

# The Gippsland Anglican

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## A BUSH CHRISTMAS

Lynton Allan

I always admire artists who capture the true essence of the Australian outback, those who portray it in an honest and raw fashion. Frederick McCubbin is one such artist. This painting is my nod to his famous painting *On the Wallaby Track*, also a phrase that was used to describe roaming of the edges of bush properties by itinerant workers seeking work when times were tough.

The young mother, depicted here as Mary, is vulnerable and alone as she faces the harshness of life

without family to help and the security and comforts of a home to live in. As she gave birth to the Christ child, she was also giving birth to the wonder and mystery of God with us in the earthliness of life. God is not distant and immune from suffering and pain but comes to us when we least expect it.

Even though we live in a different age, this year of a global pandemic has been

a difficult reminder of the fragility of those things we have considered essential to happiness and security. Christmas, however, provides the hope that God is with us and for us, in whatever we are facing, and that we are not alone.

The first Christmas had a choir of angels, shepherds and wise sages coming to the baby to sing praise and bring gifts. In this painting

I have imagined in a fun way the Australian bush creatures doing likewise. They look on with their young at the mystery of Emmanuel, God with us.

Christmas for me is linked to Easter – these two events are bookends to the great good news story of God’s love for us. This amazing love is a gift for all, but it came at a great cost. In the background I have painted an

unusual gum tree that stands in central Queensland near an Aboriginal community. They call it the Jesus tree because of the unique shape of the broken limbs and central burl. Jesus came as a baby but grew to become the one who gave his life on the cross to provide healing, forgiveness and peace between us and our Maker. Have a great Christmas.

*Lynton Allan is an artist and storyteller (www.lyntonallan.com, YouTube: Lynton Allan).*



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# “As it was in the beginning...”

We don't tend to use the old Book of Common Prayer conclusion to a section of psalmody or a canticle as much these days: “As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.” A pity, perhaps, as this refrain was a constant reminder in our worship of the principle of continuity in the Scriptures and in the Tradition.

That ‘golden thread’ of continuity is beautifully woven through Stephen Cottrell's Advent book *Walking Backwards to Christmas*. The Bishop of Chelmsford's title references the Christmas song made popular by the BBC radio comedy *The Goon Show*. As a child I recall every radio in the house being tuned to the ABC on a Saturday morning so that we could listen to The Goons as we went about our various activities, and the song rings a bell.

Bishop Cottrell adapts a venerable Jewish interpretive technique known as ‘midrash’, whereby a biblical narrative is respectfully embellished or amplified, filling ‘gaps’ in the story in a way that is utterly consistent with the Scriptures and draws on a depth of scholarship that Cottrell shares with the rabbis before him. If you saw the little

series ‘Through the Eyes of Mary Magdalene’ that I offered online in Holy Week, you'll have a sense of how this method seeks to open up new ways of engaging with familiar texts.

In just over a hundred pages of disciplined and elegant prose, the ‘Christmas story’ is retold to us ‘through the eyes’ of eleven characters who are either directly identifiable from the pages of Old and New Testaments, or recognisable from the spaces between the lines.

The genius of Cottrell's fresh approach to this story is to ‘begin’ at the ‘end’.

We start with the prophetess Anna's account of that moment of revelation and insight when the Christ child is first brought to the Temple. A desolate mother voices the weeping of Rachel for her children in the aftermath of Herod's slaughter of the Holy Innocents. Herod himself tries to rationalise his actions in what has chilling resonance with the real politik of our own time. One of the Magi recounts the adventure of his star-struck journey to Bethlehem. A shepherd is dragged from the bawdiness and drudgery of the night shift by a celestial epiphany. The innkeeper-turned-midwife offers a gritty yet tender reminiscence of how a young



Bishop Richard Treloar

mother was delivered of her first child. Joseph shares his inner wrestling with the circumstances of his beloved and the cost of his integrity. Elizabeth laments her barrenness and the miracle of its reversal bringing fire into her belly. Mary bursts with life from within and without her, rejoicing in Eden restored and in the steady beneficent presence of God in the world. The prophet Isaiah looks for the shoot that will rise from the stump of Jesse, foreshadowing the peaceable, borderless kingdom this One will usher in. And we end where – in a sense – it all began, with the call of ‘I am’ to Moses to liberate God's people from the midst of that fire which enlightens but does not consume.

Not only are we drawn irresistibly and ever more deeply into this familiar story by Cottrell's narration, but also we are invited to see it as our own story: in the joy, the conversion of heart, the

grief, the fear, the wonder, the promise, the mystery and the ordinariness of it all.

In the process, Cottrell invites us to read the story of our own lives from end to beginning: from our sense of who we are in God's vision and purpose for us to our ceaseless becoming of that new creation from womb to tomb, and beyond.

This is the trajectory of our baptism. What we become in baptism – heirs of God's kingdom with Christ – is something we must grow into day by day, in the fellowship of the Church, at the table of the Eucharist, and under the canopy of the Scriptures.

That is to say, our life's journey and goal is to become more fully what we already are in God's eyes, with Jesus as the pioneer and perfecter of that work of Holy Spirit in us.

I warmly recommend *Walking Backwards to Christmas* – both the book and the exercise! Because of where it starts, the book remains ‘seasonal’ until the Feast of the Presentation on 2 February. More importantly perhaps, the journey to which it calls us is perennial, for “as it is in the end, so now and ever was in the beginning: world without end. Amen.”

+RM

## Prayer Diary: beyond the parishes

“That we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith...” (ROMANS 1:12)

### ANGLICAN MOTHERS' UNION

Anglican Mothers' Union Australia is part of the worldwide Mothers' Union showing Christian care for families, with eight branches in Gippsland. Praise God for the many ways that Mothers' Union members have been able to keep in touch during COVID and shutdown. Groups are beginning to meet again in various

ways. Please pray for the ongoing safety of members. May they continue to serve the Lord supporting marriage and family life. Pray for their planning for 2021 that ideas will flow and that we will see an increase in membership.

### ANGLICARE VICTORIA

Please pray for the work of Anglicare Victoria in Gippsland as we respond

to the needs of families, children and young people, particularly during the pandemic and its aftermath. Thank God for the different ways in which we have been able to respond to the needs of the community during the lockdown.

Pray for those rebuilding their lives after leaving violent or abusive relationships. Pray for those who work to support them as they heal and make decisions about their future.

Pray also for those seeking to change their abusive or controlling behaviour.

Thank God for the commitment of volunteers in the Get Out for Good program working with those being released from prison. Pray for those still in prison with reduced access to visits from family and friends.

Please pray also for those involved in Foster and Kinship Care and for more volunteers to care for vulnerable children. Pray for families who are in conflict and struggling to make ends meet, particularly at Christmas.



# Natural disaster Royal Commission report released

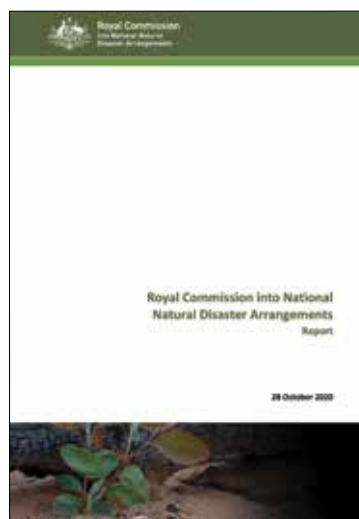
Rev'd Cathy Turnbull

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements was convened in light of the 2019/20 summer bushfires across Australia. The report of the Royal Commission is a huge volume of work of nearly 600 pages and a supplementary appendix. It comprehensively covers the majority of aspects of natural disaster recovery in Australia, focusing mostly on the impact of and recovery from significant bushfire events. It draws upon 1772 submissions from those directly impacted or working with those impacted by the fires across Australia last spring/summer and 301 witness appearances. Over 78,270 pages were tendered in evidence. As such, it has been acknowledged to be a public record

of national significance.

Although the Royal Commission report's main focus is on the national response to natural disasters, it is of such a scope that it drew deeply on local input of collective individual and community experiences in recovery, as well as expert and scientific knowledge. It makes 80 recommendations, from national coordination arrangements to emergency planning onto delivery of recovery services and financial assistance. The recommendations need to be read alongside the chapter notes to understand what evidence led to each recommendation.

There is a strong emphasis throughout on enhancing resilience through the recovery process and beyond – both in the way governments respond to natural disasters and in



community and/or individual ability to adapt, transform and recover from the effects of a disaster in a timely and efficient manner. This has been done in recognition that natural disasters on the scale of those last summer are becoming more likely due to the shifts in weather patterns across Australia.

The report recognises,

however, that disaster impacts can be extensive, complex and long term. At times there may be several disasters that communities and individuals are dealing with – either concurrently, such as we have seen this year with COVID-19 affecting fire recovery programs, or in succession, such as drought, fire then flood.

The report briefly looks at Indigenous land and fire management. It recognises the work done by GLaWAC (Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation) and encourages collaboration between Traditional Owners and government agencies in generating an adaptive fire management practice.

Coordinating relief and recovery is extensively covered, mostly focusing on the role of the Australian Government in supporting state governments. However, there is an emphasis that, in the long term, a locally led response is desired,

and consultation with local communities throughout the recovery process is vital in establishing localised resilience for future events.

Recognition is given for the need to educate the general public on how they respond with offers of material aid, which often overwhelms communities with more than they could possibly need and adversely impacts local businesses. Websites such as GIVIT were praised for the work they do coordinating the donation and receipt of goods where and when they are needed.

There is so much more that is covered in this report and it will be a great resource for the Diocese in preparing for our own responses in the future to natural disasters. The report is a very accessible document, despite its size, and is freely available at [www.royalcommission.gov.au](http://www.royalcommission.gov.au).

*The Rev'd Cathy Turnbull is Diocese of Gippsland Bushfire Response and Recovery Coordinator.*

**Victoria, you know fire.**

Victoria was hit hard in the 2019-20 fire season. The 2020-21 season is coming and you know as well as anyone how important it is to plan and prepare. Ensure your home is fire ready, ensure your family knows your plan, and be ready to leave early.

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Graeme Liersch and his wife, Susan

# New Rector for Wonthaggi and Inverloch

The Rev'd Graeme Liersch has been appointed as Rector of Wonthaggi and Inverloch. Graeme has a breadth of personal and professional experience, having served in the RAAF as an electronics technician, and as a philanthropic welfare office with the Department of Defence.

In early 2016, the Bush Church Aid Society supported Graeme's appointment as mission facilitator and trainer for central west Queensland (Diocese of Rockhampton), overseeing ministry in three parishes covering a vast area, while continuing as a reserve air force chaplain and as a director of two companies

that provide philanthropic support to the defence forces. Graeme is married to the Rev'd Susan Liersch, an occupational therapist, trained counsellor and adolescent and mental health worker. Susan is a Deacon and has just completed a Bachelor of Theology degree. After five years working in the remote outback of central west Queensland, Susan and Graeme are very much looking forward to the cooler climate of South Gippsland, and to what God has in store for them ministering in Wonthaggi, Inverloch and the greater parish. They believe this calling is an act of God because they weren't considering moving that far south. Another aspect of excitement is the opportunity to work in a team with a gifted group of clergy and laity. They are praying that God will get the best out of all in the parish and that the Gospel of Christ will spread with positive outcomes that include the laity sharing with others what Jesus Christ means to them.

# Poowong Community Garden launched

Marty Shaw

On Sunday 1 November, at our Poowong church, All Saints, we celebrated the launch of the Poowong Community Garden with the turning of the first sod. All Saints sits on a large block of land, with the church at the front and a large vacant lot behind, perfect for the establishment of a community garden, where time, friendship and freshly grown fruit and vegetables can all be shared. The Rev'd Dr Fran Grimes took the idea to the Parish Council, which offered its support, and we were on our way. With a strong working committee, the project has progressed well. Donations have been received: railway sleepers, garden bed sleepers, plants, a tank and many other items. A grant application is currently pending with the

South Gippsland Shire Council and two grants have been successfully sought through Anglicare Parish Partnerships, so things are progressing well. With COVID-19 restrictions, celebrations had to be managed. Restricted numbers, no sharing of food, social distancing and mask wearing were all in play, but still the turnout was impressive. People were keen to share in the launch, no doubt thinking about what the garden will provide long term for the Poowong community. A plant swap was set up where hints and ideas were freely discussed, the proposed garden design was displayed in the new community noticeboard and entertainment was provided by local musicians Phil Beggs and Paul Robinson. The day was enjoyed by all. Danny O'Brien, VLA Member for Gippsland South

and self-confessed gardening nerd, was invited to officially launch the project and turn the first sod with a special gold shovel provided for the task. After a warm welcoming speech by Rev'd Fran, the duly dug sod was transferred to a magnolia already growing in the garden. Danny offered his support to this community project and others like it. Community gardens are a wonderful way of bringing people together. They provide the opportunity for the community to work together, but also to relax, enjoying the fellowship and friendship of neighbours and friends. The site is superbly located in Poowong. It backs onto the recreation reserve and is next door to the Poowong Sports Stadium. People are coming and going all the time. It will be a great place for all to catch up and to watch the kids play.



Turning the first sod at Poowong Community Garden

# Religious press awards for TGA and TMA

Sally Woollett

The Gippsland Anglican has received a Highly Commended in the Best Feature Single Author category, for previous editor Jan Down's story 'Lake Tyers' history and Aboriginal Ministry today' (TGA September 2019) in the 2020 Australasian Religious Press Association (ARPA) Awards. The judges commented: *The successful pieces in this category give their protagonists a voice. This is achieved by providing the necessary context and showing how actions complement words. To take a back seat and allow our subjects to speak requires discipline, humility and confidence in our stories. Writers who do this should be*

*celebrated and emulated.* The Melbourne Anglican took out four bronzes this year: for Best Cover Newspaper (December 2019), Best Feature Multiple Author (Summer Reading Special), Best Theological Article (Rev'd Canon Prof. Dorothy Lee, 'NT's women show us God's inclusive plan', September 2019) and Best Editorial Opinion Piece (Rev'd Dr Mark Durie, 'The Pentecostals are coming. Are we ready?', May 2019). The annual ARPA conference, at which the ARPA awards are usually presented, was cancelled this year due to the COVID pandemic, so the awards were announced online. Other award winners can be viewed at [www.arpa.news/awards2020](http://www.arpa.news/awards2020).

# Anglican Family Violence Project opens survey

People who have experienced violence from an intimate partner (also known as domestic violence) and also have a current or previous link with the Anglican Church are being invited to contribute to a research project to help improve the Church's policy and practices. "Our Church is committed to supporting safe, loving homes and safe churches. However, we recognise that domestic and family violence is a serious and widespread problem, with enormous individual and community impacts and social costs – and that the Church is not immune. Our Church seeks to improve how we to respond to these difficult issues" said Rev'd Tracy Lauersen, Convenor of the Family Violence Working Group, Anglican Church of Australia.

The invitation to take part in this research is open to current attenders of Anglican

churches as well as those who no longer attend. An anonymous online survey contains questions about demographics (such as age and gender), personal experiences of intimate partner violence and the ways in which the Anglican Church featured in each person's story. A small number of people will also be selected for in-depth, face-to-face interviews. The Anglican Family Violence Working Group has engaged NCLS Research to undertake the research which is titled the National Anglican Family Violence Project. Three studies make up the project. To participate in the survey, visit [www.surveys.ncls.org.au/NAFVP/experience](http://www.surveys.ncls.org.au/NAFVP/experience). More information can be found at: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/family-violence>, <http://ncls.org.au/research/NAFVP>.

Courtesy Anglican Church of Australia



# Breaking the prison cycle with supported housing

**Merryn Stevenson and Cathrine Muston**

Life goes in cycles and mostly that is a good thing. However, the cycle of imprisonment and release that many Aboriginal men face is one that needs to be broken. It is hoped that Warrigunya, a supported housing project for Aboriginal men in Gippsland, will be instrumental in breaking this cycle.

Warrigunya, which means Warrior's Home, is the project of a group of predominantly Aboriginal people in Gippsland to collaboratively address the high levels of Aboriginal incarceration



Uncle Alan Coe, the Aboriginal elder leading Warrigunya, and Warrigunya supporter Derek Amos discussing auspicing possibilities

and recidivism for men on family violence orders and men exiting prison. It aims to provide a place where they are connected to culture, country, education and work

as well as pro-social support.

The provision of safe, affordable housing for Aboriginal men who are serious about turning their lives around is essential. It is

hard to turn your life around on a mate's couch or on the streets. Warrigunya will provide individually tailored and culturally sensitive programs to build resilience, confidence and skills, as well as housing.

Several employers in the area have undertaken to provide work, and Chris McEvoy of Radial Timber has donated 25 acres of land at a peppercorn lease for 50 years on which to build the accommodation. Derek Amos, director and senior advocate for Barrier Breakers Inc, has kindly offered the use of meeting rooms and to

provide auspices for grant applications for Warrigunya until incorporation. Such local support has been significant in assessing the feasibility of the project, and the next step is to spread the word more widely in the community to build support for Warrigunya Inc.

To learn more about the project, contact Merryn Stevenson (0492 984 212, [nenya@westnet.com.au](mailto:nenya@westnet.com.au)) or Alan Coe (0458 217 057, [alcobapo@yahoo.com](mailto:alcobapo@yahoo.com)). Alternatively, check out the Facebook page – just search for 'Warrigunya'.

## Financial wellness supported in Gippsland

**Cathrine Muston**

Anglicare Victoria has now recruited six Financial Wellness workers to assist people in Gippsland.

Employed under the Working for Victoria program, the workers have come from a variety of backgrounds and undertaken accredited training to provide support for people who may have difficulty managing household finances.

Financial Wellness workers are equipped to provide budgeting support, advocacy around utility providers and information on financial rights.



They can also provide referrals to financial counsellors and further community supports. To speak to a Financial Wellness worker, call 1800 966 172.

## Resurrection: a sprig of green

**Rev'd Ken Parker**

It was a little while after the Ash Wednesday bushfires, which wiped out so much of Mount Macedon and two of our parish churches in 1983. We were having a planning meeting at Marian and Barney Hutton's little house on the Mount, which they had saved from fire. Someone had plucked up the courage to ask the artist Leonard French to come and talk about making a window for us.

He lived at Heathcote and had driven across the blackened wasteland to meet us. Along the way he had stopped and plucked a sprig of new, green gum tree. Holding the sprig, with its blackened end, he said, 'Here is Resurrection. Here is your window!' You can see his Resurrection window at the Church of the Resurrection Macedon (pictured) today.

And now we are at the end of 2020, looking across a world landscape blighted by COVID-19. Where do we find Resurrection?

Like the artist's sprig of green, the promise of Resurrection is ever present. About midway through lockdown I was part of a clergy discussion where we reflected on what we were finding and how we were going. Most of us talked about the gift of kindness in people we met

as we walked our territory. We agreed that there was so much sheer goodness to be found in our neighbourhood. The inevitable question was asked: "How do we bring those people into church? We need them."

At Synod this year, as we were heading back into our churches, the same question emerged: Can I do a Leonard French and show you a sprig of gum tree and say, "Here is Resurrection"? I offer you the thought of gum tree services. Can I say, too – don't bring the people in. Leave them where they are and be church with them. Look out for what they value, see what they delight in and seek opportunities to celebrate with them. Jesus was good at this, I reckon. Think fig trees; think sheep; think flowers in the field.

My idea of gum tree services is that we so listen and so look that we can go out and be there with them, to celebrate with people the goodness and beauty and story they value.

At Castlemaine, when I was priest there, we had the Sunday service at the cemetery, gathering around the Dads' monument to mark Anzac Day. It was built by the fathers for the sons who did not return. Other times we'd gather at the great Bean Tree in the beautiful botanic gardens, and we would trek



out to the ruins of the Welsh village to mark St David's Day on 1 March. When the time was right we would have a service in the art gallery, once using Tom Roberts' painting *Reconciliation* in Holy Week. During another Holy Week we gathered to make Eucharist at the crossroads in the heart of town. An annual event was the commemoration of the Feast of Holy Innocents (28 December) at the Pennyweight Flat Children's Cemetery.

Give it a go. Have a gum tree service once a month or maybe quarterly. You'll know your local territory and its people. Sure – do invite them in, but, for God's sake, take the church out. Look for every opportunity to speak the word of Love and to share it with the love that is palpable in those people out there and has been over recent months.



Beth Delzoppo (left) and Gwen Chapman (right) presenting the cake to June Flowers on behalf of the congregation

## More than 80 years at the organ for June Flowers

June Flowers, organist at St John's Neerim South Cooperating Church, turned 94 on Sunday, 15 November. This marked the completion of 82 years at the organ since she began playing for services at the age of 12. She was presented with a cake to mark the occasion.



# 2020 and beyond: resilience, recovery, renewal



**Rt Rev'd Dr Richard Treloar**

In a year when our Synod has been pushed from May to November, and from a face-to-face gathering to a zoomathon, we are conscious of many such changes to the rhythms and practices we have known, in the church and in the world.

Among those is the rescheduling of NAIDOC Week from its usual mid-year observance, partly in recognition of the vulnerability of our First Nations people during COVID.

We join this online Synod from many places across Gippsland, and beyond, on lands of which several peoples are the original custodians: here in Sale, where this service was recorded, the Brayakaulung clan of the GunaiKurnai peoples; in the western reaches of the Diocese the Boonwurrung/Bunurong people of the Kulin Nations; and in the far east and alpine regions the Bidawal and Ngarigo/Monero peoples.

We pay our respects to their elders – past and present and coming to be – and we commit ourselves to the ministry of Reconciliation, which is at the very heart of the Gospel.

One expression of that resolve is our support of two Indigenous priests. With the fund established to maintain these part-time stipends depleted, this practical expression of Reconciliation falls back on diocesan resources that remain under pressure, and we must face up to a deficit interim budget.

Yet we cannot address a gap in our finances, and ignore the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, or the deficit of over half of all First Nations languages since European settlement,

or the discrepancy between incarceration rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the rest of the population.

This is not a commitment we can walk away from, any more than we can from other mission initiatives of the Diocese that go to the heart of our share in God's reconciling mission to the world in Christ. These include Anglicare Parish Partnerships Grants, our governance and other contributions to education in Anglican schools as providing affordable housing to those who live at Clifton Waters Village and Botterill Court, supporting fire-affected communities through our bushfire response and retaining a part-time Abbey Priest. We publish *The Gippsland Anglican*, contribute to prison chaplaincy and fund the work of Professional Standards – not only in meeting our responsibilities with respect to redress for past abuses and rebuilding that trust deficit, but also in building resilience and enabling best practice for our clergy and lay workers of today and tomorrow through professional supervision.

And yet our ministry is not only to this generation but to future ones, and so we must ensure their work may also be resourced, by being good stewards of what has been entrusted to us. This means making some hard choices.

The ecumenical chaplaincy at the Gippsland Campus of Federation University, which we have been subsidising in recent years, is an example of something that – regrettably – we must now leave to others.

Likewise, our financial responsibility for the 'fresh expression' of church that is Cafe 123 has recently ended – though not our involvement in the evolution of this much-

loved social enterprise into a new form under a multilateral partnership.

As I flagged at the first Session of this Synod 18 months ago, one of the ways to tap the wells of goodwill in our communities, such as we've seen in the 123 story this year, is through partnerships, including philanthropic ones.

The Bishop-in-Council report refers to a new Draft Strategic Financial Plan, the first pillar of which involves the appointment of a Diocesan Development Officer to grow our existing partnerships and explore new ones. In recent months we have partnered with others, including in local government, to apply for three significant grants relating to building connectivity through new technologies, to bushfire recovery, and to food security.

We have partnered with Bush Church Aid to commission Jude and Andy Benton as BCA Field Staff, ensuring Jude can minister in a full-time capacity at Croajingolong through until at least 2024.

We will need to do more and more in this space if we are to attract external funding for our mission as one pathway to sustainability.

To that end, it has been encouraging to see local print, radio and television media take an increasing interest in the work of the Diocese and to partner with us in telling some 'good news' stories.

Bushfires come with the territory, quite literally, of parts of regional and rural Australia. That said, nothing could have really prepared us for the events leading up to and into the new year. The sheer scale and ferocity of last summer's fires shocked the nation and the world, and we were held in the hearts of faith communities from

Perth to Brisbane, Rwanda to New Zealand, Texas to South Yarra, and everywhere in between.

I spent as much time as possible in the Eastern Region from Epiphany through to the middle of Lent, where in Omeo on 22 March we first got the news that churches would need to close for gathered worship on account of the pandemic.

The tireless, costly and fruitful ministry of our clergy and lay people, including a number of VCC Emergency Chaplains from within and beyond the Diocese, was an absolute privilege to behold in the aftermath of the fires, and I want to pay tribute to the Diocesan staff team who met weekly or fortnightly throughout that crisis to help plot a course through it, drawing on external expertise and keeping in contact with local leaders to provide support and encouragement.

Archdeacon Brenda Burney, with Regional Dean Lyndon Phillips, exercised superb leadership; Bevil Lunson's team at Orbost was incredible in offering first resort relief; Laurie Baker did some exceptional pastoral work in Tambo; and Jude Benton's ministry at Croajingolong has become emblematic of how the church can be present in such emergencies to bring comfort and hope.

Those I have named would be the first to say that our bushfire response has been, and continues to be, one big team effort, with so many people contributing in various ways, all of which have made a difference.

Further to my comments around partnership and philanthropy, the transformative factor here has been the response when we reached out to the wider community in our first tentative attempts at using online platforms.

Since early January, the diocesan Emergency Relief Fund has received over \$354,000, and the gifts continue to come in. Of that amount, just over \$252,000 has been acquitted.

Bushfires and other natural disasters draw a strong humanitarian response that we might not expect to match in other appeals. Yet we see what can be achieved when we have a compelling story to tell, and we find a way to tell it. Two Anglican schools from outside this Diocese used the YouTube interview Jude and I did in chapel services, each then contributing thousands of dollars raised by students, staff and families.

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This kind of solidarity from organisations and individuals has enabled us to distribute frontline aid to households who have lost property, stock and livelihoods; to support the fire-affected parishes and The Abbey, whose towns were evacuated, churches emptied out, summer seasons lost, and were faced with the added burden of caring for those most directly affected.

A significant donation from the Provincial Disaster Relief Fund in January was specifically for the purpose of employing a part-time Bushfire Response Coordinator.

The Rev'd Cathy Turnbull, born in Tambo Upper and a former parishioner at Bruthen, was one of the first to contact me with an offer of support, having discovered her calling to become a distinctive Deacon in the course of the community work she did following the Black Saturday fires. By the end of January Cathy had got herself a job, on secondment from her parish in Melbourne.

Recently, the Anglican Relief and Development Fund Australia more than matched this grant, and so I'm pleased to say Cathy will again work with us part-time in 2021 in a new role as a Missional Deacon to the Eastern Region clergy.

When in Gippsland, Cathy will be based at Nowa Nowa, giving us a presence there. Working with Brenda and the eastern clergy, Cathy will continue our bushfire recovery ministry, which is far from finished, having been hampered by COVID, with a particular focus on the more remote communities and households who continue the rebuilding process, and whose pastoral and spiritual needs are great. Cathy will also work on collating the experience gained this year, and developing our capacity for fire-preparedness and response.

This extraparochial position is fully funded, and is an example of the creative appointments we need to be open to making alongside the more familiar parish structure, if we are to be sufficiently agile in a rapidly changing ministry context.

I look forward to commissioning Cathy in

the new year – along with a number of others we've not been able to induct since March.

If the overused word 'unprecedented' sheds any lights on this year, perhaps it has to do with a reality check (for our generation in the West at least) to that implicit worldview wherein human beings are assumed to be at the centre, and sufficiently in control of our surroundings as to be able to predict and manage most things life throws at us.

Such hubris has been legitimised by anthropocentric interpretations of the first creation story in Genesis: readings neither we nor the creation itself can afford. Of necessity we have

“Of necessity we have made some changes to the way we go about being church, only to find that we're still doing it, and perhaps more intentionally as a consequence.”

dramatically reduced air traffic around the planet, only to find that it still turns, and perhaps breathes more easily as a consequence.

Of necessity we have made some changes to the way we go about being church, only to find that we're still doing it, and perhaps more intentionally as a consequence.

This year would have been a very different experience without the collegiality we enjoy, and which – like the privilege of being able to gather for worship – we must never take for granted.

Thank you to our faithful clergy, Lay Readers, and op shop coordinators, who have stayed the course in and out of various stages of restrictions. Thank you to clergy and lay

workers who have made great personal financial sacrifices during the winter months as we sought to drastically reduce our operating costs.

Thank you to the newly formed Executive Committee of Bishop-in-Council for providing wise counsel, strategic direction and financial oversight.

Thank you to the Diocesan staff team, who in the midst of our bushfire response doubled down and rallied together to think and pray through the short and long term implications of COVID – liturgically, pastorally, and missionally.

Thank you to the Cathedral Parish for hosting 33 consecutive weeks of recorded worship, and counting. Thank you to the Registrar, to Christine Morris, and others who have filmed and edited these and the associated Fireside Chats, and to the many clergy and lay people who have participated so willingly in these offerings.

Thank you to everyone on our boards and committees who have gone square-eyed peering into the Zoom mirror in order to keep the important work of governance and forward planning going, and to connect for prayer, study and mutual support.

It's too soon to say what lasting impacts the coronavirus may have, but it's not too soon to be listening for what God is calling us to do and be in this moment. In fact, some of the conversations started at Synod in May last year have suddenly become much more urgent for us as a Diocese and as a Church.

The challenges of 2020 have not prevented a number of people taking up or renewing ministries

in Gippsland. Others have discerned a call to serve elsewhere, have recently retired, or are preparing for that great adventure! Others of our number have taken their place in the new Jerusalem – such a traumatic year in which to suffer further grief and loss and to have our funeral ministry so constrained.

There will be changes ahead, we know that, even if we don't yet know what sort. But that's ok, because the Church has a technical term for change: we call it 'tradition'. As Picasso famously said, 'Tradition is having a baby; it is not wearing your father's hat!' Which is to say living traditions embrace continuity and change as complementary forces, rather than seeing them as competing ones.

We of all people must not fear change, for we follow him who changed everything

by his living and dying, by responding to his calling in his particular time and place; and yet whose role in the new creation calls us back to the vision of Eden; and whose Church is grafted on to the gracious promises first made to Israel.

And so we prepare ourselves once again to watch and wait for the baby who changes everything in order to bring us back to our true selves: the Christ child, who calls us with Nathaniel out from under the safe canopies of our fig trees, to come and see.

*This is an abridged transcript of the recorded Presidential address screened online at the 39th Synod on 13 November 2020. Visit [www.gippsanglican.org.au](http://www.gippsanglican.org.au) to read it in full, or view it in the context of the Synod Worship Service at [youtu.be/KM-M7f7jMCK](https://youtu.be/KM-M7f7jMCK).*

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Rowena Armstrong at Richard Treloar's Installation as Bishop of Gippsland in 2018


# Rowena Armstrong tribute


Sally Woollett

Ten Synods after she became Chancellor of the Diocese of Gippsland, Rowena Armstrong AO, QC is retiring. Philip Davis, former Liberal member of the Victorian Legislative Council, delivered a tribute to Rowena at Synod in November. “She had so many firsts and smashed straight through that glass ceiling referred to so often in respect to women’s careers.” Rowena is the sixth Chancellor of the Diocese of Gippsland and has served for more than 30 years, having been appointed in 1990. In that role, she advises the Bishop on all matters relating to good governance of the

Diocese, particularly with relevance to the law. She is the first woman to have undertaken this role, and the second longest serving. During this time, she has brought approximately 100 Bills to Synod. Her three great passions have been her late husband, Bishop James Grant, the Anglican Church and legislative drafting. Rowena came to Australia in 1966, signing the Victorian Bar roll in 1970 and being appointed QC in 1991. She was the first woman in Victoria to be appointed Chief Parliamentary Counsel. Rowena has always been engaged and engaging as a mentor. In their 1999 annual report, the Department of Premier and Cabinet said “she was a leader in her field; those


who worked closely with her learned a huge amount.” Referring to Rowena’s exceptional mentoring skills and leadership in her vocation, a colleague remarked, “there was never a day when I did not want to go to the office.” Rowena received an Order of Australia in 2003 “for service in the area of legislative practice development in Victoria, and to the community through the Anglican Church as an administrator, legal adviser and contributor to the Church’s social welfare policy activities.” Philip, who as a parliamentarian actively engaged in consideration of legislation in which Rowena had a significant drafting role, describes her as a “storied contributor to the Anglican family in Australia.” Bishop Richard said “Ms Rowena Armstrong AO, QC is one of the great legal minds of our generation. In her extraordinary service to the Church, she combines her mental acuity with a deep love for and understanding of Anglican tradition and polity – something she and the late Bishop James (Jim) Grant shared. As the sixth Bishop of Gippsland to have benefited from her wisdom, I’m sure my predecessors would echo me in extolling Rowena’s faithful service to our Diocese and the wider Province of Victoria. As a drafter of ecclesial legislation she is unsurpassed, and the Acts of this Diocese will long bear the mark of her expertise and precision. Thank you Rowena!”





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Cynthia Grove

St Paul’s Cathedral in Sale has been offering Quiet Afternoons for some time. Some have been reported in previous editions of TGA. Quiet Afternoons have been held in the Sale Art Gallery, the Sale Botanic Gardens, the Cathedral and in Victoria Park, opposite the Cathedral. Participants are local and from farther afield. During COVID-19 our participants have gathered over a Zoom meeting. Each afternoon includes prayer, a short leading and a time of personal reflections during which participants walk, sit quietly with artworks or in gardens, or draw, write or pray, before returning to the meeting. Individuals are invited, but not coerced, to speak about what that time meant for them. After a brief prayer and more words of wisdom, people return to the daily round. On Sunday 1 November, being All Saints’ Day, Dean Susanna asked participants to think about and pray for those who have gone before us, those who lost the battle with COVID-19 and those in our own past who have held a light for us in our journey of faith. Who were the saints (people Set Aside In New Testament Spirituality) in our lives? We were invited to reflect on those who raised us, led us to faith, taught us about the triune God and increased our understanding. Were there people who stood out to us in this way?

To be honest, I struggled with this. I loved my grandparents, my parents, aunts, uncles – but were they lights on my journey? To a degree, yes, but flickering. Teachers, clergy – mostly just short flickers to take me a little way further. The image came of a rope, many threads plaited and wound together. The threads varied in lengths, textures, thicknesses, and colours. There were dark coloured strands, which gave strength. Bright metallic strands of gold and silver; some of these were quite short, I sensed, but they certainly caught the attention and added light. There were embroidery threads, knitting yarns, garden string, so much more. Some only short, some seemed to be threaded all the way through the whole. So not one or two people in that rope, and no names to put to any length of thread but simply a sense of many people, many experiences, woven together. All this sounds fanciful and I’m sure each of us had our own meaningful experience, but I found comfort in the image. You’ll understand why I kept silent as we spoke afterwards about how the time had been for us, but a Quiet Afternoon is a time for each of us as individuals. God will meet each of us according to who we are and how we respond to such challenges. The next Quiet Afternoon of prayer is heading our way on Sunday 13 December.



# Philosophical and ethical systems and belief

## Can they function together in the wake of COVID-19?

Rev'd Nikolai Blaskow

Fairly soon after my conversion, I remember a very earnest conversation with another believer, who warned me about the dangers of 'philosophy'. He seemed to be super-sensitive to the possibility that philosophy might lead me astray. Here I am, decades later, occupying a more considered vantage point, arguing the opposite: that I am more likely to be led astray by false belief than by the quest for truth and wisdom. The pre-Enlightenment period with thousands of lives destroyed in religious sectarian wars – be they Protestant versus Catholic or Protestant versus Protestant – seemed to lend weight to that conviction.

The Age of Reason, after all, was greeted as a welcome escape from the madness and irrationality of the religious wars. Of course, human all too human humanity then discovered other (reasonable) excuses for war. Thus, reason seemed also to prove itself inadequate. So, itself

misguided, it now appeared to be no wiser than misdirected belief. Both reason and belief, it seemed, must drink deeply at the fountain of wisdom.

But what is wisdom if not the effective application of knowledge to unlock the mystery, the problem, the issue and, more profoundly, the complexity that is a person and a life?

What soon became apparent during the pandemic and the search for a vaccine was a disturbing tendency, on the part of both belief and reason, to confront the issue of the rising number of COVID cases and the treatment of COVID patients in overstretched emergency wards, to operate on assumptions that were either unfounded or undisclosed and mostly left unexamined. For example, when the pandemic hit Italy in the first and second waves, and hospitals were hopelessly understaffed, underequipped and underprotected, high-sounding ethical arguments were being posited to justify why younger patients with a longer life expectancy should be/were being given

ventilators rather than older patients in their late 70s and their 80s. In effect, these were utilitarian/consequentialist arguments, and they were made to sound very ethical and so ... very persuasive. That is, until you insert a name and a face into that terrible equation. Then, when it becomes a question of *your* grandmother or *your* grandfather, it suddenly doesn't come out sounding either ethical or persuasive.

In other words, the argument that this 'difficult' decision to offer the ventilator to one but deny it to the other, for the greater good, suddenly starts to ring very hollow indeed.

Such a dilemma and disenchantment then inevitably lead us to questions of whether ethics, indeed philosophy, can ever resolve questions to do with humanity. The gibes of a Martha Nussbaum or a Cora Diamond for philosophers to start a revolution by reading a novel seem to reinforce that suspicion. For non-consequentialism (otherwise known as de-ontology), principled behaviour ethics



Photo: Unsplash/Udayaditya Barua

with noble aspirations to treat people as ends in themselves, and not as means (the ethics of Immanuel Kant) seem reasonable and rational – until you realise that a man like Adolph Eichmann, who prided himself on being trained by it, stamped away the certificates and the lives of over a million Jews, authorising them to their deaths because he was following orders/directions, which was his duty (virtue ethics).

Another great philosopher, Martin Heidegger, sold his soul out to Nazism in order to secure a place as head of faculty in a leading German university, which prompted some philosophers even to declare the death of philosophy.

Of course, all these are oversimplifications and reductionist arguments. The philosophical systems do work well and, when combined with the immanent

transcendent moral ethics of the likes of Raimond Gaita and Iris Murdoch, produce some stunning outcomes. It is an approach that treats moral and ethical problems, issues, people and dilemmas as mysteries with horizons, which must be discovered rather than theorised about.

Sufficient to say that it is an approach, like a novel, that embraces the untidiness of life and people as they are. In effect, it is an uncensored approach. One might even go so far as to say it is an ethical stance that most closely approximates the mind of Christ.

However, that discussion must be held over for another time.

*Nikolai Blaskow is Associate Chaplain and Head of RAVE (Religious and Values Education) at Gippsland Grammar and Honorary Associate Priest at St Paul's Cathedral in Sale.*

The Gippsland Anglican

*Q: Is there a faith question you're afraid to ask?*



*A: Chances are others have that question too!*

Send your question to the editor at [gippsanglican.org.au](mailto:gippsanglican.org.au) or 0407 614 661 and we will publish an answer from a clergy person. (Your details won't be shared or published.)

*“Who is the twelfth apostle mentioned in Revelation 21?”*

*14 And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

Revelation is an amazing book with lots of vivid images in the different visions that the Holy Spirit gave to the author often called John the Divine. Because most of it is in poetic form, it is helpful to read it as poetic vision rather than how we might read a scientific essay or a how-to manual.

We all know that Jesus chose 12 disciples, people who he called to follow

him throughout his earthly ministry. They learned from both his teaching and his actions. They came to understand that this spiritual master of theirs was no ordinary man, but God's own son. But have you noticed that the lists in the different gospels vary? It is most likely that there were more than 12 in Jesus' group of disciples, but in Hebrew understanding 12 is a very special number (from the 12 tribes of Israel) and so there is a completeness about there being 12 disciples.

When Judas took his own life, the other disciples chose Matthias to replace him. The word *apostle* means 'sent one', which is quite different from being a disciple. It is the

Spirit's role to call and send us into particular ministries. A disciple is someone who chooses to follow Jesus and this may or may not include being 'sent' into a particular area of Kingdom work. The Bible does not tell us anything else about what Matthias did, so we cannot see if he is this 'twelfth apostle' from Scripture.

Paul is often thought of as this new twelfth apostle. His Damascus Road experience was definitely a call! He was passionate about the people he met on his three different mission trips and helped many to become believers or to grow in their faith. Therefore, many Christians would hold that he is the one the Spirit chose to fulfil

this twelfth apostle role.

However, as I mentioned, Revelation is poetry and full of images. I prefer to read this in a poetic way. The twelfth apostle is those who God has called to go and speak out the Good News of Jesus across the ages. It could be Matthias or Paul – both were godly people who were recognised as ready to respond to God's call in their lives. And you and I in our own small ways can also take the role of this 'twelfth apostle' as we respond to the Spirit's leading and go where the Spirit leads us, bringing others the *water of life*, which was also promised in Revelation 21:6.

*Rev'd Sue Jacka*





Volunteers (before the COVID pandemic) at the Baw Baw Food Relief Centre

# Relieving food insecurity in Baw Baw

Jan Morton

In 2002, 12 churches in the Baw Baw Shire came together after seeing the impact that food insecurity was having on the local community. Baw Baw Food Relief was born out of the need for the church community to help assist residents in the wider Baw Baw Shire.

The not-for-profit organisation assists residents who may be experiencing food insecurity in Baw Baw. Operating successfully for the past 18 years, it has become the largest food relief centre in the shire.

In the early days, approximately 30 families and individuals were attending the centre. This has grown each year, with over 900 families being assisted in 2019. These figures keep growing, with a significant rise already this year. It is hard to watch the figures going up, but we know we have the experience, the workers and the food to ensure no one in our community goes hungry.

For a \$10 donation, families and individuals receive a shopping trolley full of nutritious and good quality, healthy food, including cereals, pasta, bread, vegetables and fruit, frozen meals, dairy items, personal products and baby items. The centre can direct anyone needing further financial and personal support to other agencies in the area.

Many businesses, farmers and volunteers support the

organisation to do what they do best, and that's food. With the support of Foodbank Victoria, Coles and Woolworths, Secondbite and local suppliers and farmers, we can provide nutritious and affordable food to people in need, so no one goes away hungry.

The dedication of our volunteers has enabled the centre to improve the model they set, resulting in the birth of our community outreach program earlier this year to reach more residents in the wider shire who are experiencing food insecurity.

The centre is managed and run by 92 volunteers who attend each week. This number keeps growing, and staff are always happy to speak to anyone wanting to volunteer.

Volunteers come from various career backgrounds and all have a strong work ethic. This makes for a valuable workforce, and the centre values each one of them. Volunteers are a team focusing on working together to go forward with their mission.

The volunteer program offers an outlet for people to give back to their community. Our workforce of volunteers is capable, and everyone's positive attitude makes the centre very successful.

Volunteers may have worked for many years in different careers and the centre is very privileged to benefit from their life experiences. They provide skills in cooking, cleaning, sewing repairs, retail,

office skills and driving.

The centre is an uplifting environment where people can be part of an extended family; a place to come and have fun and laughter – the laughter is contagious.

Providing food security contributes to better outcomes for everyone; a full stomach may be the first step to changing the way a person's day progresses.

COVID-19 did not create food insecurity, but it shines a glaring new light on an old problem: far too many people are experiencing food insecurity and suffering the consequences. Fear and reservation can leave people feeling stressed, anxious and powerless in their lives. The hardest thing for people to do is walk through our doors. But, once they do, staff are there to assist them.

The Baw Baw Food Relief Centre is at Factory 6/11, Pearse Street, Warragul and is open between 10 am and 2 pm, Monday to Friday. If you would like to volunteer, please phone us on 5622 3891 to make an appointment to come in and fill out an application form. Induction days are Wednesdays and Thursdays between 10 am and 2 pm.

We are here to assist anyone in the shire experiencing food insecurity. Please feel free to visit, or to share this story with someone you feel could use assistance.

Jan Morton is Team Support Officer at Baw Baw Food Relief.

# St Paul's campus plans for Drouin and Traralgon

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School is pleased to announce two major developments: the planned establishment of a new early learning centre and primary school in Drouin in 2024 and the completion of the Traralgon campus to include a VCE offering for Years 11 and 12 from 2026.

The decision to open a new campus in Drouin was made in response to ongoing population growth and a demand for additional educational choices in the region. Subject to a town planning permit, the campus will be located on a beautiful elevated 36 acre site which has been very generously gifted to the school. Positioned on the Melbourne side of Drouin, with convenient access to the M1, the school will also attract students from surrounding areas.

The school's striking design, although still in the initial stages, will create a vibrant contemporary learning environment and a welcoming place for the growing Drouin community. The new school will commence with a kindergarten and early primary school offering and will create a place to encourage meaningful connections. The large and verdant site will also provide an opportunity to integrate elements of the

outdoors into the curriculum. Construction of the Drouin campus is expected to take place in 2023.

The school will also be extending the current Traralgon campus offering to include Years 11 and 12 from 2026, commencing with the first cohort of Year 7 students in 2022. St Paul's will embark on a staged building program of secondary facilities commencing in 2022 with the Futures Centre: a striking double-storey building with a welcoming entry and reception area, performing arts facilities, general learning areas, a modern secondary library adjoining a spacious open cafeteria, a community hub and a range of student gathering spaces – both large and small. St Paul's strong focus on academic excellence will expand and diversify the curriculum to include a broad range of VCE subjects and co-curricular activities, creating opportunities for every student to work toward their potential.

St Paul's is the only independent Anglican school between Pakenham and Sale, so this expansion will enable many more Gippsland students to access a quality, independent Christian education in the Anglican tradition.



Artist's impression of the planned St Paul's early learning centre and primary school in Drouin



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## EDITORIAL

## Food and beyond

"Tell me what you eat and I'll tell you who you are." So said Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755–1826), French politician, lawyer and gastronome. The classic French ring sponge cake, gâteau Savarin, invented in the mid-19th century by Parisian chef pâtissier Auguste Julien, and a triple-cream cheese, have both been named after him. (For those with a culinary bent, [www.recipecommunity.com.au](http://www.recipecommunity.com.au) has a recipe for Christmas champagne Savarin with berries.)

The name *Savarin* is appropriately close (but not related) to the term *savour*, originating in the 14th century as *savorer* (Old French for 'taste' or 'appreciate') and from the Latin *sapor* ('taste', 'flavour'). Savarin's famous work *Physiologie du goût* (*Physiology of Taste*), first published shortly before his death and still in print, has the delightful subtitle *Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*.

Brillat-Savarin is considered by some to be an early advocate of the low-carb diet. Perhaps reflecting his earlier studies in medicine and chemistry, he wrote:

*The second of the chief causes of obesity is the floury and starchy substances which man makes the prime ingredients of his daily nourishment. As we have said already, all animals that live on farinaceous food grow fat willy-nilly, and man is no exception to the universal law.*

Christmas pudding, anyone?

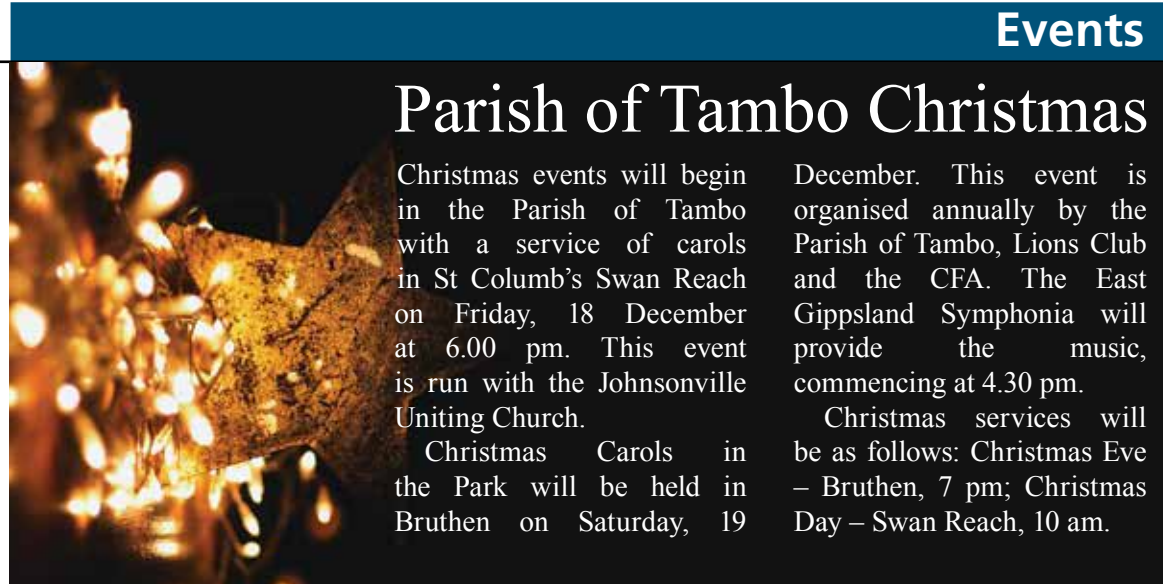
Jan Morton at the Combined Churches Food Relief Hub in the Shire of Baw Baw says COVID has shone "a glaring new light on an old problem" – food security has long been and continues to be a problem, both globally and locally (p. 10). The not-for-profit organisation began when 12 churches in the shire (including the Anglican churches of Warragul and Drouin) began to work together in response to seeing the effects of food insecurity around them. With a mission to "provide food, friendship and practical support to those in need", their values are love, care and support, communication, strength, compassion, humour, leadership, acceptance and generosity.

The Diocese currently has a submission under consideration for a grant from the Community Food Relief Fund to coordinate food security in Wellington Shire. These Victorian Government grants, of up to \$75,000, aim to support local community organisations supplying food to Victorians in need during the COVID pandemic.

Anglicans like a good nosh-up, and the descriptions of Christmas fare I receive for publication in *TGA* are lovingly detailed. The 'nosh', of course, is about more than food, and this year has highlighted just how much emotional and spiritual sustenance we derive from the conversation and communing that comes from eating together, be it at Sunday lunch, or perhaps after a christening, wedding or funeral. In his book, the great gastronome remarked:

*The pleasure of the table belongs to all ages, to all conditions, to all countries, and to all areas; it mingles with all other pleasures, and remains at last to console us for their departure.*

Sally Woollett



## Parish of Tambo Christmas

Christmas events will begin in the Parish of Tambo with a service of carols in St Columb's Swan Reach on Friday, 18 December at 6.00 pm. This event is run with the Johnsonville Uniting Church.

Christmas Carols in the Park will be held in Bruthen on Saturday, 19

December. This event is organised annually by the Parish of Tambo, Lions Club and the CFA. The East Gippsland Symphonia will provide the music, commencing at 4.30 pm.

Christmas services will be as follows: Christmas Eve – Bruthen, 7 pm; Christmas Day – Swan Reach, 10 am.



Christine Morris with some of the books donated for January's book fair in Sale

## Book fair set for January at St Paul's

## Christine Morris

Postponed twice this year, the annual St Paul's Cathedral book sale is expected to be held on 16–30 January, 9 am to 4 pm (later times by appointment).

Many people have either been reading all their books or using the time in lockdown to have a clean-out, so we have been inundated with books, DVDs and CDs. I have been overwhelmed with the quantity and quality of books donated, and the generosity of people. Many seem brand new.

A wonderful and very hardworking bookworm, Wendy, has been sorting and packing all books into categories as they came in.

This year, several libraries have been donated by former priests of the Diocese, including many theological books as well as religious books and Christian DVDs and CDs.

The book fair will cover the entire hall, with at least 70 trestle tables. We will observe all COVID-safe practices, holding the fair over two weeks to manage attendance limits.

This is our major fundraising activity, and because funeral catering has not been possible during COVID restrictions it has become a very significant ministry as well. People appreciate the care and love we put

into sorting and the layout, our friendliness, and the 'lovely feel about the place'.

People looking for a particular book can contact Christine (0438 595 056, [stpaulssale@wideband.net.au](mailto:stpaulssale@wideband.net.au)) – we may be able to arrange 'click and collect'.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

It was lovely seeing an article on Benetas in a recent issue of *The Gippsland Anglican* (October front page).

I have been a Benetas At Home client for 16 years. They have been wonderful to me, enabling me to stay at home at my age (in my 80s). I have a level 4 package, which means I have services such as weekly home help, gardening, window cleaning and monthly frozen meals. I have an outside chair lift, rails everywhere and much more.

Since my dear husband passed away in 2018, they have been so caring and helpful, phoning regularly and keeping in touch to see if I'm ok and if I need anything.

I say to everyone that if you want to stay in your own home, seek an aged care package like I have, and like me become 'independent'. It's great!

## The Masked Pensioner

*I'm sick of social distancing  
I really want a hug  
Don't want to eat inside my house  
I prefer the pub!*

*We have to wear a silly mask  
To go out for our ventures  
But then again it's not so bad –  
We needn't wear our dentures!*

Sandra R. Haynes

## Barry & Annette Lett

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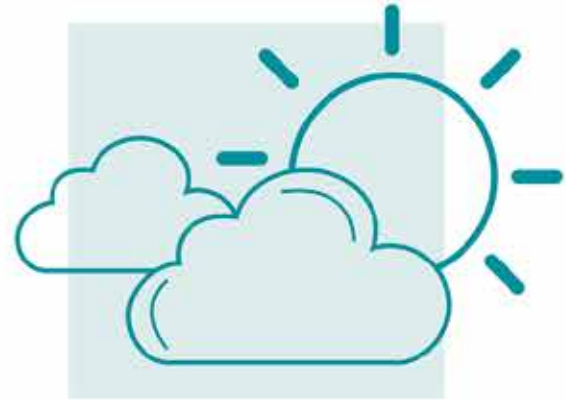
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