

The Anglican Communion Media Service reported on 3 May that, 'The archbishop has won praise for his calm and judicious leadership at a time of increasingly polarized divisions in the church.'

Bishop Richard added, 'Archbishop Geoff has been a model of wise and gracious leadership in the Australian church and

has gently steered our national Bishops Conferences over recent years, enabling difficult conversations to take place safely and in a context of warm collegial fellowship. He will be greatly missed from the House of Bishops and the College of Bishops, and Gippsland Anglicans pray every blessing on him and Lynn as they prepare for retirement.'

Living as the forgiven people of God

An Easter reflection in two parts

■ Canon David Head

PART 2

When I was a young, unchurched, and non-believing adult, I used to think that some people who went to church regularly and blithely confessed their sins were often hypocritical. Why did I think that? Because they seemed to be just the same hurtful people after going to church as they were before, and they did just the same greedy, selfish, nasty things again.

However, life and later ongoing Christian experience have altered my view of all this.

Firstly, I believe that if we, as Christians, do not regularly confess our brokenness before God, then we may actually be a lot worse than we would be if we did not bother to confess at all.

Secondly, if we are honest and open in our confession before God, then we are far more able to properly analyse our lives and get on with better and more positive living. This, then, is not hypocrisy, as I once saw it, but represents a daily struggle with our weaknesses and with the power of temptation and sin. We may not always win the battle. So back we must go again to confess before God and to receive the ongoing assurance of God's forgiveness and love, and thus, as a result, to receive something of God's power to get back up and try again.

In the Anglican Church, there is also the opportunity – though it is quite rarely used – for the Sacrament of Private Confession before a priest. This is particularly used when there is some deeply anguished need to open our souls before God as we struggle with painful hurts and memories, or when we need to be assured that God wills to love us and does still love us.

Such confession can be important when we have done something that has profoundly hurt others and ourselves in our deepest being. It is equally helpful when we need deeper wisdom and counselling to achieve some greater degree of peace in our hurting and blighted spirit.

I have seen some amazing release from deep pain and darkness when people have come to me for private confession and absolution. Such release is far more profound than that which is found during public confession time.

However, we must remember that to forgive and be forgiven is not to forget, or to try to pretend that something has never happened, or to gloss over the deep scarring that has been left.

Instead, to forgive and be forgiven is to decide that you will not allow some deep hurt or sin to continue to hamper and destroy your peace of mind, or to derail your movement toward healing and growth.

To forgive and to be forgiven is to heal your own heart and soul of pain and bitterness, and to begin healthful living again. Jesus, when he rose from the dead, still had the scars of his suffering and torture on his hands and body, but he was totally released within himself in his power to forgive his persecutors and so became an example and enabled his followers to do the same.

Living as the forgiven people of God, therefore, means living by a number of guiding principles given to us by Christ.

1. It means living as people who acknowledge their own sinfulness and weaknesses and yet know that there is God's abundant love and power to help us grow and change.
2. It means living as people of humility, in the knowledge that we are all in need of God's forgiveness and love.
3. It means being people of thankfulness and joy, knowing that we are loved and forgiven by God – and so, as a result, being able to be people of forgiveness and compassion to those around us.
4. It means living as forgiven people of God who enable others to confront their demons in a place of security, compassion, and hopefulness. We are called to companion people in life. Did you know that the word companion literally means 'to share our bread with'? And that is exactly what Christ does with us in the Eucharist – and calls us to do the same in our care for others.
5. Finally, it means living as the forgiven people of God who help others find the heaven of God's presence in the private hells of their existence. Hell is not some awful, fiery place where the bad are condemned to go because they are too horrible for God to love and forgive. Hell is, quite literally, the reality of places of our own making – where God is not invited in or allowed to be found. These are places of emptiness, of dark and dreadful hopelessness, of feeling totally unloved and forgotten, of feeling abused and violated, and of deep, bitter hatreds.

So, we are all called to live as the forgiven people of God – as Easter and Resurrection people – and to enable others around us to search for and find that blessed place of peace and forgiveness too.

Note: Part 1 of this article was published in TGA May 2025 edition.



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

Scattering Seeds of Hope

Evangelism for the Discouraged and Ineffective

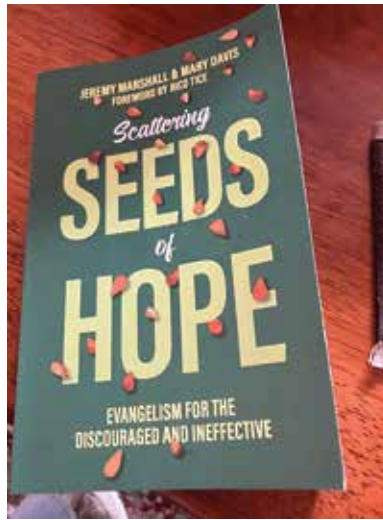
Jeremy Marshall & Mary Davis
10 Publishing, 2016

■ Richard Prideaux

Marshall and Davis have produced an outstanding, easy-to-read paperback to encourage those who feel they have been unable to effectively communicate the Gospel to their friends and neighbours. They begin with simple New Testament stories that, somewhat mysteriously, still resonate with our fast-moving culture, which values stories and personal contributions over abstract propositions.

Co-author Jeremy Marshall suffered for many years from a virulent, incurable cancer, which he fought off for five years longer than his medical team expected. This remarkable resilience enabled him to play a major and helpful role in the creation of this book.

The initial chapter reminds us how challenging it can be to communicate with members of our own household or close friends, and it explores both the authors' successes and some defeats. There are other powerful stories and thoughtful suggestions offered throughout the book, particularly in relation to navigating difficult situations. The reflection on the Good Shepherd on page 56 is especially helpful, as is the quote



from Solzhenitsyn on page 57: *The line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being.*

Another very useful distinction is the emphasis on making disciples, not merely converts. Marshall suggests that 'making a decision for Christ' – for example, at a large evangelistic rally – is perhaps less important than learning to live together in an everyday manner as part of Jesus' church, with a changed posture and a changed life through meeting Jesus Christ (p65).

Marshall encourages the use of Facebook and other online platforms for outreach but also warns of the potential pitfalls of 'Facebook evangelism'. He references Tim Chester's short book *Will You Be My Facebook Friend?*, in which Chester reminds us that Facebook does not cause sin, but can accelerate it – because it liberates us from the constraints of the body (p117). Marshall further notes that social media isn't just about what we post, but how we engage with others. It's about speaking the language of those we want to reach (p71). He also highlights how unleashing creative energy within the church – particularly among young people – can be a powerful encouragement for the whole community.

Another excellent section is Marshall's emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, using the story of Nicodemus (p82). He reminds us that we must ask for God's strength, rather than relying solely on our own efforts.

Scattering the Seeds of Hope for the Discouraged and Ineffective is a very helpful book for both clergy and church members. I warmly commend it.

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

Reply received regarding Forest's 'Dear Editor' piece in our April TGA

Dear Forest,

It is with mixed feelings I respond.

Relief that in the dying days of our oil-based society, the powerful didn't destroy everyone with their most powerful weapons in a fit of rage. Sadness that even knowing we were using the world's resources unsustainably, we didn't change until it was forced on us.

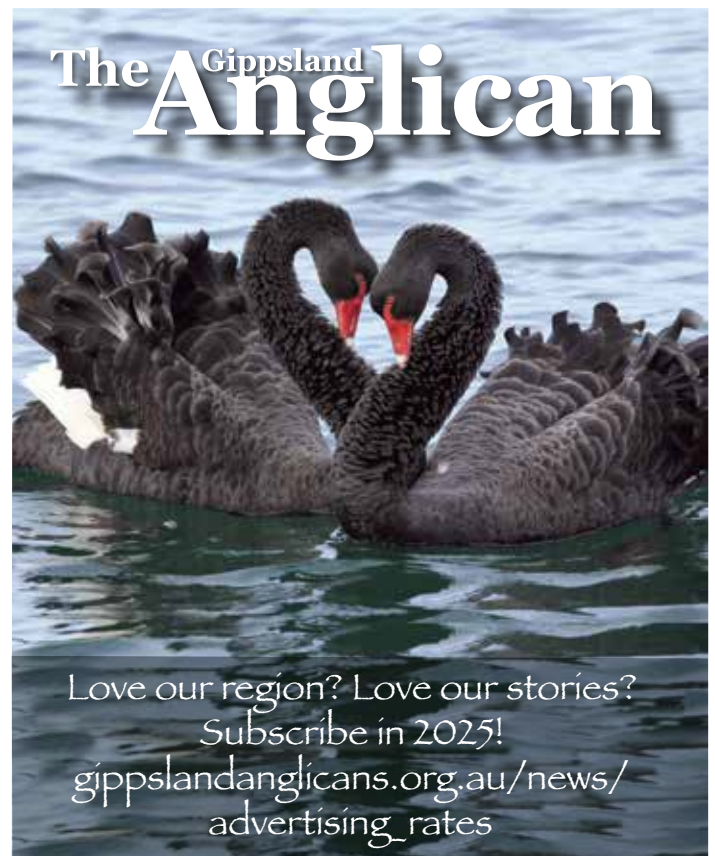
Why? In a word, greed. The powerful, having more than enough, wanted ever more. They duped us into following them with false stories of wealth for all. We became less caring for other humans and positively callous towards the other creatures and the environment. Profit, regardless of ultimate cost, drives our world, except for those who are, even today, bearing the cost of our greed.

Today we are starting to experience the consequences of our unchecked consumption as the CO2 we have emitted warms the planet beyond its ability to cope. We have sped up a process that normally takes thousands of years which will wipe out many of our fellow species, both animal and plant, as you are painfully aware.

Some of us care, as you noted. I wish it had been a lot more.

In tears,

Jeremiah



Murriyang: Song of Time

Stan Grant
Bundy, 2024

■ Canon David Head

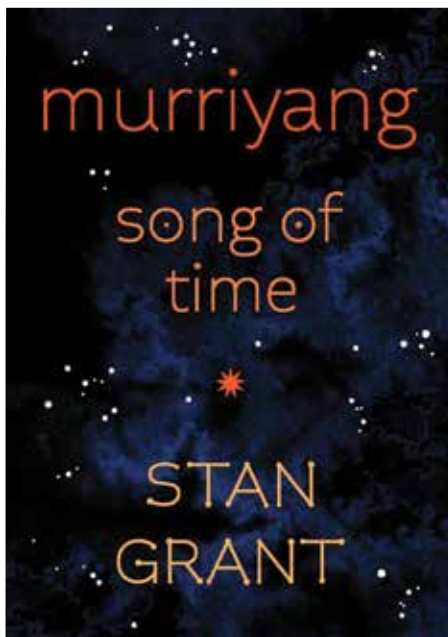
This is a deeply inspirational and contemplative book on God, Christian faith, and silence. It is also a complex book about science, and the concept of time, and suffering, and listening to music, and facing the failure of the media and political system to bring hope and peace to our world. It is written from a profoundly personal and a First Nations perspective. I have enjoyed reading it immensely, and I have been challenged and deepened in my own spiritual journey. However, it is a book to be read, I think, in smaller chunks to properly reflect on all it offers the reader.

Stan Grant's previous recent books have displayed much hurt and anger, and just and righteous indignation at the way First Nations people have been treated in the past – and still today – and those feelings blazed forth in beautiful and powerful language which often unsettled and challenged me as the reader. This new book is gentler and more wide-ranging.

Murriyang means, in his own ancestral Wiradjuri language, a prayer in one long uninterrupted breath, both in time and beyond time. He calls it a Song of Time, but it is not linear time, as we Westerners usually conceive time.

Stan Grant has recently completed a PhD in Theology with a dissertation (or thesis) entitled *Yindyamarra as Theology*. *Yindyamarra* means, in the Wiradjuri language, the spiritual practice of deep silence and respect, of contemplating God, and of being kind and forgiving.

Stan Grant calls this book a *psalter* (or book of psalms) and a Wiradjuri Book of Prayer. It is a contemplation of the sacred: of time, of God, of his own father's role in his spiritual journey, and of many other things. His dad taught him about the practice of *Yindyamarra*.



Stan grew up in a strongly Christian home, among a deeply faithful and mainly Black church people. He writes, 'These people would laugh and sing up a storm for God.' Stan says he knew no time when he did not have faith in God, but 'it dimmed as I moved away and let the world into my soul.' He lived a very busy and tumultuous life of reporting, and saw much tragedy and suffering as a world-wide journalist, and he also experienced much hatred and bigotry because of his outspoken views, particularly during the recent failed referendum on First Nations recognition in the Constitution. After the 'No' vote, he decided he had to stop, and back away from TV and media involvement, to take some breathing space and to nurse his open wounds. It was then that...

God came to me when I wasn't looking,
God crept up on me ... God was where
He always was, I just couldn't find him.
God has called me home ...
and embraced me with silence.

When Stan stopped talking, God began talking to him in deep and powerful, often hidden and silent ways. He heard God and perceived God in almost everything he contemplated, read, and listened to.

This wonderful book is a deeply spiritual reflection on his growing faith in Christ and his journey with and into the paradox of God's ultimately unknowable Being. Stan is now a faithful member of the Catholic Church and goes to Mass regularly. He writes:

I know the church fails us: the church is filled with broken people – we are all broken – and the church at its worst has betrayed God ... I struggle with the church ... But I don't go to church to fill myself, but to empty myself; I go to church to shrink in God's presence.

I hope this challenging and worthwhile book stirs you to read and contemplate its message.

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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





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EVENTS

For events at The Abbey, see page 12

JUNE

- 23-26 Diocesan Clergy Conference, The Abbey
- 29 Provincial Choral Evensong,
St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne, 4pm
– all welcome
- 29 Mid-Winter's Service with Saints Peter
and Paul, St David's UCA Yarragon, 11am.
Lunch at the Yarragon Hotel immediately
after the service

JULY

- 6-13 NAIDOC Week: *The Next Generation
Strength, Vision & Legacy*

Please note

Articles for the July TGA are due to the Editor by
Monday 9th June: editor@gippslandanglicans.org.au



Blessed are you Sovereign God, Creator of all that is,
upholding by your grace all who hear your call.
Under your covenant priests and rulers
were anointed to serve you,
and in the fullness of time you anointed your Son
by the Holy Spirit to be the Christ,
the Saviour and Servant of all.
By the power of your Spirit may your blessing rest
on those who are anointed with this Chrism
in your name.

Let it be for them a sign of joy and gladness
as they share in the royal priesthood
of the New Covenant and make known
the kingdom of Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
we lift our voices of thanks and praise.
Blessed be God, our strength and our salvation,
now and for ever.

Amen.

The Gippsland Anglican

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