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Singing to
find our way
for refugees



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Finding hope
through hymns
at St Mary's



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Celebrating
175 years
of ABM

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The Gippsland Anglican

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Philip King

Dancing with joy

100 years of the Anglican Church in Gahini

■ **Krista Mountford**

In August, Lindy Driver and Sarah Gover travelled to Gahini, Rwanda with a team from Australia and New Zealand, to join in the centenary celebrations of the Anglican Church in Gahini.

It was in 1925 that the first missionaries arrived in Gahini, establishing a hospital that became the foundation of both physical and spiritual healing. Their dedication, sacrifice, and countless hours of prayer bore fruit beyond what they could have imagined. Within a decade, revival began to spread from Gahini—transforming communities across Rwanda, East Africa,

and ultimately reaching far beyond the continent.

The centenary was marked by a three-day conference, a joyful gathering of people from across Rwanda, neighbouring nations, and the wider Anglican Communion. Together they praised God in song and dance, giving thanks for a century of faithful witness and for the ongoing movement of the Spirit in the region.

Lindy Lindy shares her reflections on this remarkable experience and the deep sense of renewal they encountered on page 15.



Treaty and Truth – an ancient (and modern) connection



The Victorian Parliament is breaking new ground as the first Australian state to introduce treaty legislation which will enshrine the First Peoples' Assembly (Gellung Warl) as a permanent advisory body to government on matters affecting Victoria's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

'Treaty' is a concept that Anglicans can embrace as part of our Judeo-Christian heritage. Whilst we are more familiar perhaps with the language of 'covenant' (*berit*), treaty is a related biblical concept.

In the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament the noun *amanah* means a formal or solemn agreement or treaty, as in the binding written agreement between God and the people of Judah in Nehemiah 10:1. The context here is the return from exile in Babylon, and the need to repair or rebuild something that has been broken – not merely the physical walls of Jerusalem but the covenant embodied in the law. The *amanah* is sealed immediately following a prayer of contrition, in which the Levites recount the painful truth of the apostasy of biblical Israel.

This noun – 'agreement' or 'treaty' – also appears as an adverb (*amenah*) meaning 'truly', or 'in truth' (see Genesis 20:12 and Joshua 7:20). This form of the word reminds us of its close connection with another, much more familiar word, 'amen'. In Hebrew, amen has connotations of reliability, stability, constancy, trustworthiness. When used as an acclamation (as we do at the end of a prayer, though in Anglican worship it can often be expressed more devotionally and thus be somewhat subdued) it literally means 'surely!'

Here we can see an inherent connection between 'treaty' and 'truth'. They are related semantically (that is,

in terms of a field of meaning) and etymologically (that is, through their common derivation from the Hebrew letters *a-m-n*). As such, they are also connected by virtue of the spiritual interplay between truth-telling and agreement-making.

We might say that truth-telling is a necessary condition for agreement-making, and that agreement-making is a proper outworking of truth-telling. Or that treaty is an 'amen' to truth, just as our 'amen' expresses our conviction about and commitment to a prayer. So too, in the language of the BCP marriage rite, husband and wife exchange their 'troth' (an archaic word for 'truth') as the sacramental mechanism for creating their marriage covenant.

A second use of *amenah* as a noun in the Hebrew Bible has to do with 'protection', and this is the sense in which it occurs in Esther 2:20. Those who took June's Bible Reading Challenge with our friends in Ballarat Diocese may recall that the context there is Esther's vulnerability during the process by which the vacuous Persian King is seeking a replacement for defiant Queen Vashti.

Esther's cousin, Mordecai, has counselled her to keep her Jewish identity a secret (Esther's name being a form of the word 'secret') in order to safeguard her from the likes of the villain Haman who appears in the story just a few verses later. As the narrative unfolds, Esther's capacity and authority to determine and to articulate her own identity is critical in the survival of her people, both physically and culturally. In this instance, *amenah* carries connotations of establishing protective boundaries, or promoting safety through agency.

Mindful of the risk of paternalism here, we can also hear the resonance between 'treaty' and 'safeguarding'. As a mutually binding agreement, a treaty establishes boundaries that have a protective quality.

So too, the landmark treaty in Victoria is intended to provide for the agency and voice of First Peoples with respect to decision making. 'Nothing about us without us' is a phrase that captures this imperative as adopted and adapted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders over many years. Indeed, Target 16 of the 2023 Close the Gap Implementation Plan states 'The Commonwealth is committed to ensuring that all language activities will be done in partnership with First Nations peoples and to fully embedding the principle of 'nothing about us, without us' for all First Nations language work.'

In biblical literature, a solemn agreement or treaty can be understood as a means of healing a breach of trust, of responding to difficult truths, and of future safeguarding.

In the legislative literature that has been passing through the chambers of the Victorian Parliament in recent weeks, some of the same principles and aspirations are being formalised – ritualised, as it were.

Following on from the truth-telling of the Yoorook Justice Commission, Treaty between the state of Victoria and its First Peoples is a further step towards healing where trust has been broken, and a way of ensuring that protective measures are in place such that the self-determination of those represented by Gellung Warl is respected.

Amen!



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.

A parish partnering with the community to commemorate Armistice Day



Merri Spalding and Finn Langford unveiling the memorial rock and plaque

■ Libby Willems

In 2018, before a global pandemic halted everything, a bare stretch of nature strip on the path between Drouin's Memorial Park and the Drouin RSL rooms was noticed by the former Rector of Drouin Anglican Parish and botanist, Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding. The treeless stretch was immediately in front of Christ Church.

Dean had been deeply contemplating the impact of WWI on Drouin and the nation as a whole. Seeing the opportunity for a commemorative tree planting to honour the upcoming Centenary of Armistice (11/11/2018), Dean contacted the Drouin RSL sub-branch and Baw Baw Shire Council to facilitate a discussion that would lead to a new memorial in Drouin to remember the significant service and sacrifice of Australians in and after The Great War.

A story of significant sacrifice and loss emerged with a recurring theme of the number six:

Approximately 60,000 Australian lives were lost in World War I when the country had a population of a mere six million people. Another 60,000 lives were cut short in the following ten years, most likely by the effects of their service. Drouin's Great War cenotaph names sixty-six young men who died in service during the 1914 to 1918 period. But it is likely that a similar number of local men died in the following decade

due to trauma, injuries and illness sustained as a result of their war-time service – and this 'second wave' of losses has until recently been forgotten and uncommemorated. In the period after the war, the average life expectancy of a veteran was ten years less than a non-veteran Australian male.

And so, it was decided that six Golden Elm trees would be planted as a living reminder of these sobering numbers, lest we forget.

With the blessing of the Drouin RSL sub-branch, the Council generously supplied the trees and undertook the investigative work to ensure there was no underground infrastructure at the site. Drouin parishioners assisted with preparing the site and the trees were planted with the assistance of young people of the church (Finn Langford and Merri Spalding) on 5 October 2018.

The Parish hosted a well-attended commemorative service for the Centenary of Armistice on 11 November 2018 at which each of the six trees was blessed. That same afternoon, Drouin Parish hosted a community musical event featuring Baw Baw Singers who performed a program of WWI-era music.

Fast-forward to 2025 and a key stage of the planting project remained unfinished – the commemorative rock and plaque to tell the story of the six trees.

This had been delayed due to fundraising and then the pandemic. Dean's time at Drouin concluded in 2020 and there was a real risk of this stage of the project not ever being completed.

The strength of every Parish is its shared consciousness and connection to its community. A Drouin parishioner who had been part of the 2018 project was able to gain support from the current Rector, Ven. John Webster, and the Parish Council to restart a discussion with Drouin RSL sub-branch to plan for the installation of a memorial rock and plaque and facilitate the completion of the project.

'The rock and plaque are equally as important as the Golden Elms,' said RSL President, Rod McNab. 'The rock shows people that this is something important, and the plaque tells the story of why we must never forget.'

On 31 August 2025, the trunks of the six trees were dressed with a black band and golden ribbon and the newly-installed memorial rock was unveiled at an event hosted by Drouin Parish, led by Drouin RSL-sub-branch President Rod McNab. God blessed the event with a break in the wet weather and even some sunshine. Honoured guests included Kurnai Elder Aunty Cheryl Drayton, Mary Aldred MP, Cr Ben Lucas and Cr Tricia Jones from Baw Baw Shire Council, and Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding, Rector of Parish of Trafalgar. Symbolically, Finn Langford and Merri Spalding who had assisted with the tree planting, were invited to unveil the rock as a reminder to share important stories with the next generations so they are carried forward. The Parish provided hospitality after the event and shared a reel of images telling the story of the project.

The Drouin Parish played a critical facilitation role throughout this project. The Parish will continue to have somewhat of a custodial role for the trees and a role as a story-keeper due to the close proximity to the memorial and its involvement in the project. Drouin Parish was sincerely thanked by the Drouin RSL sub-branch and Baw Baw Shire Council for its contribution to the wider township through this project.

Libby Willems is the TGA representative for Drouin.



St Mark's Thorpdale celebrating the Day of Prayer for Refugees

■ Dean Spalding

A tiny footnote in the APBA Australian Lectionary 2025 on page 52, at the bottom of the entry for 31 August reminds the reader that the last Sunday in August was set by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia in July 2001 as a 'Day of Prayer for Refugees'.

On the *inaugural* Day of Prayer, 26 August 2001, a Norwegian freight ship, The MV Tampa, rescued 433 refugees from a leaky fishing vessel 140 km from Christmas Island. The refugees were mostly Afghans, fleeing the Taliban. The entry of the vessel into Australian waters sparked a military response from the Australian government initiating the 'Tampa crisis,' which changed the atmosphere of Australia's response to refugees. It is as if the last Sunday of August were a highly contested space. Just two weeks after the 'Tampa' incident the 11 September ('9/11') attacks of 2001 further influenced Australia's political trajectory in profound ways. A pernicious and baseless conflation of 'terrorists' and 'boat people' took root in too many minds.

This year, the last Sunday of August, was the twenty-fifth Day of Prayer for Refugees. Coincidentally, it was the *same day* on which organisers of anti-immigration rallies chose to arrange marches in every state and territory capital of Australia (as well as many other towns) under the title of 'March for Australia'. The space for that purposed day it seems is still contested (contentious and divisive) and I would suggest that we

need greater liturgical resourcing than a mere footnote in the Lectionary, so that we might more deeply and humbly place ourselves under God's guidance to know how to pray and respond to the challenges of our times.

In the Parish of Trafalgar, when we are perplexed, sometimes it seems that one way to work through a contentious or divisive issue is to read the scriptures and sing to our God to show us the way along the road!

To start with, we needed scriptures. We needed to hear the call of the 'law and the prophets', who constantly reminded the people of God of their obligation to the refugee – the stranger in their land who comes seeking sanctuary and freedom. In the fourth of the Ten Commandment lies an important refrain, 'Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.' For a psalm, we chose Psalm 146, part of which reads,

The Lord gives food to the hungry:
and sets the captives free.
The Lord gives sight to the blind: the
Lord lifts up those that are bowed down.
The Lord loves the righteous: the Lord
cares for the stranger in the land.
He upholds the widow and the
fatherless: as for the way of the wicked,
he turns it upside down.

And for the Gospel – a hard choice – would it be Matthew 2:13-23 detailing how Jesus was the child within a family of refugees who fled to Egypt to escape the murderous regime of King Herod ('Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him')? Or Matthew 25:31-46, where Jesus commends and rewards with eternal life those of whom he could say, 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me.' It could have been either – they both found their way into the message! Instead, we honoured the Lukan year by reading Luke 14:1-14 in which Jesus says to invite to our tables those who cannot invite us 'in return', and *that* had sufficient resonance with the theme of showing hospitality to refugees.

And songs? I have always been inspired by our First Nations peoples' concept of 'songlines' – and suspect that good songs allow God not just to lead our minds, but our hearts and our actions, as we navigate our way along a challenging path. For a start, we sang Sydney Carter's *When I needed a Neighbour*. To prepare our hearts to hear the Gospel, we sang a song Deacon Sue Newcombe of Lakes Entrance introduced to the Parish of Trafalgar, to the beautiful French tune *Noël Nouvelet* called *Build A Longer Table, Not A Higher Wall*, with words by David Bjorlin.

We sang another challenging set of lyrics from the pen of Brian Wren to conclude the message, *Break the Bread*



Three members of the Longriders Christian Motorcycle Club in front of St Mark's

of *Belonging* (with a haunting tune by Hedley Roberts). To prepare for the eucharist, we sang *Comfort, Comfort* by South Australian Lutheran composer Robin Mann. The South Australian Lutherans' ancestors were often refugees fleeing the regime of a Calvinist King Frederick III, who persecuted Old Order Lutherans in the 1830s, because they refused to join a Calvinist (Reformed)/Lutheran Union Church. When they refused the King's command to join the Union Church they were variously fined, imprisoned or had goods confiscated. They were also detained at the ports for up to two years before they were allowed to board ships 'bound for South Australia' – with the result that their financial resources were mostly depleted by the time they set sail for a new life in Australia. When they arrived, they were penniless but used their tremendous skills to grow vegetables, berries and wine grapes. Because of their talents, we have the amazing Barossa Valley, the delectable Beerenberg table supplies, and cultural treasures like Sir Hans Heysen, who helped other more recently-arrived Australians to appreciate the tremendous beauty of the grand eucalypt trees in our landscape. Our lives as a nation were enriched by this and other waves of non-Anglo migration. The verses we chose for the singing of *Comfort, Comfort* (that key phrase comes from Isaiah 40) were the ones first specially written by Robin Mann for the 1988 Christmas Bowl Appeal.

1. Though we build strong walls for prisons,
though we feast while others starve,
though we fill this world with weapons,
comfort, comfort!
Every prisoner will be rescued,
every hungry mouth be filled,
every gun will rust, forgotten,
comfort, comfort!
Comfort, comfort all my people
with the comfort of my word.
Speak it tender to my people:
"All your sins are taken away."
2. Though we fracture God's creation,
though we stand so far apart,
though we fail to love each other,
comfort, comfort!
Every wall will crack and crumble,
every stranger will be friend,
every one embrace another,
comfort, comfort!

For a final stirring hymn, we sang Graham Kendrick's *Beauty for Brokenness* with its provocative description of the changes that must take place for the fulfilment of God's kingdom.

Refuge from cruel wars,
havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary,
freedoms to share.

And after the prayer, the readings and the singing we adjourned to the local hotel, The Travellers Rest, Thorpdale, for a beer (or a lemon squash!), a bite of lunch and respectful conversation around tables about what our ancestors have taught us about being 'strangers in a foreign land'.

You can view Rev'd Dean's retrospective video recording, 'Four songs and some reflections for the Day of Prayer for Refugees and Asylum Seekers' here: <https://youtu.be/LcqcvaAKMIQ>

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



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Celebrating Wattle Day at St Thomas Bunyip

■ Francesca Lamond

On Sunday 31 August, St Thomas Bunyip holds its annual Wattle Day Service celebrating God, spring and our community!

Each year, at the commencement of spring, St Thomas Bunyip hold our annual Wattle Day celebration. This celebration marks the beginning of spring, the overcoming of the challenges of winter and at the heart of Wattle Day is community. The community spirit shone brilliantly on this calm spring afternoon.

The wattle flower itself carries a profound meaning. Its golden blooms burst forth after winter, symbolising hope, renewal and community. Just as the wattle blossoms in even the toughest conditions, so too are we reminded that God's love sustains us in all seasons. As Isaiah foretells:

The desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom
abundantly and rejoice with joy
and singing. (Isaiah 35:1-2)

Wattle day is all about bringing community together and giving back to our community both local and afar. Our wonderful op shop volunteers have been working extremely hard and their efforts have seen us in a position to make much needed donations to two very deserving local community organisations; Bunyip CFA and Anglicare (Gippsland Region).



Representatives from both organisations were in attendance to receive their certificates and donations. This brought such joy to parishioners, visitors and recipients alike.

We were blessed to be joined by over fifty attendees including our friends from St John's Anglican Nar Nar Goon, Bunyip Uniting Church and St Joseph's Catholic Church Iona. A wonderful ecumenical celebration to honour God's word. We shared a wonderful sung Eucharist followed by lunch prepared by St Thomas' parishioners.

How good and pleasant it
is when God's people live
together in unity!
(Psalm 133:1)

An additional highlight of the day was our ability to raise much needed funds for the ABM GAZA Appeal. This allows us to reach out to our global community.

Wattle Day 2025 at St Thomas was more than an event – it was a reflection of the Gospel in action. A community working together for the common good. It showed what is possible when hearts, hands, and faith come together. May the spirit of the wattle, with its brightness and resilience, inspire us all to continue our work for God's Kingdom, shining His light into our community.

Francesca Lamond is the Parish Treasurer at Bunyip.



(L-R) Rev'd Christine Angus (Parish Priest), Wendy Mawoyo (Anglicare Gippsland), Rev'd Ken Parker OAM (Assoc. Parish Priest), Francesca Lamond Parish Treasurer, Tracey Edwards (Secretary, Bunyip CFA)

Stewardship of God's creation Solar installation at Warragul Anglican Church

■ Carol Monson

At its August meeting, the Warragul Anglican Church Parish Council approved the installation of a 10kW solar system on the contemporary worship space at St Paul's Warragul. This decision is a tangible expression of our Christian calling to care for God's creation and to steward the resources entrusted to us with wisdom.

The journey began with our Thanksgiving Service in 2024, where the focus was on giving thanks for God's good creation and committing ourselves to its care. Parishioners responded with generosity, raising the full amount required for the project.

Since then, the Solar Working Party has prayerfully and diligently explored the complex options of rebates, incentives, and system designs. Their careful

discernment has led to the recommendation of Uncommon Solar, whose community-minded approach allows us to install the system at cost, ensuring the greatest benefit to our parish and our mission.

The system will reduce our annual electricity costs by around \$2,150, freeing resources for ministry and witness. Just as importantly, it will reduce our environmental footprint – each year its impact is equivalent to saving 4,099 litres of fuel, planting 247 trees, or avoiding the burning of 4,659 kilograms of coal.

This investment is not only financially sound but also a visible sign of our commitment to live faithfully as stewards of God's creation. Installation is expected within 4-8 weeks. Parish Council gives thanks for the leadership of John Broadbent and Church warden, Michael



Michael Sterling (L) and John Broadbent (R) who initiated the solar installation

Sterling, in initiating this project and for the persistence of the Working Party in bringing it to fruition.

Carol Monson is the TGA representative for Warragul.

Faith and fellowship flourish at the Daffodil Festival

■ Marion Dewar

The annual 82 seat pop up café in St Peter's Church enjoyed great patronage and fellowship during the Daffodil and Floral Festival in Leongatha, 28–30 August.

Flower arrangements from five different churches filled the church with 38 bouquets of spring beauty.

St Peter's Opportunity Shop displayed an amazing array of knick-knacks that were all priced and available for immediate sale. Op Shop helpers replenished the display at regular times each day.



St Peter's Ladies' Guild provided refreshments for 20 hours over the three days. Seven delicious soup varieties were only exceeded by a mouthwatering array of cakes. Gluten free choices were also available. 231 serves of soup and 416 serves of cake refreshed an estimated 370–450 visitors.

The *Prayer Corner* was available throughout the Festival, with two parish members present for seven hours over the three days.

The display of *Mission Knitting Without Limits* attracted interest and great conversation with the group's leader who was in attendance for the duration of the Festival. Free bookmarks from New Beginnings Bookshop were also available for visitors.

Many people assisted to make the Festival a success, including setting up on Wednesday afternoon, working during the three days of the Festival and a final replacement of some pews on Sunday between the two morning services. Sixteen people were involved on both Friday and Saturday with a lesser number during the other times.

Marion Dewar is a Diocesan Lay Reader at Leongatha.



Do you have a question, comment or concern?

Let us know!

The Gippsland **Anglican**

Phone: 0407 614 661

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Finding hope through hymns at St Mary's

■ Sue Jacka

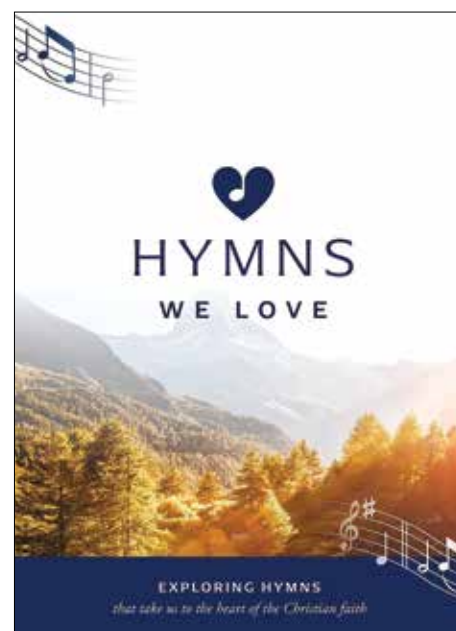
At St Mary's, Morwell, for Hope 25 we decided to run a course called *Hymns We Love*. We wanted to find a way to reconnect with people who for a variety of reasons had stopped coming to church. We also thought it would be good for people who were wanting to experience more fellowship and a chance to discuss their faith. Since many of the people we were thinking about lived on their own, a meal was always a requirement. We decided to have our series early on a Sunday evening with a video series, some discussion and then a simple shared meal. We didn't want anything too long or demanding, but something that tapped into the participants' previous knowledge of God or church.

Hymns We Love ticked all our boxes. It's an English six-week series based around famous hymns. Each week's video runs for about half an hour. The people portrayed throughout the series are older adults with a variety of backgrounds and birth countries. I found these speakers connected well with our group.

There was usually a dozen of us, some regulars at worship and others who had been invited. On the video, there is a short introduction before we listen to a *Songs of Praise* style rendition of the hymn of the week. I thought something that connected our own experiences with the theme of the week's hymn would be helpful, so we had a 10-minute discussion question where people contributed their experiences and thoughts. The video includes a witness speaker – someone who has experienced God in a way that is pertinent to the hymn.

Each session may only run for half an hour, but it raised plenty of issues to be discussed and enabled very good table conversation. The meal of homemade soup and rolls was simple but well appreciated and in the table fellowship which followed there were many personal reflections shared.

How effective was this course? This is always very difficult to assess but one attendee has just been confirmed, which is encouraging. It's helpful to reconnect pastorally as many older adults face



dramatic life changes and need hope in Jesus to adapt and even flourish after losing a spouse or significant surgery.

The Venerable Sue Jacka is the Rector of Morwell.

A day of fellowship and friendship in Bairnsdale

■ Malcolm Reed

To build on the outreach efforts of Hope25, Bairnsdale parish decided to hold a Seniors Fellowship Day, an event to which the congregation was invited not only to attend but to bring a friend.

On Friday 29 August, a fine warm winter's day, we gathered for the first Seniors Fellowship Day. Over 50 people attended, and the warm 'fellowship' feeling throughout the day reflected a high level of participation and enjoyment.

Following morning tea in the hall, we moved to the church for the main session. Our guests, pianist Dee Harry and speaker Dr Sandra Leggat, both members of St John's Metung, together with church members and friends, were all welcomed to this new event. *How Great Thou Art* was our first song and the rousing singing, with live piano, was enjoyed by all. Kathie Tisdall-Fry led us in prayer and Rev'd Paul read well known verses from John's gospel, Chapter 3 Verses 16 and 17, which as he explained, is the gospel in a nutshell. We appreciated musical items from David and Tania Harvey, members of St John's congregation prior to the singing of *I Cannot Tell* to the well-known *Londonderry Air* tune.

Our guest speaker was Dr Sandra Leggat, whose long career in public health, as an academic teacher and author of over 140

HOPE25

published articles including a professorship at La Trobe University, makes her an ideal member of the Bairnsdale Regional Health Service Board. After a three-year term as a board member, she was elected Chair by her fellow Board members.

Sandra spoke of various aspects of our Bairnsdale hospital, its current ED (Emergency Department), and demonstrated the use of an ED app to check in live time the busyness of the ED and therefore likely wait times if attending for non-life-threatening conditions. She also outlined alternatives to attending Emergency. At Bairnsdale the imaging department is now bulk billed, a great saving for those requiring this service. The hospital is currently building staff apartments in a bid to reduce the number of expensive agency staff appointments and encourage staff to consider Bairnsdale as a future home.

Proudly, Bairnsdale Hospital was one of three finalists in the Premiers Medium Health Service of the Year award and gained an award for the Aboriginal Cardiac Rehabilitation Program. Congratulations! A final well-loved song, *The Lord's My Shepherd* to the tune *Crimond* and a closing prayer concluded the program, and we all

moved back to the hall for lunch. Great food: a choice of two soups, sausage rolls and a choice of apple crumble or chocolate pudding. Our thanks to the catering team, Jeni Reed, Linda Davies, Peggy Arthur and Cheryl Eldridge and others who assisted in the preparation and clean up of the hall.

The name for the future is Fellowship Day (maybe because the name 'Senior' means Rev'd Paul needs a special invitation!) The next Fellowship Day will be held on 29 November.

Malcolm Reed is a Warden at Bairnsdale.



Dr Sandra Leggat

Why music and the arts matter

Building confidence, creativity and connection in children



Gippsland Grammar Early Learning Centre children Penny Wager and Samuel Van love their specialist music classes at the local independent school

Music and the arts are far more than just creative outlets — they are powerful tools for developing the confidence of children and even their emotional intelligence.

Research and experience show that engagement in the arts boosts self-esteem and confidence, enhances fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination while improving memory, concentration and cognitive development.

It also fosters better listening skills, creativity and imagination — all vital tools

for lifelong learning and personal growth. According to Gippsland Grammar Director of Performing Arts, Dr Kevin Cameron, children make sense of the world around them when they are able to express themselves well and connect with others.

Arts education fosters imagination, empathy and curiosity, helping students to become not only better learners but more thoughtful and compassionate individuals.

At Gippsland Grammar programs are designed to be inclusive and accessible,

supporting every student from beginners to those pursuing a future in the arts, and those who will carry their love of music and creativity throughout their lives.

In schools where the arts are prioritised, students benefit from a wide diversity of experiences — on stage, in ensembles and as solo performers.

It is through this kind of learning that students are first introduced to movement, storytelling and visual expression, which are central to all cultures and a vital part of human experience.

'The arts are essential in education because they bridge the divide between 'what is' and 'what might be'. If we want our young people to enjoy a life with feeling, empathy, deeper meaning and emotional intelligence at the foundation, the arts are crucial', Dr Cameron confirmed.

What sets Gippsland Grammar apart is our multi-campus music team, whose collaboration and shared expertise enrich every lesson and experience.

Our students benefit from a high standard of music education, supported by exceptional educators and resources and a commitment to excellence across all three campuses.

At Gippsland Grammar, the arts are not an extra — they are a foundation for confident, creative and compassionate learners.

In the end, it's not just about performance, it's about possibility.

Gippsland Grammar prefects take action to 'Share the Dignity'

Gippsland Grammar's Prefects have led a service project in support of *Share the Dignity*, a national charity that works to end period poverty by providing menstrual products to women, girls and those who menstruate who are experiencing homelessness, domestic violence or financial hardship.

The initiative was inspired when a parent introduced the Prefect team to the cause. 'We resonated with it immediately,' Kenny Goncharow said. 'As a prefect team we decided it was an initiative that we resonated with and wanted to support as a school community.'

Fellow Prefect Aishah Hanafi highlighted the reasons behind the drive:

Many don't realise access to period products is a privilege not everyone is afforded,' Aishah said. 'In Australia, 64% of menstruators have struggled to buy period products, therefore missing work, school and not participating in sports.

By increasing the accessibility we are able to support others continue on with their lives to the fullest.

Gippsland Grammar's support for 'Share the Dignity' had two parts: a collection where each class group from Years 7–12 at the senior Garnsey Campus in Sale aimed to fill three bags of essentials for adults, teens and mums with bubs; and a bake sale, which raised more than \$650 in one lunchtime thanks to more than 30 different baking contributions from the Prefects' fellow Year 12 students. The students filled hundreds of bags with health essentials for those in need.

The collected bags and funds will go directly to Share the Dignity, helping ensure that managing a period is never a barrier to dignity.



Gippsland Grammar Prefects Kenny Goncharow, Aishah Hanafi and Mia Humphris collect donations for the Share the Dignity campaign



Strengthening connections in Timor-Leste

The Years 10 to 12 dance group from Ponilala Secondary School with St Paul's staff

Eight staff members from St Paul's Anglican Grammar School travelled to Timor-Leste to continue the school's longstanding collaboration with local communities, a first-time trip for some.

In the districts of Ermera and Bobonaro, they visited towns and villages, always greeted with waves and smiles against a backdrop of beautiful scenery.

At Ponilala Secondary School, built in 2006–07 with partial funding from St Paul's, they received a warm welcome of music and dancing, and were presented with a Tais, a traditional weaving made by the women of Timor-Leste.

They also spent time at the Malimea English Language Study Centre (ELSC), established in 2023 through fundraising and ongoing support from St Paul's Team

Timor and the Friends of Ermera.

During the visit, the next stage of the English Language Program was also delivered to ELSC staff as a continuation of the program previously introduced by St Paul's staff in 2023.

The experience reaffirmed the school's enduring connection with the people of Timor-Leste, a relationship that has spanned more than 20 years.

Empowering young minds through mental health education



St Paul's Live4Life Crew members present the program to students

Year 9 Live4Life Crew Members at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School's Traralgon Campus recently welcomed Year 8 students to an exciting and informative Live4Life Launch event, designed to

promote mental health awareness and wellbeing within the school community.

The Crew opened the event with a powerful speech and a video they created, outlining the purpose of the Live4Life

program and its importance in supporting mental health across the region.

The launch continued with a range of fun, hands-on activities focused on key wellbeing messages, including the benefits of fitness for mental health, healthy eating to fuel the brain, the power of positive thinking and how music can influence our mood.

A highlight of the event was a specially decorated 'Live4Life' cake, which was shared and enjoyed by all – a small but much-appreciated treat to mark the occasion.

Following the launch, Year 8 students will now undertake the Teen Mental Health First Aid course. Upon completion, they will receive a certificate and be offered the opportunity to continue their journey by applying to become Live4Life Crew members themselves in the future.

Presenting the Live4Life program at school marks another step in St Paul's commitment to fostering a culture of support, resilience and mental wellbeing for all students.

Spring stories

The power of community and partnership

■ Wendy Mawayo

Spring is here – even if it still feels like winter some days!

As the year unfolds, I've been reflecting on the power of partnerships. In a world that often feels uncertain, I continue to see light in the way Anglicare, churches, organisations and communities show up – with generosity, heart, and hope.

In August, Chaplain Tim Morrison from Gippsland Grammar School shared information about Anglicare Victoria's Foster Care Program to promote the important role Foster Carers play in our community, supporting vulnerable children and young people. He is also encouraging the Year 9 students to support a local community program: Bass Coast Youth Services at the Youth Hub, in Wonthaggi.

It's a beautiful reminder that small acts of awareness can lead to real community impact.

Then in Bunyip, I visited St Thomas parish (see page 6) and met with The Rev'd Christine Angus and the rest of the parishioners. People from across the community gathered at St Thomas – volunteers, the Salvation Army, fire brigade, and local churches – all united by a desire to care. From their op shop proceeds, the Bunyip parish chose to support TRAK Forward, a program supporting recovery and healing from family violence. On behalf of the team at Anglicare, thank you – your gift means more than you know!

Program Highlight: Trak Forward

TRAK Forward is a therapeutic program that supports recovery and healing for adults and children who have been impacted by family and intimate partner violence. TRAK Forward's person-centred interventions strengthen connections and relationships between parents and their

children, empower adult survivors to make meaning of their experiences, and provide families with an opportunity to develop mutually supportive peer-based relationships.

Apply Now: Parish Partnerships Grants

If your Parish is dreaming of a project to meet a local need – e.g. a parenting group, food relief, or something new – I'd love to support you. Even if you're short on volunteers, consider partnering with others. That's what this work is about. Let's not wait for perfect conditions. Let's start now, together – connecting and collaborating.

Wendy Mawayo is a Community Development Support Coordinator, Parish Partnerships, for Anglicare Victoria – Gippsland.

wendy.mawayo@anglicarevic.org.au
0429 171 441

Feel free to contact me if you would like to support any of our programs or would like to get more information.







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- Person centered
- Strengths based
- Solutions focused
- Recovery orientated

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- To personalise a solution focused recovery plan.
- To feel safe and strong
- To increase confidence, self-worth and a sense of empowerment
- To understand and heal from family violence relational trauma

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- Recovery groups for women, young adults, children and families






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Naming it

Vegetable boxes in Melbourne's CBD

■ Jan Down

In TGA April this year I mentioned 'Resilience and Acceptance in the Face of Collapse', an online course I was just starting. The title of the course had immediately claimed my attention, because it chimed with what I was seeing around me.

There were major road and rail works going on at Kilmany. I was seeing the massive earthmoving equipment, the steel and concrete construction work, and thinking about the total dependence on oil that these projects represent. And about how many of these kinds of projects are going on around the country, and around the world. I was thinking – how can our civilisation ever stop using oil for all these things? What would happen if we did? But what will happen if we don't? And it felt like so few people were seeing a problem.

Imagine a Problem-ometer that looks like the semi-circular bush-fire rating graphic. The Problem-ometer asks you to rate how bad you think things are in

the world, from zero, 'No problem at all', through to 10 'catastrophic'.

I would put the arrow on this gauge at about 9 – 'severe'. Now picture a Response-ometer which asks you for a rating on how well the world is responding to the problems.

The gauge goes from 'no response at all', through 'slight response', 'half-way there', 'impressive', and all the way to 'widespread, inspired and empowered response'.

I would put the arrow on this one at about 2 – a slight response. So I see a huge and uncomfortable disconnect between the two. That is why the title of the Resilience and Acceptance course (R&A) spoke to me, and while I found some parts of the course confronting, there was also an element of relief in facing up to the reality – naming it – and in finding that there are actually many others seeing things the same way.

The Problem-ometer and Response-ometer images come from another excellent online course called 'Active Hope' which I am still working through. The two courses are very different both in content and in method of delivery, but I find them complementary, with 'Active Hope' providing a way forward in light of the R&A message about collapse. Both courses are generously offered free of charge.

Resilience and Acceptance in the Face of Collapse

The R&A course runs over nine weeks, with a weekly group session via Zoom and about three hours of reading / viewing between sessions – and it's worth every minute! I found the course materials very well researched and the Zoom sessions skillfully and wisely managed. I also very much enjoyed meeting other participants from around the world. The course is run from the United States, which does mean finding one running at a time of day that works in Australia.

The material point that came through to me with a deep thud is that the underlying cause of the many interconnected global crises – climate change, the degradation of nature, economic inequality and so on – is over-consumption and the unsustainable use of resources. This is overshoot – we are living beyond the Earth's carrying capacity. (Christians might name human greed as a major factor.)

Our civilisation has been built on the availability of cheap and abundant energy from coal, gas and especially oil. But over the last two decades accessing oil has become more difficult and extraction more expensive. And in any case, climate changes require us to stop depending on fossil fuels for energy.

But there is a huge problem with this, as I wrote back in April. We use oil not just for transport and energy, but in vast quantities for concrete, steel, plastic, agriculture, clothing and lots of other manufacturing. Which means we can't just replace oil with renewable energy to power our whole economy.

For this and other substantial reasons, the conclusion of the course is that the collapse of our modern civilisation is already underway, and that it is inevitable and even necessary to restore nature's balance.

This was a difficult message to hear, but there was a lot of support provided through the wisdom and care of the presenters and the discussion with others. Eight of the nine weeks were devoted to how we deal with the emotional impact of such confronting information and how we can reach acceptance and develop both inner and outer resilience.

The course draws heavily on indigenous wisdom from around the world, including the practice of 'dadirri' – deep listening – from Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann AM, a Ngan'giwumirri woman and Elder from Nauyu in the Daly River region of the Northern Territory.

I found the arguments for collapse only too convincing. I would prefer to say it is 'highly likely' rather than inevitable, as we can never perfectly predict the future. I also prefer Joanna Macy's term, which is used in this course too: 'The Great Unravelling'. She named the three big stories of our times as Business as Usual (which is unsustainable), The Great Unravelling, and The Great Turning.

I recommend trying this course and judging for yourself. But you might want to start with the Active Hope course.

'Active hope' is something you DO

The Active Hope course does not delve into *what* is happening. It is purely about our response. It is designed to provide 'insights and practices that help us face our concerns about the world and respond in ways that contribute to positive change'.

The seven sessions can be taken at your own pace. It consists of a series of short videos with questions and exercises to try. It can be done on your own, or perhaps with a friend.

Active Hope is also the title of a book by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone, first published in 2012. Joanna Macy, who recently died at the age of 97, was the creator of 'The Work that Reconnects', which is described as 'an inspiring, interactive group process for anyone who longs to serve the healing of our world in a more powerful and effective way'. See <https://workthatreconnects.org/>

Joanna Macy said that active hope is not something you *have*; it is something you *do*. Her life was devoted to working for peace, justice, and the well-being of life on earth. She was a courageous, creative, inspiring woman of great intelligence and wisdom. A revised edition of the book was published in 2022 with the subtitle: 'How to face the mess we're in with unexpected resilience and creative power'.

Chris Johnstone is the developer and presenter of the Active Hope training course. He has a background in medicine and psychology and has been involved in facilitating workshops related to 'The Work that Reconnects' since the 1980s.

I found his presentation warmly engaging and easy to follow, though perhaps a little slow in the delivery, but not enough to matter – the material is excellent. It is largely based on the powerful practice of 'The Spiral of the

Work that Reconnects' which has four main parts to it: Gratitude; Honouring our Pain for the World; Seeing with New Eyes; and Going Forth.

The course includes some clips with Joanna Macy. I loved the one where she talks about gratitude as a revolutionary act. She says:

It brings you freedom from the industrial growth society. How? You see things in a new way and it contradicts the predominant message of the consumer society which is 'You're not good enough, you're not smart enough, you don't have enough...' One of the cruelest aspects of this society is that it breeds profound dissatisfaction.

Gratitude work, she says, is liberating and subversive. Yes! Isn't that something like Jesus saying, 'Do not worry about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink?' And the apostle Paul saying 'Give thanks in all circumstances...'

Name change for ACTinG

The Resilience and Acceptance course changed my perspective. While climate change does make other crises worse – species extinctions, natural disasters and so on – it is not the root problem. Climate change is a symptom, not the underlying cause.

For me this is even more reason to change the wording of the ACTinG acronym. Instead of Acting **on** Climate Together in Gippsland, ACTinG is now Acting **for** Creation Together in Gippsland. (Climate change remains an important area for action.)

The new wording acknowledges how inter-connected the crises are, and our belief in God as Creator, so bringing into focus the theological foundations for our work. The change reflects the Anglican Marks of Mission, particularly the fifth mark, which is 'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth'.

What is next?

It has taken me some time to come to terms with the

information in the R&A course, both emotionally and mentally. But then I began to wonder, if it is true that our civilisation is unravelling, then what are we to do – as individuals and as churches and communities? Can we help soften the landing? There is so much to think about.

A book I have just started reading is called *Forming Communities of Hope in the Great Unravelling*, (a book that looks to be geared mainly to clergy). While the authors (Alan J Roxburgh and Roy Searle) believe we are heading into a dark time, I was very much encouraged to read in the introduction:

Our starting point... in understanding this unravelling is that God is acting in the disruptions confronting us... What drives the writing of this book is the conviction that the unravelling is not the primary nor true story of our time. God is at work reweaving a broken creation and inviting us to join in this work of salvation.

The two online courses reviewed can be found at: <https://www.activehope.info/> and <https://accepting-collapse.com/>

A condensed version of the review section of this article will be published in *Knit Together*, the Asia-Pacific newsletter for the Third Order of the Society of St Francis.

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



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Feast



■ Cath Connelly

In Christ together, this is what Christian life is about. Gathering as community to honour our oneness in God. How beautifully this was portrayed at the recent Abbey Feast. Ninety people from across the Diocese crossed the waters to join us on August 30 for a marvellous day of feasting and fellowship. The room was abuzz with laughter and conversation. The Feast was also an opportunity to showcase the improvements that have been happening here at The Abbey, particularly the newly renovated retreat rooms. It is with heartfelt thanks that we honour the work of the Traralgon parish, both for your delicious catering and your generous donation of the cost of the food back to The Abbey. I am already looking forward to next year's Feast...

On another note, we have come to the end of this year's *Season of Creation* and yet we remain always aware of the oneness we have with all beings. Here at The Abbey, we are blessed that 'nature' is right here. The primary identity of this place is captured in trees, kangaroos, koalas, lake, grassland, echidnas, sunshine, storms, pelicans, fairy wrens... As I wander the grounds of The Abbey, I am awake to the Christ who is revealed in all of creation.

Pausing beside the Prayer Tree, I reflect on the roots going deep into earth to bring nutrients to the surface. I notice, too, the leaves reaching to the sky, the process of photosynthesis that is occurring and the trunk of the tree providing structural support. I also notice that this particular tree contains several dead branches as well as others bringing forth new life – a constant symbol of the cycle of death and resurrection. It is humbling to see the number of prayers that people have pegged onto the Prayer Tree. Only God and the one who composed the prayer know the contents and meaning behind each petition, but how important it is to have a space where all people can pause to add their own heartfelt prayers to this ritual of attaching paper to the tree. As the sun shines on your prayers, as the rain falls and the wind blows, be assured that your prayer is honoured in this place where creation is so present.

Les Ridge has kindly shared the photos he took at The Abbey Feast here: <http://bit.ly/4nEY0f1>



Members of the Traralgon Parish catering team

Save the date



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

OCTOBER

- 4 Blessing of the Pets
- 9 *Hush Quiet Day* – Triangle of Rhetoric: Ethos, Pathos and Logos
Facilitator: Kevin Broughton
- 9 Celtic Music session
- 10–12 Women's Storytelling Retreat
Facilitator: Lee Palumbo
- 24–25 Diocesan retreat
Grace and the Holy Spirit
Facilitator: Rev'd Kate Campbell
- 26–31 Meditation and Mindfulness in the Christian Tradition
Facilitator: Roland Ashby

Please note that the Raymond Island ferry will not be operating for six weeks between 10 November and 8 December. All Abbey programs will continue to operate during this time. There is a free shuttle ferry that brings people across to the island, but cars remain parked on the mainland. A special carparking area next to the Paynesville yacht club has been designated for this time. We can arrange to meet you at the ferry to assist with any luggage you have and to drive you to The Abbey. The Abbey is an easy walk from the ferry.

NOVEMBER

- 1 Clothes swap day
- 13 *Hush Quiet Day* – Journey from the Centre
Facilitator: Cath Connelly
- 13 Celtic Music session
- 17–20 Benedict: Living Life in the Daily
Facilitator: John Stewart
- 28 Ecumenical Advent Conversation
St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Sale

DECEMBER

- 5–7 Art from the Heart
Facilitator: Andrea do Santos
- 11 Hush Day Advent – Step out in faith and be renewed
Facilitator: Gradwell Fredericks
- 11 Celtic Music session

Gahini revisited

■ **Lindy Driver**

Celebrating the Centenary in Gahini

It had been about 21 years since I had returned to Gahini in Rwanda. After our first visit, the hospital caused me great distress, no glass in windows, not even gauze netting, people waited for treatment on the dirt outside, beds had two or three people in them, many didn't even have mattresses and running water was a problem.

We visited many parishes where the priests didn't even get paid. So began the raising of money for not only the hospital but the *Cash for Cows* commenced to give the priests something to use as a resource for nutritional milk and to be able to barter for other food requirements.

Thus began a wonderful relationship between our two dioceses, which brought about the Covenant of Companionship.

My return in late August was a delight. We – a team from Australia and NZ, led by Gippsland – travelled to attend the celebration of 100 years of the Anglican Church in Gahini.

The first missionaries arrived in Gahini in 1925 and established a hospital. Through their hard work, sacrifice and hours of prayer over 10 years, revival was spreading out from Gahini, taking the gospel to all of Rwanda, East Africa, and the world.

The conference was a three-day celebration of their work and of the revival. People from all around Rwanda, East Africa and the world came to praise, dance and celebrate. It was a privilege to be able to be there.

I was impressed with the changes not only to Gahini but to Kigali. Shanty towns were gone, new buildings were there instead, roads were well paved with brick walkways on either side and good drainage systems.

The first big surprise was that there were hardly any pedestrians walking along the road, as on all my previous visits, instead there were cars, buses, trucks, and motorbikes galore. WOW WOW what a transformation.

This was on the road to Gahini.

We arrived at the Seeds of Peace, and I did not recognise it. No longer just the round houses and the long roof covered veranda where we ate, sang together etc. That was now gone and there were many new buildings, one large with a large dining room, where we all ate. Of course we stayed in Gippsland House, myself and three others in one area with a bedroom each with ensuite and a communal lounge area. Now when I say ensuite, let's not get too excited. There was a handbasin, but mine leaked a little, a toilet, that was good and believe it or not a shower and hot water, well lukewarm anyway, but, hey it beat using a bucket and cup to wash!

The hospital was enough to make this woman cry. So many wonderful changes and the greatest was the new, very large Rehabilitation building, with physiotherapy. They now have a proper indoor kitchen for cooking and although some of the buildings were gone, many had been upgraded really well. It was a dream come true for me.

Unfortunately, due to some changes made by the Archbishop we were unable to present the badges to Mothers Union while I was there, but Sarah Gover did it the following Sunday and we had given Bishop Manasseh and his wife Rose a preview when they took us out for dinner on Sunday night at the end of the convention.

So, what did I learn from the short time there? That we here in Australia need a revival, we need to let go; to sing and dance and we need to be bringing the healing touch of God to his people and restoring the spirit of the broken, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Lindy Driver is the Mothers Union President for the Diocese of Gippsland.

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* Please include your name and suburb for publication.



Letters may be edited in the interests of clarity or space.



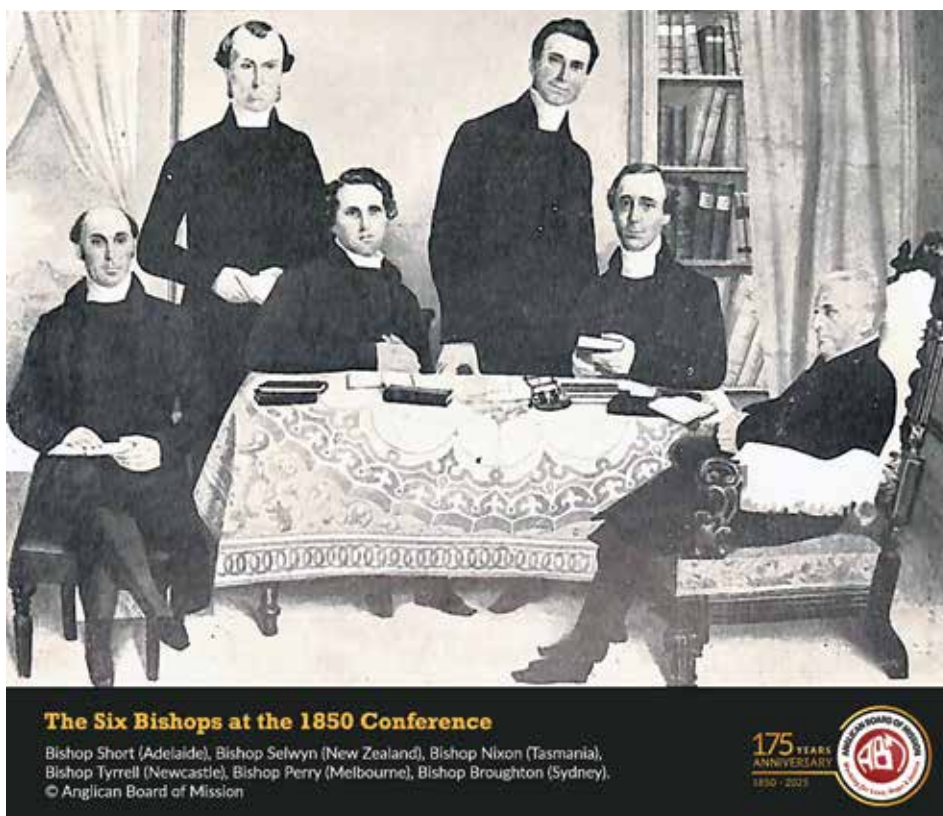
Sarah Gover with Bishop Rhiannon King, Bishop of Southampton

Celebrating 175 years of the Anglican Board of Mission

Wednesday 29 October 2025 marks the 175th anniversary of the formation of what became the Anglican Board of Mission (ABM). The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland is proud to support and work with ABM and is pleased to share in its history as summarised here. The second Bishop of Gippsland, George Cranswick, was Chairman of ABM from 1942–1949.

Milestones (kilometre posts) in the history of ABM

1. In 1850 at the urging of the Bishop of New Zealand, George Selwyn, the six bishops of Australasia meet in the school room of St James', King Street, Sydney and approve a motion moved by the Bishop of Melbourne, Charles Perry, to establish a board of missions which is to be known as the Australasian Board of Missions. The mandate of the Board is to support missionary endeavours among Aboriginal people, the peoples of the Pacific and the Chinese on the goldfields. The dioceses respond by establishing individual mission committees which maintain local autonomy under this new ABM umbrella. The Board's initial activity is to fund the construction of a boat to support the work of the Melanesian Mission. The boat is commissioned in 1857 and named the Southern Cross – the tenth in succession Southern Cross is launched in 2024.
2. In 1867 the Diocese of New Zealand separates from the Australasian province and begins to establish its own board of missions, which in time will become known as the New Zealand Missions Board. In 1872 ABM becomes constituted by a canon of the General Synod and changes its name to Australian. This new structure has a general secretary and some administrative support. This allows it to become more active in its support of emerging Aboriginal missions.
3. In 1891 after a fortuitous meeting on a train to Singleton which brought Albert Maclaren (Anglo-Catholic) and Copland King (Evangelical) together, they embark on the first mission to Papua/New Guinea. Sadly, Maclaren dies within six months of his arrival, and it is left to King to continue to lay the foundations for what in time becomes the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea. King perseveres at great cost for more than a quarter of a century, learning to love the people and the country and dies revered by those whom he served.



4. In 1892 John Gribble establishes a mission at Yarrabah in north Queensland. In 1896 he is joined by James Noble, a local Aboriginal church worker, who becomes indispensable in Gribble's missionary work. (In 1914 Noble travels at Gribble's request to Forrest River in Western Australia to reopen the mission station. In September 1925 Noble is made a deacon in Perth and becomes the first ordained Aboriginal Anglican clergy.) Over time ABM endeavours to generate support for the work at Yarrabah and that commitment continues until the 1960s. In recent years ABM has come to recognise the paternalism which undergirded much of the engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents on the mission stations. The Yarrabah community has continued to evolve and is currently one of the largest indigenous communities in Australia.
5. In 1910 a meeting of Anglican women is held in Sydney with the purpose of inaugurating 'the Womens' Auxiliary in connection with the ABM'. Lady Chelmsford, the wife of the Governor of NSW, formally moves the motion, and branches and affiliated groups quickly spread across the Anglican Church within Australia. In 1913, the Women's Lenten Offering, the forerunner to the Lenten

Appeal, is instituted and in 1965, the Auxiliary launches its first Special Project 'Operation Deficit'. The Auxiliary 'Project' becomes an annual undertaking, which places emphasis on supporting new programs and partners. In 1987 the Auxiliary's name is changed to 'the ABM Auxiliary', permitting it to expand membership to include men. The fundraising efforts of the Auxiliary and the many 'gifts in wills' which ABM has received from former Auxiliary members for more than a century have made and continue to make a substantial contribution to ABM's ability to fulfil its mandate.

6. In 1911 John Jones, who had served on Thursday Island, is appointed General Secretary. He undertakes a major restructure of the organisation and in 1915 becomes the first chairman. During his term in office Jones builds support for ABM's operational presence within Australia. In 1922 he is succeeded by John Needham who had experience working in Aboriginal missions and developed a strong empathy for the residents. Needham encourages the growth of grassroots support thorough the Comrades of St George and the Heralds of the King. He dies in office in 1942 and remains ABM's longest serving chair.

7. In 1915 ABM assumes responsibility for the mission work in Torres Strait at the invitation of the London Missionary Society (LMS), who had set new geographical priorities first their work. The LMS had arrived on Erub Island in the Torres Strait in 1871. Over time this missional endeavour has come to be known as the 'Coming of the Light' and the concept has evolved theologically leading to deeper and ongoing reflection on the mutuality of the enlightenment which has grown from the encounter.

8. In 1942 as World War II rages across the Pacific a number of Anglican mission workers in New Guinea are martyred. The decision of the then bishop of New Guinea, Phillip Strong, to request the mission staff to stay at their posts generates a lasting controversy which reaches up to the higher levels of the Australian Government. There is also confusion, which is not resolved for several years, as to the identity of some of the martyrs and the actual number. After the initial shock, their witness becomes an inspiration to others and generates in the postwar period an increased interest in missionary service. Among the martyrs are a number of women – a lasting reminder of the often unrecognised, yet significant and sacrificial contribution of women within ABM's missional history.

9. In 1953 ABM creates a department of cooperatives and appoints Alf Clint, a Christian Socialist, as director. Clint travels around the Aboriginal missions establishing cooperatives at various locations. However, not all the church admire Clint's work or politics, and the Bishop of Carpentaria, who regards him as a destabilising influence, bans him from entry to missions in his diocese.



10. In 1957 Frank Coaldrake is appointed as Chair. Coaldrake had remained a committed pacifist during WWII, but together with his wife Maida served as missionaries in Japan in the postwar period. He challenges the paternalism of ABM's approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and is a leading voice in the campaign to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised as citizens of this land. He is elected Archbishop of Brisbane in 1970 but, sadly, dies before being consecrated.

11. In 1983 Ken Mason, the former bishop of the Northern Territory, is appointed Chair. Mason's commitment to partnership and vision of broader international engagement sees ABM begin to expand its outreach. Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Zambia become added to the already existing partners in the Pacific. He also begins to build relationships across the Communion and claim a voice for ABM in global Anglican conversations around mission. The Five Marks of Mission emerge out of these conversations, but it is Brian Kyme, succeeding Ken in 1993 and becoming ABM's first National Director, who integrates the marks more fully within ABM's being and doing.

12. In 1993 ABM submits its first community development projects based in the Philippines to the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) for a funding grant. This is the initiative of Robert Cooper who has been inspired by contact with the community development team working in the Episcopal Church in the Philippines. This initiative leads in time to a commitment by ABM in 1996 to seek full accreditation with AusAID (AIDAB's successor) and the appointment of Cooper as ABM's first Development Officer. Sadly, Cooper is forced to retire due to ill health in 1997 and is replaced by his new assistant, John Deane.

Next month we will have a more recent history and the future of ABM as well as news of how ABM celebrated their 175th Anniversary.

For more information on the vital work ABM please visit: <https://www.abmission.org/>

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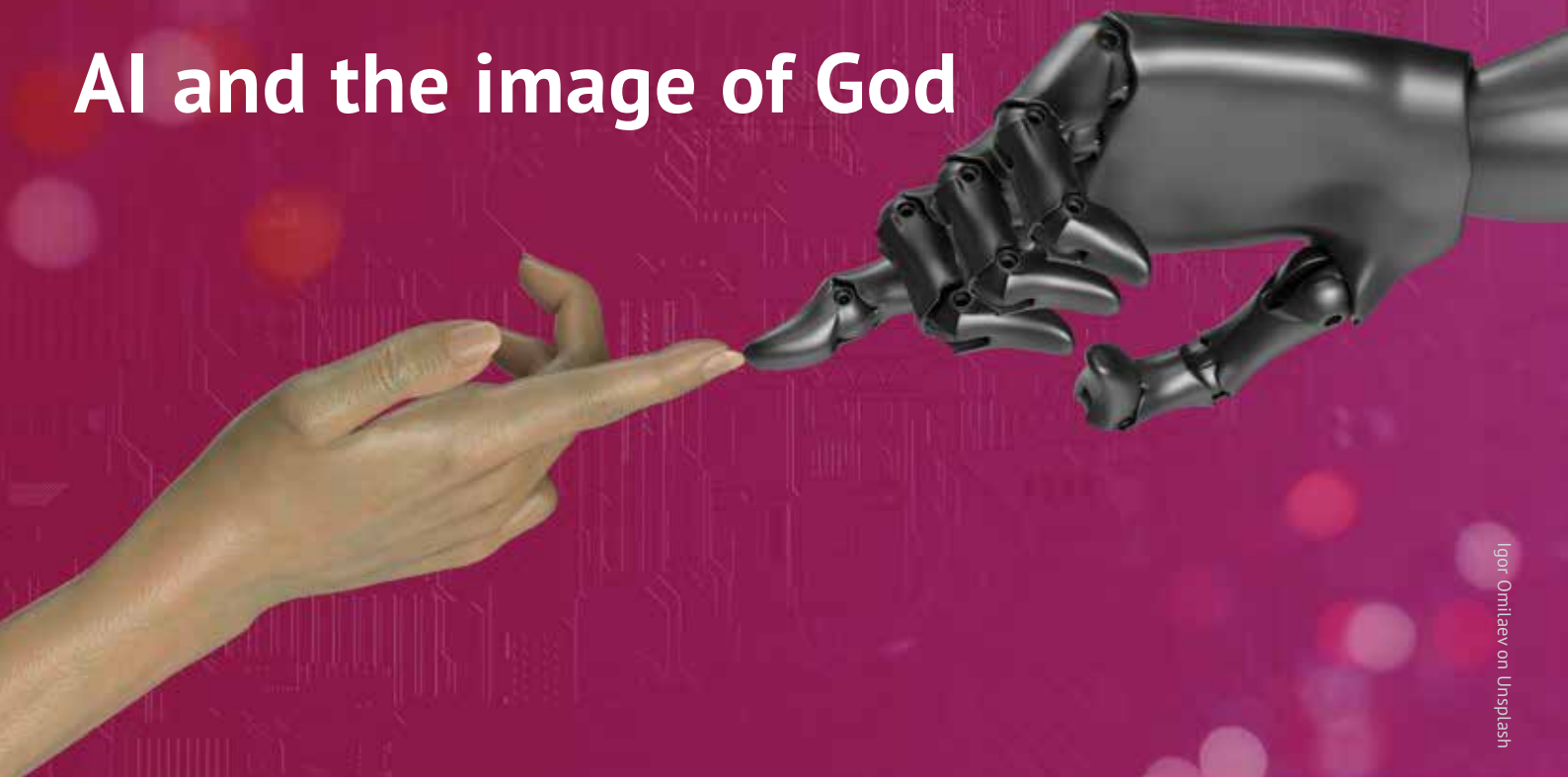
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AI and the image of God



Igor Omliaev on Unsplash

■ Daniel Lowe

We live in a time when Artificial Intelligence (AI) is suddenly everywhere. It predicts our sentences, autocorrects our texts, it pops up on our phones, our cars, in our schools, our workplaces and even in our social lives. Some people get very excited by it, others anxious and some angry. Part of the challenge with AI is that it is so profoundly shaping our lives that it forces us beyond the realms of asking 'what can this tool do?' and into more existential questions of how should we treat AI and what does it actually mean to be human?

The first challenge with AI is to understand some of the terms that get thrown around. Everything from LLMs to Hallucinations! One distinction that I think is very important is the difference between 'weak or narrow AI' and what is often referred to as 'strong or general AI' – Artificial General Intelligence (AGI).

Weak or narrow AI is what we have now. Weak is probably misleading because AI is already powerful in very specific ways. It is really good at crunching patterns of data and making predictions based on probability. What it lacks is creativity and the ability to generalise knowledge in new situations. It lacks a human-like understanding.

Artificial General Intelligence (think *The Terminator* or Jarvis from *Iron Man*) on the other hand is not here yet. These are machines that would have broad capabilities, enabling them to handle any intellectual challenge a human can, making it truly flexible and broadly capable of intelligence. Some experts think we will never achieve this, while others declare we are moments away. Time will tell, I guess.

TOOL TALK

In the meantime, how should we approach the AI that we have?

Let's be clear from the start: AI is a tool.

And tools can be brilliant. Think about a shovel. A good use of a shovel is to dig a hole. A poor use of a shovel would be to use it as a letter opener. The wrong use of a shovel would be to hit someone over the back of the head with it. In each case, the shovel becomes a reflection of the user. The same principle can be applied to AI.

The Bible is full of tools and technology. Cain builds a city, Noah builds an ark, Solomon builds the temple with incredible craftsmanship. Tools and technology are part of human creativity, and that creativity reflects our Creator. We are beings made in the *image of God*. God creates, so we create. But tools can often be twisted, and we need to think carefully about how we use the tools we have. Christians might talk about a theology of tools. A theology of tools is the idea that the things we make and use are part of God's world and can shape both how we live and how we relate to each other and to God.

1. **Tools are gifts.** They reflect our God-given creativity. AI can help you write an essay, design a poster, or even generate study flashcards. It can enhance your creativity, not replace it.
2. **Tools are never neutral.** They shape us as much as we shape them.



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If you rely on AI to 'do' your work, you risk becoming too dependent on it and less confident in your own thinking. The tool is shaping you, not just the other way around.

3. **Tools reveal our hearts.** Jesus said, 'Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' How we use technology shows what we really value.

If AI is mostly used to cheat on assignments, create mocking memes and images, or run deepfake scams... well, that says something about what's going on inside us.

AI, like every tool, will amplify what's already in us. In the hands of a doctor, it might help cure cancer. In the hands of a scammer, it might rip off the vulnerable. In the hands of a teenager? It might either help them learn, create, and grow... or become yet another digital distraction.

The important question to ask is, 'Does this tool bring life? Does it help me love God and love others?'

COMPANION TALK

Now, here's where AI gets really interesting, and risky.

AI is venturing into territory beyond just a tool we use, like Google Maps or a calculator. It's starting to present itself as a *companion*. Some of you might have seen or even used apps like Snapchat's 'My AI,' or 'Replika', that are designed to act like digital friends. You can chat, share your day, even talk about feelings. And the AI will respond in a way that feels... well, surprisingly human.

There are positives:

- Chatbots can be great for helping you practice a new language (I do enjoy Duolingo).
- If you're feeling anxious at 2am, an AI chatbot won't roll its eyes and say, 'Go back to bed.' They are always available.
- They can provide quick comfort or conversation when you feel like no one else is around.

But there are real dangers too:

- Privacy and security. Who owns the app, and who keeps your late-night confessions? Once information is shared, you can't get it back.
- They don't **know** you. They can simulate empathy, but they can't truly love or care.

- Relational risks. We might prefer 'perfect' digital friends over real relationships, which require patience and grace. And because chatbots are programmed to affirm you, they don't always challenge dangerous thinking.

When Jesus was on earth, he spent his time with real people. He ate with sinners, sat with outsiders, listened to their stories, and touched the untouchable. He didn't avoid messy relationships; he entered into them. And he invites us to do the same.

This is where Christian faith has something important to contribute. The Bible teaches that humans are made in the *image of God*. We are not just bundles of data. We are relational, creative, moral beings who reflect something of God himself.

When Jesus was on earth, he spent his time with *real* people. He ate with sinners, sat with outsiders, listened to their stories, and touched the untouchable. He didn't avoid messy relationships; he entered into them. And he invites us to do the same.

You might know the old story of *The Emperor's New Clothes*. The Emperor gets tricked into believing he's wearing the most amazing outfit, when in reality he's parading through town in nothing at all. Everyone goes along with the illusion until a child blurts out the truth – the emperor has no clothes!

I think AI companions are a bit like that. They *seem* human, they respond like they care, they sound like they understand, but in this case, the clothes have no emperor. Behind all the fancy words, there's no real person, no heart. Just patterns of data.

Of course, this is where our understanding of what it means to be a human is so important. If humans are nothing more than a bunch of neural networks, then AI is just like

us, and we should treat them as such. If humans are marked only by our superior reasoning ability, then AI has already begun to supercede us, and we have reason to be frightened. If the thing that makes humans unique is our ability to be relational, then AI may well be closing in on us and falling in love with a chatbot should seem perfectly reasonable. But if the thing that makes humans unique is our status as God's image bearers – something AI can never be – then we have some reassuring solid ground to stand on. It stops us from confusing ourselves with machines, or confusing machines with people.

That's why it's so important to remember: only people – messy, awkward, glorious people – are made in the image of God. AI can wear the costume of a friend, but there's no emperor inside the clothes.

As you step into a world where AI will be everywhere, remember, you're not made in the image of AI. You're made in the image of God. AI is a tool to be used wisely but it cannot replace that which is uniquely human, and we shouldn't treat it as if it can.

- 3 'The idols of the nations are made of silver and gold.
- 4 They have a mouth and eyes, but they can't speak or see.
- 5 Their ears can't hear, and their noses can't smell.
- 6 Their hands have no feeling, their legs don't move, and they can't make a sound.
- 7 Everyone who made the idols and all who trust them are just as helpless as those useless gods.'

(Psalm 115)

The Rev'd Canon Daniel Lowe is Senior Chaplain at St Paul's Grammar School.

<https://thelowedown.blog/>

*This article was edited with the help of AI. No chatbots were harmed in the process.



Giving a gift that lasts

Bequests to Anglican Diocese of Gippsland

The Gippsland Diocese has been blessed with the generosity of Anglicans and others in support of its mission. One form of support you can offer is a bequest in your will – to the Diocese, your own parish or for a particular purpose.

To find out more, visit www.gippslandanglicans.org.au and search 'bequests', or contact Rae Riley (03) 5144 2044.

Always consult a solicitor when preparing or amending your will.

From the Editor



A place at the table

I was inspired by Dean's article on the for Day of Prayer for Refugees and have been reflecting on the experience of refugees and the importance of welcoming newcomers.

For a period, I coordinated the Multicultural Group at the Warragul Community House, organising activities and learning opportunities for its members. During that time, I was often saddened to hear how some members were treated in the wider community, simply because their backgrounds and cultures were different from what was considered the local norm.

One of the most powerful threads running through the Bible is the reminder to care for those who are new or on the margins. Time and again, God's people are urged to make room for others and to treat them with kindness.

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,
for by doing that some have entertained angels
without knowing it.

(Hebrews 13:2)

Here in Gippsland, this call has a very real and practical shape, as our area is changing. We live in a region where community spirit matters, where neighbours check in on each other after a storm, where meals are shared in times of grief, and where friendships are made over fences, football games, and cups of tea. This same spirit can extend to those who arrive here from far beyond our borders, especially refugees.

For many, the path to Gippsland has been marked by hardship and loss. Yet these same families and individuals bring with them remarkable gifts - skills in farming, trades, teaching, healthcare, business, and the arts. They bring rich cultures, food, music, and stories that remind us how wide and diverse God's world really is. Just as importantly, they bring a strong desire to contribute and belong.

When we welcome newcomers into our towns, schools, and churches, we don't just help them find a home, we discover blessings for ourselves too. Our communities grow in understanding, resilience, and joy. And we see glimpses of God's kingdom in action: a place where strangers become friends, and friends become family.

Every act of welcome, no matter how small, helps someone feel they belong. We build a stronger, more vibrant Gippsland. In doing so, we discover the gifts they bring, the friendships that grow, and the joy that comes from living in a community where everyone has a place at the table.

Krista Mountford

Jeremiah's reply to Forest September 2025

Dear Forest,

I will start my response with a quote from an article I've read:

But there is one last question concerning the environment: what has gone wrong? One of the most influential environmentalist activists of the past few decades is Gus Speth, former Dean of the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies at Yale University and a senior environmental adviser to the US government. A man of no religious faith as far as anyone is aware, Speth offers a fascinating diagnosis. Though he once thought that decades of 'good science' could address the most urgent environmental problems, including ecosystem collapse and climate change, his wised opinion had changed. He proposed that the critical 'environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy' – cultural and spiritual underpinnings that science alone can't tackle.

Many animals, humans included, are social creatures, that is, they only thrive in community. This makes it very hard to break away from the 'norms' of the society you are part of. If you and everyone else is taught that to succeed and be accepted by your peers is to accumulate goods, then it is difficult to deliberately go against that expectation. You need to find another group to belong to; loners are rare. Whilst such groups exist, like the ones you have mentioned, in and out of church circles their numbers are small and often they can be seen as on the fringes of society.

The larger 'associations', particularly of the religious (including Christians), help their adherents make some changes to their lifestyles but again the numbers are small compared to the societies they live in. As children and youth become aware of the climate and consumption crises facing the planet they are agitating for changes. However, whether that is sustained as they grow older, start work or start families, remains to be seen. We saw similar young groups promising to make wholesale changes in the 1960's to a range of issues but in the end, they were changed by the system, not the other way around.

Finally, I should note that psychologically humans are poor at recognising the danger posed by something that is very gradual. If it's about to bite you the reaction is swift, however, if it will bite you in 50–100 years' time then the response is delayed. Add to that the necessary reduction in living standards, then denial and procrastination win.

I trust that gives you some insight into our difficulties in motivating others.

Jeremiah



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Through a Glass Darkly

Journeys through Science, Faith and Doubt – A Memoir

Alister McGrath

Hodder and Stoughton, 2020

■ David Head

This book resonated deeply with me, and I found many connections in my own journey of faith from a scientific background as a one-time chemical engineer, and from a non-religious background, to a place of Christian faith and becoming an Anglican Parish Priest amidst all the questions and doubts and challenges of an often unbelieving world.

The author, Alister McGrath, is a world-renowned Anglican theologian and author and is currently Professor of Science and Religion at Oxford University and has held many senior positions and lectureships at Oxford, Cambridge, and London Universities. He is well-known as a clear and straightforward thinkers and teacher and writer on the intersection of faith and science, and, also as a world-renowned scholar on the works and mind of another great Anglican, CS Lewis.

This book is not a large book, but it is full of wisdom and integrity and many memorable paragraphs and quotes. It is a thinker and 'questers' book and should not be read quickly.

I believe it is an excellent book for all clergy and lay leaders, and indeed all theologically curious people, who want to grapple with the issues and quandaries of believing in a world of science, and of doubt and faith.

I finish with several quotes, among a great many worthwhile quotes:

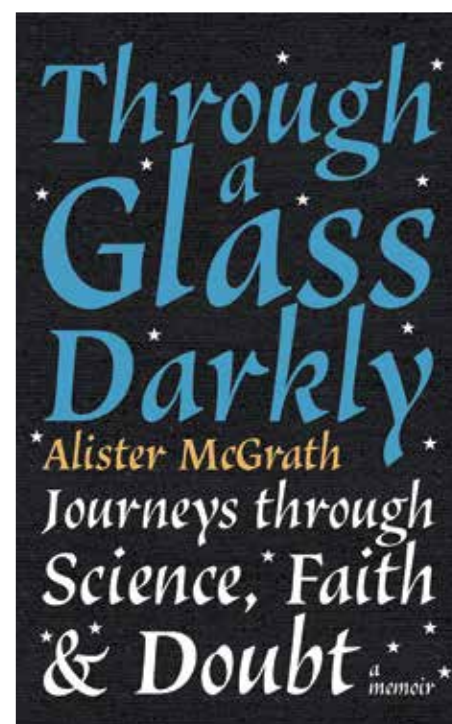
At Oxford, I formed friendships with intelligent scientists, mostly chemists and physicists, who held a wide variety of political, moral and religious views, but their scientific commitments did not *determine* their politics, ethics or faith, but they were *informed* by their scientific disciplines.

Theoretically, we ought not to be able to arrive at settled beliefs; *pragmatically*, we do this all the time. I have learned to live with this tension – namely,

believing that I have a good reason for holding a belief that I consider to be important and meaningful, yet knowing it cannot be proved. Perhaps this is a truth we need to embrace gladly, as it then allows us to get on with the serious business of living, as best we can in the light of what we believe we are justified in valuing.

The language of Christianity hovers over the brink of silence and song. Silence, because it is inadequate to do justice to the vastness of its subject. And song, because it enables us to see, however dimly, that this 'vastness' has created space for us, and invited us to rejoice in being part of God's greater story.

We do indeed see through a glass darkly (1 Corinthians 13:12), being captives to our limited capacity to behold and understand, and the fragility of the truths on which we base our lives. That's why we attach ourselves to others for company and solidarity, holding on to a vision of reality and embodiment of wisdom. Somehow, the shadows of the cosmos seem softer and more bearable when we journey in company, and in



hope, knowing that someone (Jesus) who has walked through that darkness before us, blazing a trail we can follow.

The Rev'd Canon David Head.



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On Being Blackfella's Young Fella

Is Being Aboriginal Enough?

Glenn Loughrey

Coventry Press, 2020

■ Sue Jacka

Uncle Canon Glenn Loughrey is the Provincial Archdeacon for Reconciliation, First Peoples Recognition and Treaty, working across all five Victorian dioceses. Uncle Glenn will be known to members of Synod as he, along with our own indigenous priests Aunty Canon Phyllis Andy and Rev'd Kathy Dalton, ran a very informative 'Aboriginal Ministry Forum' at this May's synod.

This book partly sets out Uncle Glenn's story of suppressing his own aboriginality for about two thirds of his life and then more recently reaffirming his connection with country and culture. He greatly respected his aboriginal grandmother and the cultural teachings his father passed on to him, but he lived within the wider community with no direct connections to a mob. He became an Anglican priest during these years of minimising his aboriginality.

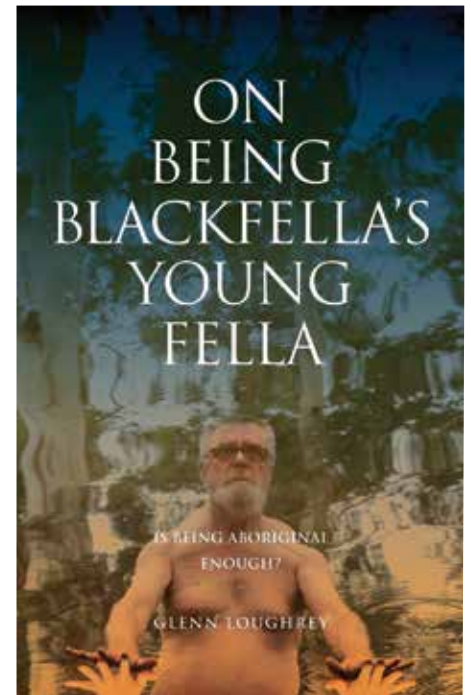
This writing, published in 2020, comes from a period of significant questioning leading to a greater understanding of aboriginality as a way of being human. Uncle Glenn stresses that there is no such thing as aboriginal spirituality because to be Aboriginal is to live connected to the spiritual in all aspects of life.

How I see others and how I resonate with country, its presence in my body, affirms that I experience a deep one-ness or whole-ness not learned or acquired through religion... These questions have become central to my journey back to my inner indigenous self.

During this period, Glenn found himself reading the Christian story through different eyes and he now sees it expanded to include 'cousins' of the natural world and indeed the universe. This deep questioning of the need for Christianity, or even for redemption, will challenge many readers but as I read, I remembered that during this period Glenn remained an Anglican priest and now has a specific role promoting First Nations recognition and reconciliation across Victoria.

There is a lot of quite understandable anger expressed in this book at the damage done to First Nations peoples not only by white settlement but by ongoing interventions which have perpetuated disadvantage and have disempowered aboriginal people. Some readers may find this uncomfortable, but it is a real part of not only our history, but also current society where discrimination and disadvantage seem to continue from sport to politics. He calls for more than a notional acceptance of the ability of aboriginal peoples to manage their own issues. Glenn's frustration is born of lived experience, not only his own but also that of his brothers and sisters.

Uncle Glenn says his book is a place to begin, to sit down with and to dialogue with as we engage with First Nations peoples. This is an 'us-two' journey that people of faith and Aboriginal people need to take together.



The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland is committed to reconciliation and we acknowledge the pain felt by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and we see that mutual understanding and constructive dialogue are part of the journey we walk together towards reconciliation. We want to make our churches and gatherings culturally safe for First Peoples, I do like Uncle Glenn's invitation:

'Here is my hand. I invite you to walk with me. We will learn together.'

The Venerable Sue Jacka is the Rector of Morwell and member of the Aboriginal Ministry Support Group.

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.

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Supporting the Aboriginal Ministry Fund

- employment of Aboriginal people in ministry
- training of Aboriginal people for ministry
- cultural education within Gippsland Diocese
- development of Aboriginal ministry

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Youth Ministry Catchup

A regular time to pray and share youth ministry hopes, plans, ideas and resources. All welcome.

First Tuesday each month, 7:30pm at: tinyurl.com/GIPPSYOUTH
For more info contact daniel@warragul Anglican.org.au



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



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Where is real hope for humanity and all creation?
What is the root cause of the sustainability crisis, and how can Christians respond?
What might help us to act in hope?

ACTinG offers a creative workshop in three locations:

- Warragul Anglican Church:
Tuesday 16 September, 1 – 4 pm
- St Nicholas Lakes Entrance:
Thursday 16 October, 1 – 4 pm
- St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Sale:
Saturday 8 November, 1 – 4 pm

Please RSVP for catering purposes and to find out more: acting@gippslandanglicans.org.au



ECUMENICAL ADVENT CONVERSATION

Friday 28 November
9.30am for a 10.00am start - 3.30pm
St Mary's Cathedral, Sale

The Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops of Gippsland warmly invite you to join the eighth annual Advent Conversation - an ecumenical gathering of clergy and laity from both traditions.

This year's Conversation will reflect on Advent themes through Old and New Testament passages from our common lectionary.

We are delighted that the Conversation will once again be led by eminent biblical scholars from the University of Divinity, The Rev'd Emeritus Professor Brendan Byrne, SJ and The Rev'd Canon Professor Emerita Dorothy Lee.

Cost: \$30 which includes morning tea and lunch.
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EVENTS

For events at The Abbey, see page 14

OCTOBER

- 6–9 Clergy Retreat, Pallotti College
18 (St Luke) – Ordination Service,
11am, St Paul's Cathedral, Sale

NOVEMBER

- 2 Flowers of Remembrance at Bunyip
(celebrating All Souls' Day)
Eucharist at 10am, St Thomas' Church,
Bunyip
- 9 Defence Sunday
- 11 Remembrance Day
- 26–28 Retreat at Bunyip
Inspired by Simon Gregg's *Turner
and Australia* exhibition at Sale,
we will explore *Images of the Divine*
and our relationship to the land.
Contact Ken Parker for more information
(03) 5976 1634
- 28 Ecumenical Advent Conversation
St Mary's Cathedral Sale

Abraham Journeyed to a New Country

A hymn by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

Abraham journeyed to a new country;
Sarah went with him, journeying too.
Slaves down in Egypt fled Pharaoh's army;
Ruth left the home and people she knew.

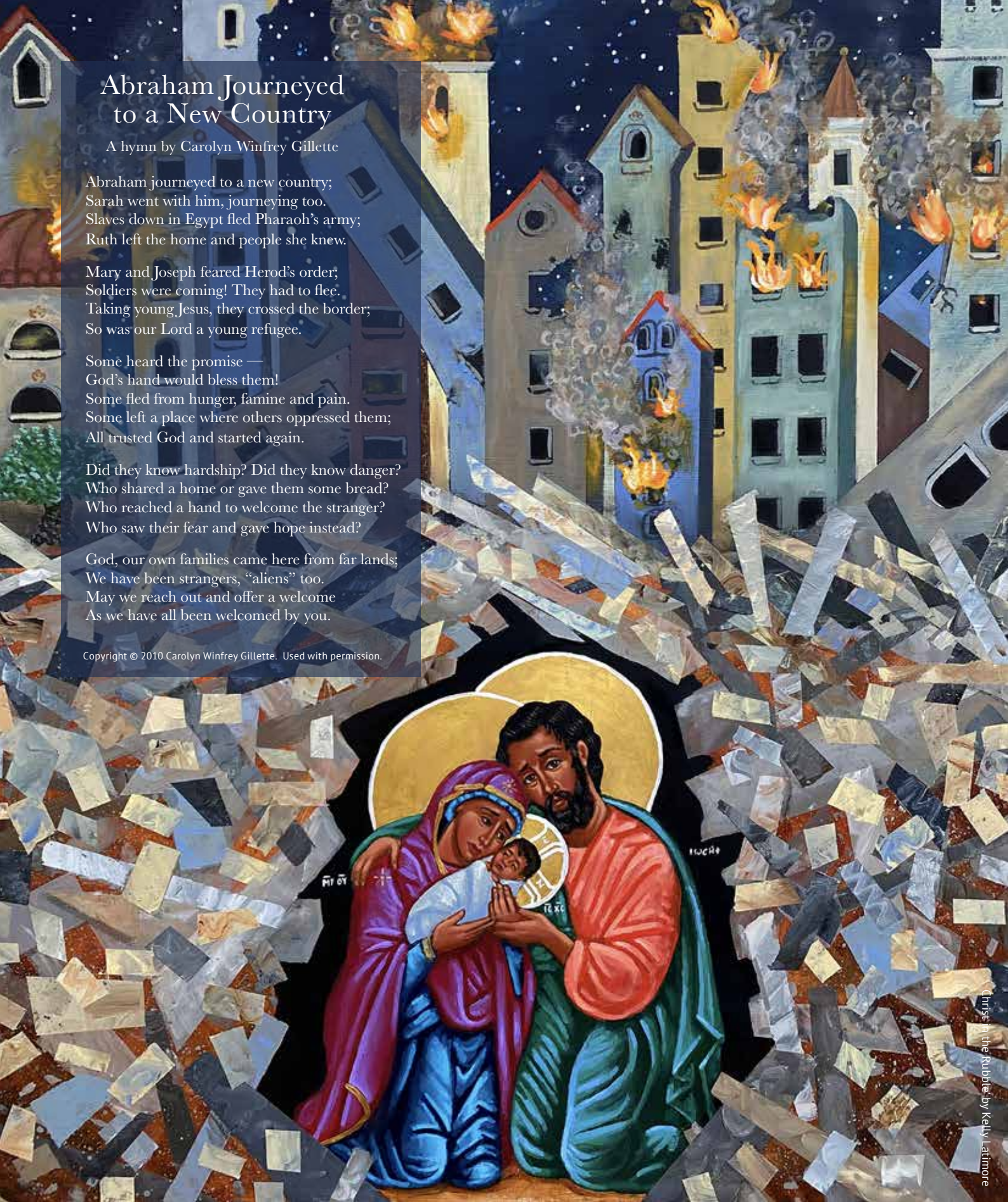
Mary and Joseph feared Herod's order;
Soldiers were coming! They had to flee.
Taking young Jesus, they crossed the border;
So was our Lord a young refugee.

Some heard the promise —
God's hand would bless them!
Some fled from hunger, famine and pain.
Some left a place where others oppressed them;
All trusted God and started again.

Did they know hardship? Did they know danger?
Who shared a home or gave them some bread?
Who reached a hand to welcome the stranger?
Who saw their fear and gave hope instead?

God, our own families came here from far lands;
We have been strangers, "aliens" too.
May we reach out and offer a welcome
As we have all been welcomed by you.

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Christ in the Rubble by Kelly Latimore

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