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Music and
Light at
Mirboo North



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Sue Jacka
steps back as
Archdeacon



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An OAM for
Gippsland's
Chancellor

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The ^{Gippsland} Anglican

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Christine Morris



Ash Wednesday

The imposition of ashes



Ancient wisdoms in today's 'Feb Fast'

If one waits long enough everything comes back into fashion. At least that's how I rationalise wearing the same clothes decade after decade! It's also a premise on which our wonderful Op Shops rely.

The relationship of Australians with alcohol has certainly been changing in recent years, and those of us who enjoy a glass of wine are oft reminded of the health benefits of moderation. 'All things in moderation' feels like a very Anglican approach, plus or minus the rejoinder 'including moderation!'

As a result, the so-called 'Feb Fast' has gained popularity, along with 'Dry July', 'Oct-sober', and most recently 'Dry January', although I can't quite catch the assonance in that one.

Perhaps it's more accurate to say that the 'Feb Fast' has re-gained popularity.

In the Roman calendar February was once the last month of the year, deriving from *februa*, meaning 'purification'. Marking a turn of the seasons, as winter begins to give way to spring in the northern hemisphere, February included a major Roman festival – '*Lupercalia*' – which was associated with spiritual cleansing as a precursor to hoped-for fertility. Another February festival, '*Caristia*', ritualised repentance and forgiveness centred around table-fellowship.

The practice of 'taking stock' and exercising self-discipline is thus not new to the month of February, quite independently from the Christian tradition of Ash Wednesday (which usually falls in February, though this year is in early March) and Lent.

Fast-forward some two thousand years to London, new year 2025. A billboard advertisement with the caption 'Drink Religiously' catches the eye. It promotes a non-alcoholic beer ('Lucky Saint'), a bottle of which is being reverently cradled by a nun.

The connection with 'Dry January' and 'Feb Fast' is obvious and – intentionally

or otherwise – invokes the longstanding connection between abstinence and the pre-spring appeasement of the fertility gods. All in the cause of selling a product.

But what does it mean for Christians to 'drink religiously'?

Equally obvious – to communicant members of churches, if not immediately to advertisers – are the eucharistic overtones to the injunction 'drink religiously'.

As English priest and theologian Jonathan Torrance (observer of the aforementioned billboard) reflects:

This Lent, as we approach the Holy Mysteries, may we indeed 'drink religiously'.

When we come to take Communion, we come with empty hands, and are fed. We come acknowledging not our luck but our weakness, and are given drink. We come with our need and are met by the God who gives us more than we can imagine, because he gives himself.

(*Seen & Unseen*, 24 January 2025, sighted online: <https://tinyurl.com/55p9ha58>)

Ironically, the secular call in England to 'drink religiously' coincides with the Church of England's grappling with questions of what may legitimately serve as eucharistic elements; in particular, the status of non-alcoholic wine in celebrations of Holy Communion (see <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/09/church-of-england-gluten-free-wafers-non-alcoholic-wine-communion>).

The Holy Communion Canon (2001) of the Anglican Church of Australia stipulates (only) that 'the bread offered must be wholesome and the wine must be of good quality' (Clause 5).

Purveyors of non-alcoholic wine (or beer) may well make a case for

its quality, and likewise bakers of gluten-free bread for its wholesomeness. Which only serves to sharpen the question: what does it mean to 'drink religiously'?

Anglicans are not prone to subscribe either to a purely subjective ('it's all about me and how I feel when receiving Communion') or a purely objective ('it's all about the duly consecrated elements, duly received') doctrine of eucharistic reception. All things in moderation.

This Lent, as we approach the Holy Mysteries, may we indeed 'drink religiously'.

That is, may our table fellowship foster reconciliation grounded in truth-telling. May we receive the Sacrament in a spirit of empty- and open-handedness, recognising first and foremost our need of grace. And may we encounter that grace both in the proper ordering of our worship and in pure and contrite hearts, open to the ancient wisdoms of restraint in due season.

This edition of *The Gippsland Anglican* is the first under a new Editorial Committee. We are enormously grateful to Interim (and former) Editor, Jan Down, who has skilfully and generously steered the Diocese's flagship publication since October last year. We also salute The Ven Sue Jacka, whose fine service to TGA in her capacity as Archdeacon (see page 5) is now ending.

Joining me on the Editorial Committee are Krista Mountford (Associate Editor) and Trevor Poulton (Production Editor), each of whom brings experience and expertise in both social and print media, and a heart for news ministry.

Thank you for sharing your particular good news stories with us, that we may share with others the common hope we have in Christ.

Grace and peace,





First Graduates of the Ministry Development Program

L-R: Joanne Stuchbery, The Ven Graham Knott, Zoe Hopwood, Bishop Richard, The Rev'd Belinda Seabrook, The Rev'd Denise Martin and The Rev'd Damien King. Absent on the day graduate Stacey Williamson of Leongatha

■ Belinda Seabrook

On the 2nd February, the parishes of Mirboo North and Leongatha gathered at St Mary's Mirboo North to celebrate the graduation of the first cohort of the Ministry Development Program (MDP). This program is a local initiative that supports the training and equipping of future leaders for the Anglican Church in rural areas. This two year course is endorsed by the Diocese of Gippsland as a training pathway towards ordination

or authorised lay ministry.

Participants of the MDP are offered an allowance to undertake training which enables them to transition from paid secular work into ministry within the church. This initiative also reduces the burden of rural parishes to fund traditional curacies and training for ministers. The MDP was seed-funded by the legacy of the late Jimmy and Annie Atkins of Mirboo North and is

solely financially supported through crowdfunding.

The second cohort of MDP is currently halfway through their course and will be graduating in March 2026. This second cohort includes participants from five rural Anglican Parishes in Gippsland. If you would like to donate to the Ministry Development Program please email belindaseabrookrevd@gmail.com for more information.

Dedication of New Aumbry at St Mary's Mirboo North

After many months of planning and craftsmanship St Mary's new aumbry was finally dedicated on Sunday the 2nd of February by The Rt Rev'd. Richard Treloar, Bishop of Gippsland. An aumbry is a small 'house' where Holy Communion is kept after it is consecrated by a priest during a public service.

The surplus consecrated communion elements are known as reserved sacrament and they are set apart to be distributed to those who have been unable to attend services due to frailty or illness. This is generally the ministry of the deacon of the church or someone in leadership.

St Mary's was blessed to work with Brian Craven from the Mirboo North Men's Shed on the design and construction of the aumbry. It has been finely crafted by hand from hardwood with exceptional attention to detail

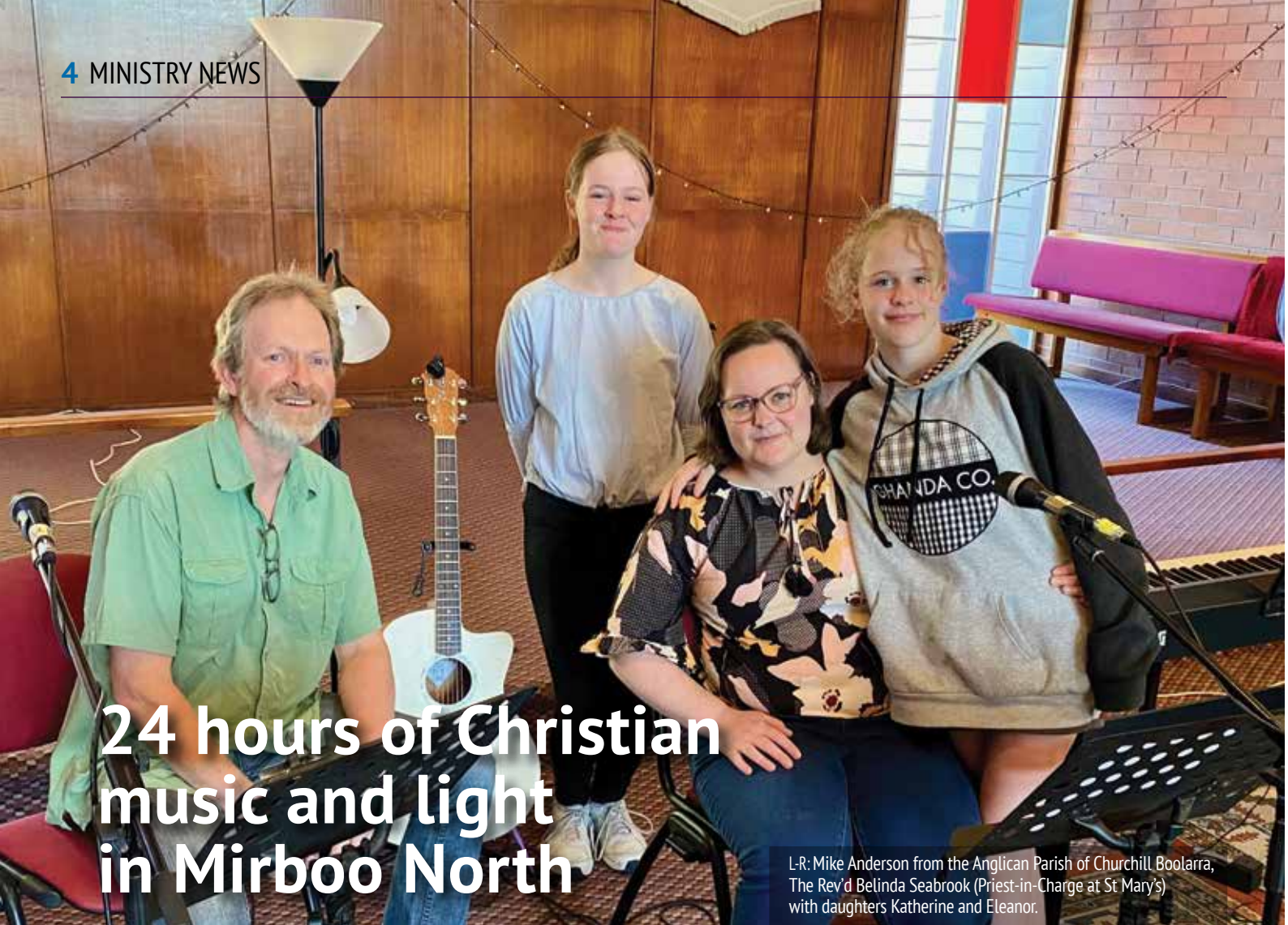


L-R: Bishop Richard, Brian Craven, The Rev'd Belinda Seabrook

and it will remain at St Mary's for many generations to come. A wonderful legacy and contribution to community life. Thank you to Brian for your dedication to this project and thank you to all the

men involved in the Men's Shed, you do amazing work for our community.

The Rev'd Belinda Seabrook is Priest-in-Charge of Mirboo North.



24 hours of Christian music and light in Mirboo North

L-R: Mike Anderson from the Anglican Parish of Churchill Boolarra, The Rev'd Belinda Seabrook (Priest-in-Charge at St Mary's) with daughters Katherine and Eleanor.

■ Belinda Seabrook

Over 30 musicians from 12 churches across Gippsland gathered at St Mary's Mirboo North recently for 24 hours of continuous live music and community singing. This event highlighted the power of teamwork and mutual support, especially across denominations, and was a gift to the community of Mirboo North which has been through so much in the last year.

Friday evening featured soloists on violin, piano and harp with a mixture of instrumental pieces and contemporary Christian music. Saturday morning featured traditional organ players and 'golden oldie' hymns for a community sing-along which was complete with scones, jam and cream. Saturday afternoon featured mixed genres including mountain folk songs on the bouzouki and nyckelharpa.

Warragul, Drouin, Moe-Newborough, Sale, Churchill-Boolarra, Mirboo North, Leongatha, Lakes Entrance / Metung, and Avon all participated in the event, demonstrating unity and cooperation.

Many from the community and surrounding towns came to enjoy the music and shared singing. Some stayed

for one or two brackets of music and there were some who stayed for almost the whole event and sang well into the night and early morning. The event featured times of deep joy and dancing, as well as times of rest and reflection.

During the event, a trailer load of locally sourced plants and trees was given to community members as a sign of recovery from the ferocious storm twelve months prior. Almost every plant was picked up from Plant Hope during the event highlighting not only a community need but also the community's readiness to move forward and replant their gardens. If you are in a position to donate to Plant Hope we would love your support.

The idea for this event came from a local young lady Katherine who is only 14 years old. She wanted people in Mirboo North of all ages to have something uplifting and happy to look forward to. Thank you so much to everyone who came together to make this such a successful event and thank you to every musician who freely gave their time, some travelling over two hours just to share in this event.



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The Ven Sue Jacka to relinquish Archdeacon's role

Sue Jacka very graciously continued as Archdeacon of the Western Region for longer than perhaps she might have chosen to, mindful of a number of personnel changes in the Diocese, of the portfolios she has carried, and of the pastoral and administrative needs in her region.

It's a role she has fulfilled with great dedication alongside her ministry as Rector of Trafalgar, in the first instance, and latterly as Rector of Morwell, in which capacity we're delighted Sue will continue to serve.

Sue was collated Archdeacon on 10 February 2019 at St Paul's Cathedral Sale, and will retain the title of Archdeacon Emeritus.

She and Vicar General Graham Knott have together shouldered the archidiaconal responsibilities in the Diocese of late, and – along with Lyndon Phillips, Regional Dean in the East, and successive Cathedral Deans, among others – Sue has been a valued member of the diocesan staff team throughout the last five years.

This has been an important time in the life of the Diocese, during which Gippsland Anglicans have met so many challenges and embraced a number of changes, as well as seeing some exciting developments and new ministries emerge.

Sue has been integral to expanding the ministry of The Abbey as a member of Abbey Chapter, and she and husband Ross remain passionate supporters of its life and work.

The Gippsland Anglican is another of Sue's portfolios, and recent years have seen significant evolution in the Diocese's flagship news ministry publication.

Working closely with Kathy Dalton at Morwell, Sue has also been part of the Aboriginal Ministry Support Group. She will continue to participate in that forum as we learn from Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy and Kathy, and seek to resource



The Ven Sue Jacka

and release them for their vital ministries in the community to and with First Nations peoples, including at Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust.

When the number of clerical vacancies in Gippsland was higher than it is now, the bulk of these – and the longest-standing – were in the Western Region, and Sue's pastoral leadership in ensuring continuity of ministry in a number of parishes has been exemplary.

Whilst we will miss her contribution in these and other areas, including Anglicare Victoria's Parish Partnerships, we rejoice that she will thus be able to slow down just a little, as she and Ross care for their daughter Miriam and relocate to their

property in Mirboo. The diocesan staff team has been thinking carefully and prayerfully about the optimal structure for its work going forward, and I look forward to sharing news of the shape and composition of this small and dedicated group in the near future.

In the meantime, please join me in paying tribute to Sue – and Ross – for the care and energy given to the mission of Gippsland Anglicans as Archdeacon these last five years, and in praying for a smooth transition for them into a new dispensation.

Adapted from Bishop Richard's *Ad Clerum*.

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

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

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

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Phone 0417 030 768
email: janetwal@bigpond.net.au



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Saturday
29
March 2025

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2:30PM

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Do words or music sing in you?

If so, you might be busting to be part of the Songwriting workshop, being hosted at St James Traralgon on Saturday 29th March from 10am-2:30pm.

Part of Hope25 and aimed at creatively jamming together to craft songs that may be used across the Diocese including potentially at Synod, this initiative is the fruit of a conversation held at the June 2024 clergy conference. A bunch of musicians sat down for an hour to ponder the question: 'How might we do something creative with music across our diocese?'

This is one of the answers to this question.

We welcome all musicians (byo musical instrument of choice), as well as aspiring song writers, poets, creative writers – anyone really. Led by Dean Keren, the day will start with some worship where we'll look at how the songs are put together before collaborating to create some new songs. After lunch (please bring something to share), we'll have an opportunity to workshop what we've managed to write.

For more information, and to book, please contact Daniel Gebert: daniel@warragul Anglican.org.au

HOPE25



Hope is contagious in bustling Toora

■ Fran Grimes

HOPE25

Back in May 2023 I attended the final service at Toora Uniting Church. Just six months earlier in November 2022 the final service had been held at St Thomas' Anglican Church Toora. Both churches are now closed.

As I drove down the main street of Toora it was quiet and many shops had closed down; however there was one place that shone brightly and I thought – here is a sign of real hope in this street.

It was St Thomas' Anglican Outreach Centre, brightly painted and displaying two large shop windows full of Op Shop merchandise.

When St Thomas's Church was to be sold a vision was developed by Corner Inlet Anglican Parish Council and Toora's population that saw clearly that the Outreach Centre / Op Shop would bring way more people into the Hope of the gospel than a small church service on a Sunday in a side street. And that is proving to be the case.

As holiday makers and visitors from surrounding towns and Toora residents come in to enjoy the life of the town, they pour into the Outreach Centre/ Op shop and on Wednesdays enjoy the bright liveliness as we gather at midday for 'Op shop Church' to worship and pray and share the Hope God gives to our lives.

It just so happened that the shop which now houses the Outreach Centre had been owned by past faithful members of St Thomas' church, George and Betty Light. Their shop had been a blessing to the town and as George had passed away some years ago, his wife Betty was now ready to sell the shop. The day we held the Blessing for the Outreach Centre in September 2024 coincided with Betty's funeral that afternoon, an assurance that the Legacy of the Lights in Toora would live on.

Now the main street of Toora is a bustling place – with cafes, craft shop, homewares shop, a traditional bakery

(in need of an experienced baker) and Tooradeli offering Delicatessen treats to all who pass through. St Thomas' Outreach Centre and Op shop continues to shine and is now a place of friendship and Christian worship and Outreach.

From Thursday to Saturday the doors are opened as our Parish Op shop ministry and we meet at midday every Wednesday for 'Op shop Church'. We hold special services as well. We had a carol service in December and will hold our Parish Ash Wednesday service in this space of worship and prayer.

The main street of Toora has come alive and we are thankful that we are now at the centre of it all offering the Hope that Jesus gives. Hope is contagious; if only we would use it more.

The Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes is Rector of Corner Inlet.



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Lenten HOPE25 Diocesan Prayer Meeting

All are invited to join in a weekly prayer meeting via Zoom during Lent from 7:30 – 8:30pm on Friday nights beginning on 7 March and concluding on 11 April.

For the Zoom link refer to the Hope25 page on the Diocesan website or email Susan Liersch at admin@basscoastanglican.org.au



L-R: Stacey Kearney, Jack Beamish, James McArdle

SALT Club graduation – stepping stones

■ Carol Monson

Each year on a Sunday around the beginning of the school academic year children attending SALT Club at Warragul Anglican Church gather excitedly to share graduation to the next level. For some it is an even bigger move when they are old enough to leave SALT Club and participate in regular church services.

Children progress from ‘Sparkies’ where there are always parents and carers present, through to ‘Fireflies’, ‘Comets’ and finally, two years in ‘Illuminators’ which is a stepping stone for young people.

Illuminators has a very strong foundation of serious Bible study compared to a more flexible study approach in the earlier years.

Children’s Ministry leader, Stacey Kearney and Youth Leader, Jack Beamish, work tirelessly and closely together to make the graduation a very special occasion for the young people. They shared the stage with each other taking turns to present gifts and pray.

This year James McArdle reached year 8 at secondary school so will take part in the regular church services. As a ‘graduate’ of SALT Club, James received a beautifully bound Bible.

In the formal church service each Sunday, young people like James have

opportunities to participate in Bible readings, the music team, learning to assist the SALT Club teaching team and welcoming people to the service. Jack and his team ensure that the older young people, like James, will continue Bible study via Youth Group activities alongside shared fun activities.

The graduation also celebrates those starting school in their Prep year. This year it was Levi Hearn and Samuel Hasan. Each received a gift bag with a range of tiny presents to get them started at school such as a reading book, post-it notes, a very cute pen and eraser.

The children’s enthusiasm for this aspect of their lives is heartwarming when shared with the whole congregation.

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■ Cath Connelly

If variety is the spice of life, then activities at The Abbey are particularly zesty during this month of March. I glance at the diary and discover that we have a craft-making day, a car rally, a day of drumming, a Celtic music session, an Enneagram retreat, weekly Eucharist, a massive birthday party, a harp concert (internationally famous Heather Downie performing) and a retreat led by The Rev'd Gradwell Fredericks. All in March. How good is that!

We have been welcoming people from overseas coming to look at the koalas. Other people arrive in need of a break, whilst workers stay overnight in the motel rooms as part of their East Gippsland travels. Pilgrims come on retreat, holiday makers find their way here and delight in our facilities and surroundings. Day trippers discover the doors of the chapel are open, others pause in their day to sit in the grounds and reflect. Being privileged to be in conversation with many of these guests is deeply humbling; each encounter is a sacred time.

Which brings me back to the core delight of what the Abbey is about. This is a stunningly beautiful place. It is a thin place where the veil between here and another realm is gossamer thin. It is a place grounded in hospitality with a table large enough to welcome all who come our way. The Holy One is found in all these activities. People of good will, joining together in this sacred place.

Save the date



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

MARCH

- 13 *Hush Day* – Drumming from the Heart. Facilitator: Jill McConnell.
- 13 Celtic Music session.
- 14 – 16 In Love with the Enneagram. Facilitator: Julia Fullarton.
- 23 Heather Downie Harp Concert.
- 25 – 28 Mid-week retreat: Mary's Seven Statements. Facilitator: Gradwell Fredericks.

APRIL

- 10 *Hush Day* - Canaan and East Gippsland: Occupied Lands. Facilitator: Michael Fox.
- 10 Celtic Music session.
- 18 3.00pm. Stations of the Cross walk.

MAY

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

The parish of Traralgon (St James, St John and St David) admission of Parish Councillors

On Sunday, 9th February 2025, Traralgon's Parish Councillors were admitted. The Rev'd Gradwell Fredericks reflected on

the calling and response of Peter. He reminded all present of their calling and to let our service be revolutionary.

It should have the ingredients of humility and obedience as Peter demonstrated when Christ called him to serve.



Aboriginal Sunday on Jackson's Track, Jindivick

■ Libby Willems

Jindivick, a tiny rural town in West Gippsland, sits in some of the most beautiful country you can imagine. Rolling green hills spotted with fat, contented dairy and beef cattle are cradled by the forests of the Labertouche and sub-alpine hills of Mt Baw Baw. Before dairy and beef, timber was the main industry. Before that? The land was in its original, untouched state.

Jindivick is made up of a wonderful community of about 600 people.

The surrounding district holds an important and unbroken history for Kurnai people where connection to, and life on Country has been directly and continuously maintained, making it quite possibly one of the only places in Victoria where Aboriginal people have always lived.

Always. (To learn more, we recommend reading *Jackson's Track: Memoir of a Dream-time Place*, by Daryl Tonkin and Carolyn Landon, 2000. ISBN: 0140276602).

For this and other reasons, the Parish of Drouin chose St James Jindivick to host its Aboriginal Sunday service, followed by a picnic in the church garden in the shade of its mature trees.

'Aboriginal Sunday is celebrated the Sunday before January 26, as an opportunity for individual congregations and faith communities to reclaim William Cooper's Aboriginal Sunday, a call to the Australian Church to stand in solidarity and pray for justice and the flourishing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,' reads the Common Grace website. William Cooper (1860-1941) was a proud Yorta Yorta man, Aboriginal activist and human rights defender who, in 1938 and 27 years before Aboriginal people were even considered Australian citizens under the constitution, petitioned on behalf of 'Aboriginal inhabitants of Australia' the persecution of Jews by the Nazi Party of Germany. (Source: <https://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/people/indigenous/display/113160-william-cooper>)

St James is a tiny bush church that usually hosts a congregation of about ten people. On 19th January this year, dozens of people drove through the paddock gate to grab a park under a shady tree, and were welcomed into the beautifully kept timber church, replete with an enormous huntsman spider sitting far beyond anyone's reach at the highest point of the wall above the altar. Fortunately for us, the spider's worship was very inconspicuous – we were all glad it did not want to dance or drop!



The Rev'd John Webster at St James Jindivick with picnickers from the Parish of Drouin in the background.

Using the resources of Common Grace, Fr John Webster had designed a rich service with prayers, music and sermon that invited us to honour Aboriginal culture and see its value and significance within modern Australian culture. We were reminded of our Parish's relationship with and ministry to our local Aboriginal community and how we and our priests provide care and comfort during Sorry business when the Anglican church is their gathering place.

Fr John brought our attention to the artwork of Safina Stewart that depicts wavy songlines radiating from a heart at the centre of the Australian continent to the coastline and Tasmania. It is an uncomplicated image in black and white; an icon. It is easy to bring it to mind and recall its message of 'a way that is opening up to finding home and hope for healing, and flourishing connections as we journey together.' (Common Grace website).

Time in Jindivick feels gentle and slow. As we sat and talked together under the shady trees on a perfect-weather day, I thought of the people who have lived in, travelled through, and respected this Country for thousands and thousands of years. I imagined people walking along the way that we now call Jackson's Track, camping alongside the river. I wondered

about the countless fears and horrors that have been endured by Aboriginal people, and the loss of kin and cultural connections and practices in such a relatively short span of time.

And I wondered about myself – what are my opportunities to learn more and do more? For me, it might be time to begin thinking about Reconciliation Week 2025 activities (Theme 'Bridging Now to Next' 27th May – 3rd June) or to spend some time with the Yoorook Justice Commission Shared Truths website.

For the Parish of Drouin, participating in Aboriginal Sunday is one more way that we open our hearts to truth-telling and truth-hearing, so we are better able to contest injustice when we encounter it. William Cooper did when he heard of the plight of Jewish people in Germany. I'm pretty sure that's the kind of love for one another that Jesus wants us to know.

https://www.commongrace.org.au/aboriginal-sunday_2025.



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New chaplain for Gippsland Grammar

Gippsland Grammar Chaplain Tim Morrison meeting School Captain Logan Mills on the students' first day of 2025

Bishop of Gippsland the Right Rev'd Dr Richard Treloar has warmly welcomed Tim Morrison as Gippsland Grammar's new Chaplain.

Speaking to staff at the school's opening chapel service, Bishop Richard said Tim was more than qualified with more than 23 years of diverse experience in education.

Tim is a highly experienced educator, who comes to us from the Catholic system – most recently at Warragul, and having also served three years at Catholic College Sale. He knows our context and our shared calling as servant leaders. He brings passion and expertise to the pastoral care and wellbeing spaces, among others.

The chapel service brought together staff from all three campuses prior to students returning to the classroom. In Tim's opening reflection he spoke about the valuable time he and his wife Emma, and their sons, had recently enjoyed with his aging mother Bev.

Spending time outdoors and engaging in simple family moments reminded me of the importance of balance and the power of reconnecting with those we love.

Tim also shared a simple yet pro-found question that he encountered during a family movie, *Patch Adams*: 'What's your name?' While this question may seem small at first, Tim emphasised that he thought it held deep significance. For him, it represented the core principle of recognising and honouring a person's identity. He acknowledged the importance of heart-centered learning and the role of educators and school leaders in being relational with each and every student, fostering meaningful connections beyond academics.

This moment led Tim to reflect on the biblical idea of the Good Shepherd, who knows His sheep by name (John 10:14). He explained,

In the same way, as educators, it is our responsibility to know our students by name – not only as individuals with academic potential but as members of our community, each with their unique story.

At Gippsland Grammar Tim's vision is to support the spiritual and emotional growth of students, helping them develop into compassionate, faith-filled individuals.

He has worked in schools throughout Australia and internationally, including locations in Armidale, NSW, Kent (England), Bathurst, NSW, Toowoomba, Qld, Warragul and Sale.

Prior to embarking on his teaching career, Tim spent 14 years in the agricultural sector, marketing beef genetics both domestically and internationally, and working as an area manager for an International Animal Health Pharmaceutical Company based in Armidale, NSW.

Acting Principal Bo Power said he was thrilled Tim had joined the team at Gippsland Grammar.

Nurturing young students in primary school up to our emerging adults in the senior school is a significant pastoral role. We have no doubt that Tim will embrace the challenge and bring his depth of experience and personal strengths to the role to add something unique to the lives of our students. Our students need quality people and quality educators, and it is clear that Tim is both. We are looking forward to him impacting the educational experience of our students.



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Always consult a solicitor when preparing or amending your will.

St James Traralgon – Candlemas service

■ Gradwell Fredericks

At the Candlemas service at St James, Traralgon, Fr Gradwell reminded the children that this feast happens 40 days after Christmas. He told them that when he was their age, they would take candles to church on Candlemas, and the priest would bless them. Those candles were lit in their homes at evening prayer and on special occasions, like birthdays and anniversaries.

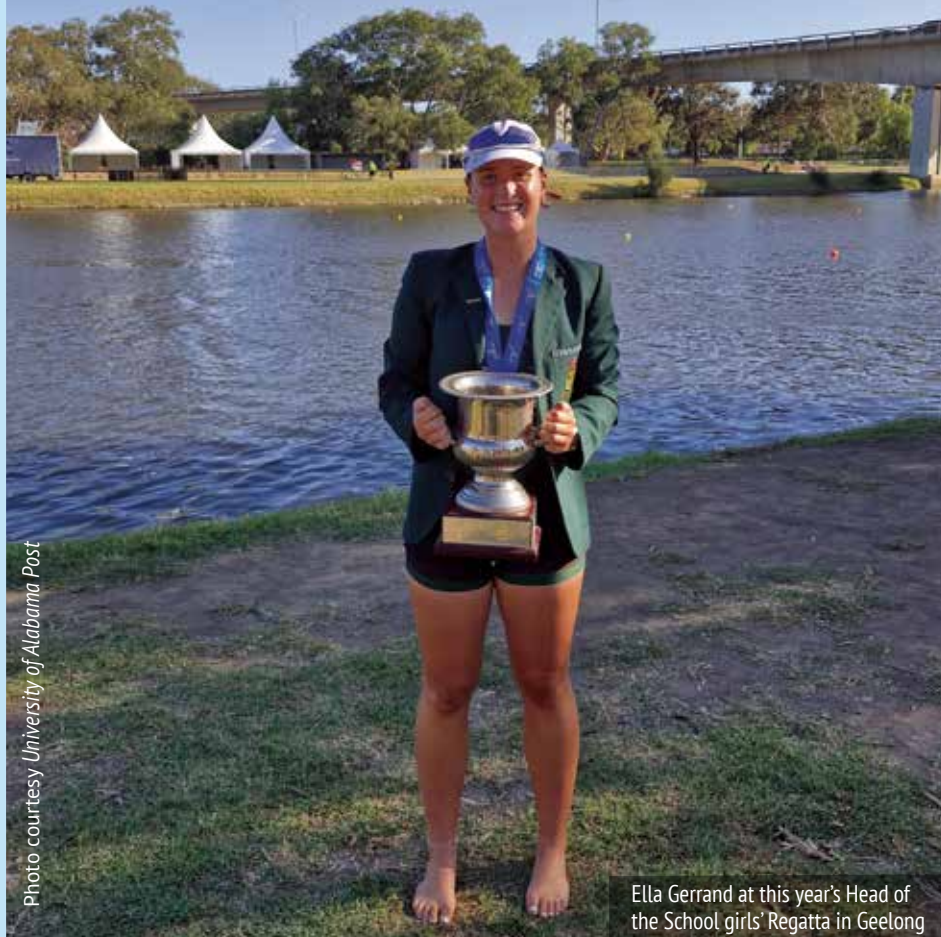
Candlemas is another opportunity for a new start, a 'spiritual rebooting', and the true value of this feast is to present us to our Lord and to one another in service, kindness, compassion, care and love.

It marked also the start of the new year for the students and teachers and prayers were offered for those starting school.



The Rev'd Gradwell Fredericks is Rector of Traralgon.

Ella Gerrand awarded prestigious scholarship to University of Alabama



Ella Gerrand at this year's Head of the School girls' Regatta in Geelong

Gippsland Grammar rower Ella Gerrand has received a prestigious rowing scholarship at the University of Alabama. Ella is a member of Gippsland Grammar's Class of 2024 and has been a passionate member of the school's rowing team since 2019 when she was in Year 7.

Since then, she has dominated the sport with her most recent achievements including winning this year's Head of Schoolgirls Regatta in Geelong in the Division 1 Quad and breaking the Australian record for rowing a marathon distance (42km) on a rowing machine, alongside fellow Gippsland Grammar student April Harrison. Ella is also a two-time Victorian State Team rower, was the Victorian Schoolgirl single scull champion last year and was Gippsland Grammar's Rowing Captain this year, while completing Year 12.

The 2025 scholarship was announced on Friday 29 November via the University of Alabama's Rowing Instagram page.

In the official announcement about the scholarship, Ms Gerrand said:

I chose to row at Alabama because of the culture that I saw on my official visit; the whole team got along, but were also competitive and pushed each other to be better. I'm so excited for where this opportunity will take me!

Congratulations Ella!

'Hand up, not handout'

L-R: Merryn Stevenson, Bishop Richard, The Rev'd Heather Toms and Dean Keren around the Warrigunya plaque unveiled on 7 February

■ Heather McDougall-Toms

Warrigunya is a Gippsland-based Aboriginal Incorporated 'Not for Profit' organization. Their mission is to build culturally connected and stronger Aboriginal communities where the men are welcomed, culturally safe and live in a nurturing place.

On Friday 7 February I had the privilege, along with Bishop Richard Treloar, Dean Keren Terpstra and approximately 120 well-wishers, of attending the grand opening of Warrigunya 'On Country House and Community Art Space'. The afternoon commenced with a smoking ceremony followed by speeches and presentations and lovely afternoon tea and traditional music.

The project has been in the planning for five years and is a testimony to the resolute, tireless, and diligent Committee led by Uncle Alan Coe of Lakes Entrance who has been the driving force since its inception. Uncle Alan was instrumental in raising considerable funding for construction and ongoing operations.

We heard of many people who had stepped forward to back the project and of one generous local landowner who offered a fifty-year lease. Merryn Stevenson (Anglican Parish of Sale), Executive Officer, has been a tireless advocate for this incredible project.

The driving force behind Warrigunya is to offer safe housing for Aboriginal men post-release from prison or from the community who are serious about turning their lives around. They provide self-determined, tailored, and supported plans to assist participants in achieving their goals.

They also offer access to culturally sensitive, holistic programs to heal, build resilience, confidence, and skills. This project offers Aboriginal men the opportunity to

reintegrate into society successfully. Uncle Alan's vision for Warrigunya is rooted in the belief that providing a 'hand up, not a handout' is essential for breaking the cycle of re-offending.

Now there are four self-contained spacious units, featuring double glazing, split system heating and cooling, kitchenette and living, bathroom and bedroom. The men can make these their own and may enjoy the many things offered to them.

As a former prison chaplain, I had the privilege of working closely with many Aboriginal men, witnessing their hesitance and concern about reintegrating back into society. Often, they would return because they were not able to find their place or where to go and what they needed to do within the community. It was a profound experience to support them through their challenges and see their determination to wanting to transform their lives but not knowing how and who to turn to for assistance.

Organisations like Warrigunya exist to provide stable housing and on-site support, culturally sensitive programs, and opportunities for training and employment which is incredibly heartening.

Having the provision of stable housing and on-site support for men to deal with issues, connect to training and employment opportunities, and make connections that support a transition back into society is a crucial step in reintegrating the men.

Warrigunya's commitment to self-determination and holistic well-being ensures that these men can reconnect with their communities, heal, and build a brighter future. The joy of knowing these men will receive the support they need to achieve their goals and thrive is truly unparalleled.

It is a testament to the power of community and the importance of offering tailored, compassionate assistance to those who need it most. In this serene and culturally significant environment, the men can find a deeper connection to their roots, engage in practices that honour their heritage, and experience the healing power of their traditions.

As Uncle Alan said '*hand up, not handout*'.

Warrigunya is here because a group of Aboriginal people had the determination to do something that they wholeheartedly believed in. They were supported by non-Aboriginal people, but they were the driving force behind the project – without their determination nothing could have been achieved. Uncle Alan Coe and Tracey Giddings stuck with the project all the way through the design, construction and operation processes.

Five years of ups and downs and sometimes wondering if they had the strength to carry on ... but they did and they brought the vision to the reality we can see here today. Elders Uncle Harry Stewart, Auntie Jessie George (Terrick), Auntie Maureen Hood and Auntie Rhonda Dinsdale were passionate advocates for the project, and most held two-year terms as directors during the period.

All Elders were involved in designing the operational model for Warrigunya. Now it is up to those who will live at our this beautiful site by making sure to pay respect to their work by making sure it succeeds in its mission of holistic healing for Aboriginal men who have been impacted by the justice system.

The Rev'd Heather McDougall-Toms,
Associate Priest St Paul's Cathedral, Sale.



Istock Rattodisabina

Visit to parishes in the Southern Region – come dance with me

■ Wendy Mawoyo

Traveling to Leongatha for the first time, I was full of anticipation. I enjoyed the picturesque drive and imagined it to be a quiet country town. Instead, I found a vibrant, welcoming community.

My mamma always told me, ‘Don’t judge too quickly’, and she was right!

One of my first encounters was with The Rev’d Belinda Seabrook from Mirboo North, hard at work in the community kitchen, preparing meals with an incredible team.

Then I met the Ven Graham Knott, whose vision for the Anglican church was simple yet powerful: to serve the community without expectation, embracing all – rich or poor, regardless of background.

Graham spoke of the growing gap between wealth and poverty in Leongatha leading to increased homelessness, single-parent households, and domestic violence. His heart was for Leongatha to be known as an accepting church – showing acts of love to the community. Instead of just preaching inclusion, live it!

Leongatha Parish has been:

- providing a weekly community lunch for over 65 people
- opening the church doors at least 10 hours a day, 365 days a year

I acknowledged their efforts in trying to find solutions for their community. The dedication of volunteers and parishioners was remarkable to witness.

Well done Leongatha!

Onward to Wonthaggi where I met The Rev’d Graeme Liersch who helps run a food pantry for anyone in need. He expressed similar concerns – homelessness, domestic violence, and substance abuse. His collaboration with the Anglicare staff in Wonthaggi exemplified true partnership, ensuring no one seeking help was turned away.

Through these visits, three key issues stood out:

- homelessness
- substance abuse
- domestic & family violence

Speaking with Keren Terpstra in Sale, I learned that over 250 people are homeless there each night.

These challenges demand action. How can we, as Anglicare, be part of the solution?

How can churches and communities collaborate more effectively?

Building stronger, more connected communities takes effort, but I am proud to be part of a team committed to making a difference. The work of Anglicare and our Parish Partnerships is proof that, together, we can create change. Together, we can.

Wendy Mawoyo is the Anglicare Community Development Support Coordinator / Parish Partnerships working on Gunaikurnai land.

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Join us in Thorpdale to remember George Cox, 'a man of many parts'

■ Dean Spalding

Come to St Mark's Thorpdale and celebrate the life of an extraordinary Stipendiary Lay-Reader from Thorpdale (also an ecumenist, missionary, naturalist, fire-fighter, and aid-coordinator for bushfire victims) who later went on to be ordained and served as a priest in many parts of Gippsland (Mirboo North, Neerim South, Yarram).

In retirement George served the Parish of Mornington in many capacities (including vestryman and churchwarden) for 25 years. A special service will be held at St Mark's Anglican Church Thorpdale at 11am on Sunday 30 March (*Remembering George Cox: A Man of Many Parts*) with a lunch afterwards at the Traveller's Rest Hotel Thorpdale at 12:30pm. On the day there will also be a collection and auction to raise funds for the three CFA brigades of the Parish of Trafalgar: Thorpdale, Trafalgar and Yarragon.

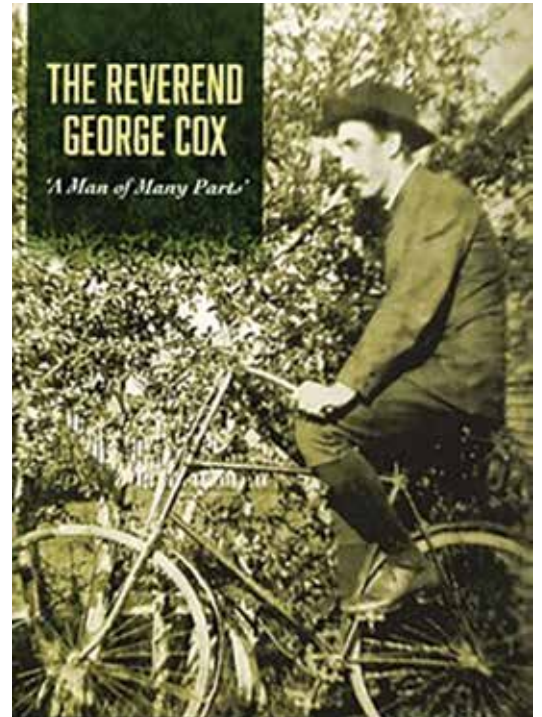
The service will be attended by officers and members of the three brigades of the parish in light of the service of George Cox to the people of Victoria in the face of the devastating Thorpdale bushfires of 1898. George was then a Stipendiary Lay-Reader at St Mark's Thorpdale, as part of his work as missionary with the Gippsland Forest Mission. George was also a naturalist and a 'lanternist' – he taught

school children about the beauty of Australia's native flora and fauna, often using the technology of the day to project photographic images onto a screen.

George also co-ordinated the provision of aid to victims of the bushfires of 1898, and was commended by the Bishop of Melbourne, Field Flowers Goe for his 'noble exertions in putting out the fires'.

I feel a huge admiration for The Rev'd George Cox for his passionate interest in the natural world and for his service to victims of bushfires, as my own childhood was 'bookended' – living through bushfires in Hobart and Macedon at the times of their most recent severe bushfires (1967 and 1983).

Before becoming a priest, I studied as a bushfire ecologist under the supervision of Professor David Hungerford Ashton of the University of Melbourne. Prof Ashton was the world's leading expert in the ecology of Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) – the world tallest flowering tree. Prof Ashton inspired me to study the regeneration of *Eucalyptus pauciflora* (Snow Gums) after the Ash Wednesday bushfires (16 February 1983) as an honours' year project. Cox's interest in the natural world and his all-too-close experience of bushfires makes him feel for me somewhat of a 'kindred spirit'.



If you would like to learn more about this extraordinary Stipendiary Lay-Reader of Thorpdale, George Cox, please come to the service on Sunday 30 March. Or you may wish to purchase the book about George Cox (published by the Mornington and District Historical Society) which is available for sale from me or on the day for \$20 (\$10 of which will go to the CFA brigades in the Parish of Trafalgar).

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

Do you have a question, comment or concern?

Let us know!

The Gippsland Anglican



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Gippsland's Chancellor awarded an OAM

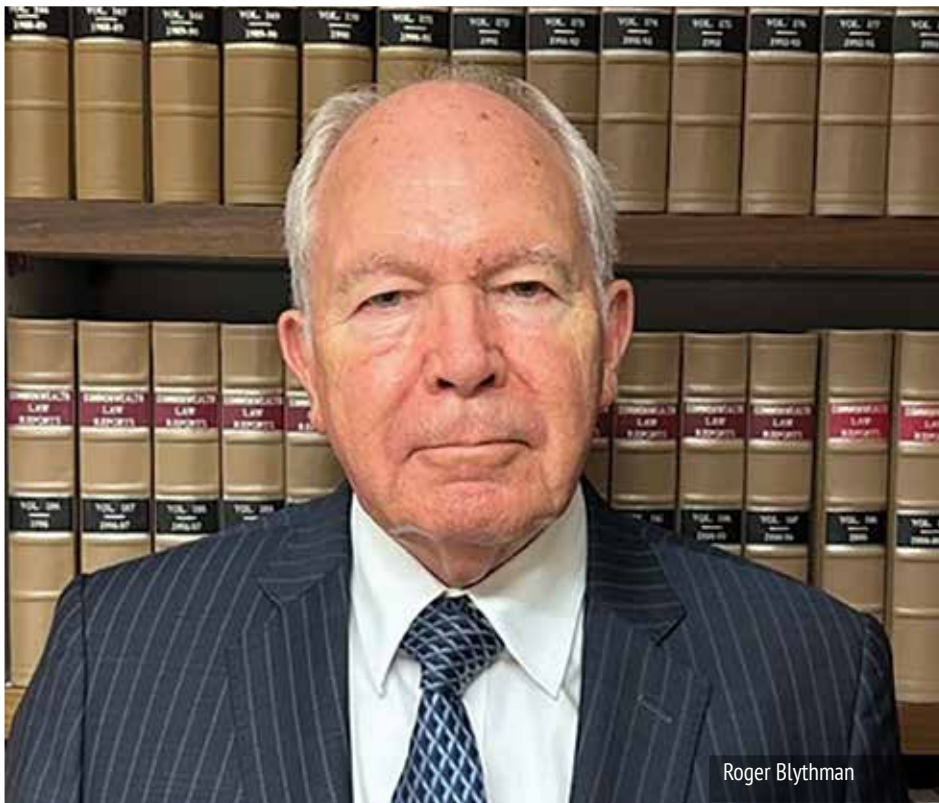
Roger Blythman, Chancellor of the Diocese of Gippsland since 2021, and Deputy Chancellor since 2019, was recently awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division for 'service to the community and to the church.'

Roger is a longstanding parishioner at Christ Church South Yarra, where he has served as an officer bearer for over 25 years, and was an inaugural Trustee of its Music Foundation of which he is currently the Chair.

Roger's philanthropy extends to the 'parish school' (Christ Church Grammar School), helping to establish its Foundation and chairing the school board. As a current Trustee of four other Trusts and Foundations – including the Vera Moore Foundation – Roger's credentials and skills in this area are in great demand.

A practising lawyer for over 50 years, Roger has been a Solicitor to the Board of Examiners of the Supreme Court of Victoria for more than 30 of those, and is a highly respected legal advisor.

Roger has a keen interest and active participation in Defence, having been an Officer in the Royal Navy Reserves (1979 – 2014) and for the last fifteen years President of the Victoria and Tasmania Division of the Royal Navy League of Australia. Roger was made a Knight of the Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem in 1989.



Roger Blythman

Having known Roger and Alison, and their two sons, for almost 20 years, and worked closely with Roger in a number of governance and philanthropic capacities throughout that period, I can attest to his personal and professional generosity, humility, and dedication to the Anglican

Church and wider community. This OAM is fitting recognition of a life of faithful and fruitful service; congratulations Roger!

Bishop Richard was Vicar of Christ Church South Yarra and President of Christ Church Grammar School from 2007 to 2018.

ACTinG
 (Acting on Climate Together in Gippsland) invites you to
Come and pray for creation
 Last Tuesday of the month
 9.30am – 10am via Zoom:
<https://tinyurl.com/n844zdys>
 Passcode: 066320
 Info: acting@gippslandanglicans.org.au
 Join us!

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

Anglican Church of Australia statement on antisemitism

In recent times, we have seen with growing concern an increase in antisemitism in Australia through hateful words and disrespectful, threatening, and violent actions directed against Jewish communities.

Such behaviour is abhorrent and completely unacceptable.

We Anglican bishops condemn these words and actions and stand with Jewish Australians against hostility and violence.

- The Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith
Archbishop of Adelaide & Primate
of the Anglican Church of Australia
- The Most Reverend Philip Freier
Archbishop of Melbourne
- The Most Reverend Kay Goldsworthy, AO
Archbishop of Perth
- The Most Reverend Jeremy Greaves, KCSJ
Archbishop of Brisbane
- The Most Reverend Kanishka Raffel
Archbishop of Sydney
- The Right Reverend Dr Gregory Anderson
Bishop of Northern Territory
- The Right Reverend Clarence Bester
Bishop of Wangaratta
- The Right Reverend Dr Richard Condie
Bishop of Tasmania
- The Right Reverend Peter Grice
Bishop of Rockhampton
- The Right Reverend Dr Murray Harvey
Bishop of Grafton
- The Right Reverend Jeremy James
Bishop of Willochra
- The Right Reverend Dr Keith Joseph
Bishop of North Queensland
- The Right Reverend Chris McLeod
National Aboriginal Bishop
- The Right Reverend Darrell Parker
Bishop of North West Australia
- The Right Reverend Dr Mark Short
Bishop of Canberra & Goulburn
- The Right Reverend Dr Peter Stuart
Bishop of Newcastle
- The Right Reverend Dr Richard Treloar
Bishop of Gippsland

No individual or group in Australia should be subjected to intimidation, hatred or violence.

Australia is a proudly multicultural and multifaith community. Antisemitism, even when the expression of a small minority, injures us all and must be rejected by all.

We call on all Australians to stand against the vilification which we have seen recently and work to enhance the peace, justice and harmony that Jewish Australians, like all Australians, are entitled to expect.



■ Dr Iain Nicolson

The Dean and Chapter, and Greater Chapter represented by Ms Marion Dewar, farewelled Dr Ann Miller on Sunday 16 February at the 8am and 10am services at St Paul's Cathedral in Sale. A wonderful crowd of well-wishers attended morning tea after the 10am service.

Dr Miller leaves us after 47 years association with the Cathedral and Parish. She and her late husband Iain (a brilliant surgeon) migrated from the United Kingdom, landing on 1 January 1977. St Paul's Cathedral became their spiritual home. Ann served the Cathedral in so many ways,

including as a member of Chapter, Lay Canon, caterer extraordinaire and the Safety Officer making sure we were all up to date. She was a Liturgical Assistant at St Paul's and read the lessons regularly, even occasionally jumping in if you were a bit slow out of your pew!

Ann has downsized and moved to Canberra to be near one of her sons. We shall all miss Ann's wise words and calming

influence, though she will continue as a member of ACTinG. She takes with her a vast amount of corporate knowledge. Not much happened in the Cathedral that Ann did not know about.

Ann was given a gift token for a Nursery near to where she will live.

Vale Michael Leunig

■ Ken Parker

Michael Leunig died just before Christmas, a month or two after his last cartoon appeared in *The Age* and after a life-time of ministry to the Australian community and to that newspaper. As we enter into the season of Lent Leunig offers us some significant symbols for the season and a life-giving spiritual practice.

Leunig gives us the tea-pot, a rare and endangered species, which for him is symbol of community and shared life. Often in his cartoons the tea-pot is to be seen at the heart of a simple procession. When I see this, I am reminded of processions of the Blessed Sacrament in the gardens adjacent to St Peter's Church Eastern Hill at the Feast of Corpus Christi. As with the blessed sacrament, so Leunig's tea-pot speaks of the Holy Presence.

And then there is the wheel-barrow. In conversation with Roland Ashby a few years ago Leunig says of the wheel-barrow, 'It is an entirely good and lovely object'. He talks of the beautiful meditation of wheeling the barrow,

of raking the rake and says,

Perhaps a wheel-barrow might be a better thing for a school than a computer... we need to give our kids their hands back, not to push buttons, but to bend, manipulate, hold, craft and touch. Bring their senses back and you bring God back.

So it is that I offer you the tea-pot this Lent and the wheel-barrow. Leunig would suggest a vase as well – 'Consider putting flowers in a vase. Some people have forgotten that you get a vase and put flowers in it. It can be more than a decoration – it might be an icon reminding us that nature is beautiful and alive and we can touch it'.

A dear friend of mine, who lived in Rye, did his Master's thesis on Michael Leunig and had many conversations with him. Bob Spencer writes about Michael Leunig's deep sense of vocation and how he had that sense since he was young. He felt that he had something to contribute to the well-being of Australian society and must do his bit.

I suspect that his sense of vocation was in part fostered by his parish priest at All Saints' Footscray, Father Alan Laity.

Alan would sometimes tell me of his admiration and affection for Michael and his ministry.

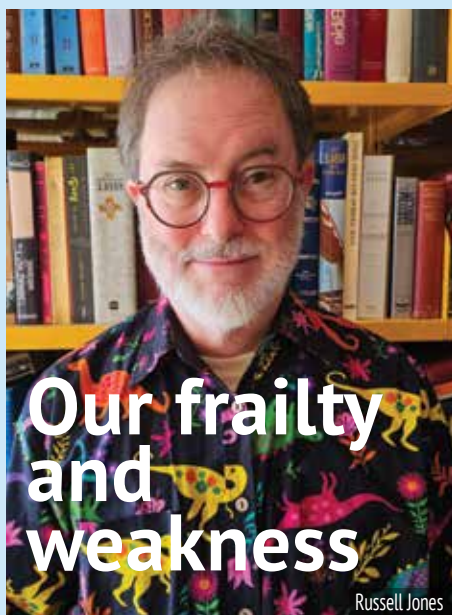
I share that admiration and give thanks for Michael Leunig's life. Some people have asked whether Leunig always practised what he preached. I suspect that Michael failed at times and I confess that I also fail that exam sometimes. For all that, I honour Leunig's special way of seeing, his sense of vocation and his courage at choosing to be the voice of the Spirit in his work.

Make time to make tea in a pot this Lent. Wheel a barrow. Put flowers in a vase.

Peace be with you.

The Rev'd Ken Parker is Associate Priest at Bunyip.

Bishop Richard's Christmas reflection featuring Michael Leunig's work can be viewed at <https://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/news/articles/bishop-richard-s-christmas-message-2024>.



■ Russell Jones

There are moments in Sunday worship when even a very familiar word or phrase from a Bible reading or a prayer really catches my attention, as I'm sure happens to others. At times just distracting, this can

bring a flash of joy or surprising insight. Or confusion.

In a recent Sunday service I felt disturbed by the words 'frailty and weakness' in the call to confession. I wasn't sure why. The worship continued into the prayer of confession, and straight into the absolution, reminding us of the hope-filled promise of forgiveness when we turn back to God. But I confess my mind wandered again during the offering.

It was when the congregation moved forward to receive the sacrament that something clicked. Many of our congregation went forward slowly, not only in reverence, but, like myself, leaning on walking sticks or walking frames or the side of the pews. Certainly, these are the marks of physical 'frailty and weakness', though not what we usually think leads to temptation or sin. For most of us these are the simple signs of aging – as someone witty (or wise) has pointed out, we are all at best 'temporarily able'.

Which reminded me of an old story about a missionary that has stuck with me. I picture this happening more than a thousand years ago with one of my

Christian Irish ancestors making the arduous journey to convert one of my 'heathen' Scottish ancestors.

After a long discussion, the Scot asks, 'So you're telling me that a Christian shouldn't rob or kill their enemies or seduce their neighbour's wives?'

'Yes' answers the missionary.

With a shrug of his shoulders, the Scot answers 'Well, I'm too old to do any of those things now, so I guess that makes me a Christian.'

A few years ago I heard an interview with Kate Bowler, who has a podcast 'Everything Happens' (her best seller book is *Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I Have Loved*). Kate's story starts with a happy successful life as a scholar, a professor at Duke Divinity School, a wife and mother, living her dream.

Then the shock at 35 when she was diagnosed with terminal cancer. She admits she hadn't thought very deeply about her own mortality or faith until then. In the interview I heard, she said one of her early thoughts was something like 'but I've never done anything really bad, especially none of the fun stuff'.

Modern Genre Theory:

An Introduction for Biblical Studies

Andrew Judd

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Zondervan Academic, 2024

Richard Prideaux

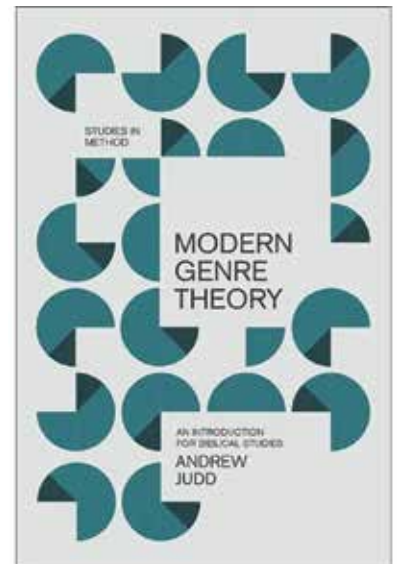
Dr Andrew Judd is the Vice Principal of Ridley College Melbourne and his study of Modern Genre Theory in Biblical Studies is a thorough and demanding read, especially in Chapters 1-4 where he very carefully defines and describes Biblical genres. Judd describes genres as

relatively stable conventions that writers and readers use to make meaning in certain contexts but not others.

This section of his book (pages 3–80) deals with two major approaches to genre, focusing on rhetorical genre studies and systemic functional linguistics. I have to say that these opening chapters are a demanding read and require very careful analysis and re-reading, although there is a helpful and detailed glossary of terms.

Nevertheless, part 2 of Judd's book, chapters 5–12 and the Epilogue, makes a very readable and indeed exciting analysis of major sections of the Bible based around the various genres that comprise them. Judd deals in detail with chapters on Genesis, Judges, the Psalms, types of truth in the Bible, the Apocalypse, Wisdom Literature, the Gospels, Letters in the Bible, and some final conclusions about genre in the Bible.

Judd's presentation includes a detailed glossary of genre terms, as well as detailed indices for Scripture texts, as well as a Subject index and Author index. It can come as no surprise to Bible readers that sections of Holy Scripture vary enormously. The lengthy narratives of Genesis, the horror stories of the Judges, the complexity of Old Testament poetry, the demanding nature of the Apocalypse, the deeply thoughtful Wisdom material and the four very different Gospels all demand careful reading and study.



Bible readers who would value significant insights into the key elements of these six Biblical sections will find substantial assistance and insight working through these very different parts of the Bible. Andrew Judd's careful analysis would make an excellent series of study for an advanced weekly Bible study group. I warmly commend this book for those who like to go deeper in Biblical studies.

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

(I will leave to your imagination – or memories – what that stuff might be.) Her academic learning told her that life is never as simple as 'the good always prosper and terrible things only happen to bad people', but emotionally she still had the sense that it was all very unfair, that she didn't deserve this. It was also a shock to realise that she couldn't actually control her own life. That's a hard one to accept.

That was in 2015. Much to her doctor's surprise, and her own, Kate has survived. She is still teaching at Duke Divinity School and as well as her podcast interviewing people with their own challenging experiences, she has written several award-winning books and watched her son Zach grow up. As a Christian, she says her work 'explores the ways that Christianity has both failed and saved her.' She knows she's deeply blessed, that her life could have been very different, but also everything that happens can add to the richness we experience, so we can still respond to God with gratitude. I hope my companions in hobbling up to the altar in worship can find the same – I know I'm still struggling.

The Rev'd Russell Jones is a retired Uniting Church Minister who now worships at St Mary's Anglican Church, Morwell, as he is able.

EVENTS

For events at The Abbey, see page 9

MARCH

30

Remembering George Cox

11am Service at St Mark's Anglican Church Thorpdale.

12:30pm lunch at The Traveller's Rest Hotel Thorpdale, including fundraising auction to support three local CFA brigades.

For further information or to book for the lunch call Dean Spalding 0421 216 825 (see page 15).

MAY

Gippsland Camino – a Hope25 event

1

Opening service and blessing of Pilgrims at Traralgon Uniting Church on 1 May.

2-4

Gippsland Camino Walk and closing service at St Paul's, Sale (see page 6).

27 May – 3 June

National Reconciliation Week

For more information:

<https://tinyurl.com/36tsx4uz>.

BLESSING THE DUST

All those days
you felt like dust,
like dirt,
as if all you had to do
was turn your face
toward the wind
and be scattered
to the four corners

or swept away
by the smallest breath
as insubstantial —

did you not know
what the Holy One
can do with dust?

This is the day
we freely say
we are scorched.

This is the hour
we are marked
by what has made it
through the burning.

This is the moment
we ask for the blessing
that lives within
the ancient ashes,
that makes its home
inside the soil of
this sacred earth.

So let us be marked
not for sorrow.
And let us be marked
not for shame.
Let us be marked
not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less
than we are

but for claiming
what God can do
within the dust,
within the dirt,
within the stuff
of which the world
is made
and the stars that blaze
in our bones
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.



"Blessing the Dust" © Jan Richardson from
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