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The Gippsland Anglican

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Secret ingredient helps fill Bairnsdale's parish freezer

Gippsland Grammar Year 1 student Emma in the kitchen with parish volunteer Sandra McMaster

■ Lisa Baker

Gippsland Grammar students and Bairnsdale's St John's Anglican Church parishioners have come together to cook meals for locals in need – it's a new project that goes beyond teaching the young

students skills in the kitchen: it's teaching kindness, service, community and giving to others. And, in this case, there appears to be a secret ingredient ... love.
Gippsland Grammar Head of

Bairnsdale Campus Virginia Evans said it had been an absolute joy to help create this program, further fostering relationships within our community.

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2023 – a year of 'Jubilee'?

In the spirit of our recent Synod motion on the Voice Referendum, I hope that readers of *The Gippsland Anglican* will be helped by the range of views expressed in recent editions, as well as on the diocesan website: www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/resources/referendum-2023.

Murray Hannah's article (page 18) is a good example of a non-binary approach to the question on which Australians will soon vote. Murray argues – rightly, I think – that the principle of justice is an important component of the call for a First Nations Voice.

As we move into the ecumenical Season of Creation (1 September to 4 October) I would want to broaden this principle to accommodate not only the reparation of injustices suffered by our first peoples but a right relationship with the land to which their culture and spirituality points us; a relationship that resonates strongly with a Judeo-Christian understanding of creation.

In what follows, I am indebted to former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, and his contribution to an edited volume *Statement from the Soul*, published earlier this year.*

Williams reminds us that in the biblical witness God is the only landlord: "The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers" (Lev 25:23, NIV). The Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament make it clear that the land gifted by God is not for absolute possession but rather for the production of food, and so its sale is linked to a certain number of harvests.

The ceremonial marker of this principle is the year of 'Jubilee', after seven 'sabbaths' (49 years) of harvests, in which the land is allowed to lie fallow – a sign every 50 years that the land belongs to God (see Lev 25:8-12). Williams makes the point that "if you remember that the land is not a possession, you may be less likely to instrumentalise and exploit other humans. The biblical Jubilee is also the year when slaves are freed and debts cancelled."

Here as elsewhere in the Scriptures, justice means more than simply 'fairness'; it has an aspect of 'affirmative action', such as is necessary to achieve 'fairness' for the most vulnerable, for whom God is shown to be especially concerned.

Such a vision runs counter to the (now officially repudiated) 'doctrine of discovery' and the colonial machinery that flows from it, whereby the land and all it holds is something that can be owned in perpetuity. Not only can it be owned, but (in this ideology) it *should* be owned, giving rise to the morally repugnant idea of 'terra nullius': the notion that if it is not being 'owned' in any recognisable (i.e. European) way, it is 'vacant', available to be appropriated by others. From there it is an alarmingly short Darwinian step to cultural erasure, and worse.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart cuts through these colonial and post-colonial narratives and calls us back to a more spiritually authentic and less proprietorial paradigm of stewardship – one in which the land is not an asset, or even an object, but rather is inscribed with divine wisdom for our flourishing, if we are sufficiently attentive to its teachings and guidance, its 'songlines'. The Statement from the Heart thus prefers the more nuanced and relational language of 'sovereignty' to that of 'ownership'.

For Rowan Williams, it is not only Indigenous Australians who bring this perspective – though they do so distinctively – or even solely those with non-agrarian practices of farming. His conviction that "we are overdue for learning some lessons from the peoples we Europeans have systematically displaced, silenced and destroyed" seems especially poignant on the back of the most recent European summer, which has confronted us with the catastrophic effects of an 'acquisitive' relationship with Earth.

In this light, while an appeal to justice (as understood above) would support a 'yes' vote, there is more than justice at stake here.

As Williams puts it, "the literal voice of indigenous peoples in our national and international debates is essential for the renewal of our humanity, not just for the fairness and effectiveness of our politics."

Echoing the language of Leviticus, early church communities identified themselves as "resident aliens" (Heb 11:13-16); everywhere at home, always ready to move on. However poorly we have borne witness to this vocation to touch the earth lightly, Christianity emerges from a theological worldview that profoundly challenges some of our society's enduring territorial assumptions.

For Williams, then, the significance of the Statement from the Heart lies in its invitation to other spiritual traditions

to recognise at their own heart something of the same disconcerting and liberating perspective on the world we inhabit and share – a perspective that encourages us to approach the myths of possession with deep scepticism and uncovers a rich and humane set of alternatives.

We cannot cherry-pick the Statement from the Heart. We cannot simply uncouple the intrinsic connection it makes between the ideal of constitutional recognition and its geopolitical form in a First Nations Voice. We must not be content with yet another hollow victory of style over substance.

Fifty years – seven 'sabbaths' – elapsed between the 1967 Referendum and the Statement from the Heart in 2017. Will 2023, at last, prove to be a year of Jubilee – of release into a better, more sustainable future – not only for our first peoples, but for all Australians?

Grace and peace,

* All quotes attributed to Williams are from 'Hearing Indigenous voices renews our humanity: The moral importance of the Uluru Statement from the Heart', in S Morris and D Freedman (eds), *Statements from the Soul: The Moral Case for the Uluru Statement from the Heart* (La Trobe University Press, 2023).



Cultivating compassion in our community

St Paul's Junior School students with Anne from Baw Baw Food Relief

■ Paula Walland

Student Representative Council (SRC) members from Years 3 to 6 at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School's Warragul Junior School have banded together to promote compassion among students.

With the welfare of others forefront in their minds, the SRC worked hard to encourage their peers from across the

primary school to collect non-perishable food items for those in need in our community as part of a Crazy Hair and Bright Colours Day.

The baskets of food were gratefully collected by Anne and Tim from Baw Baw Food Relief for distribution in the community.

SRC captains, Anna and Elizabeth, were overjoyed with the students' response to the

food drive: "We wanted to support our local community and do our part in helping others. It gave all students the opportunity to understand the needs of our community and respond with compassion. We were overwhelmed by everyone's kindness and our expectations were definitely exceeded! We thank all families for their generosity and support."

Secret ingredient helps fill Bairnsdale's parish freezer

Continued from page 1

"It fills us all with happiness and a sense of connection to others," she said. "We love that we are able to transform our humble garden ingredients into wholesome meals to help fill the parish freezer and support vulnerable locals."

Each Friday, students and volunteers from the parish can be found foraging in the school garden and orchard, along with collecting eggs from the chickens before cooking up a storm in the kitchen and delivering meals to the freezer.

Linda Davies, one of the volunteers from St John's Anglican Church, described the experience as a "privilege."

"It's a privilege more than anything," she said. "To pass on skills to others." These are life skills.

Linda says she enjoyed learning about the students' interests and often found herself encouraging the youngsters to "have a go" and if it doesn't work "try something else."

"I never knew what I wanted to do [when I left school] but the gifts and skills I have acquired over the years have really paid benefits back, not only to me but for a lot of other people in the community.

"When you enjoy doing something there's always a secret ingredient ... and that is love.

"You love doing it and it's not necessary for yourself but for someone else and that's paying it forward."

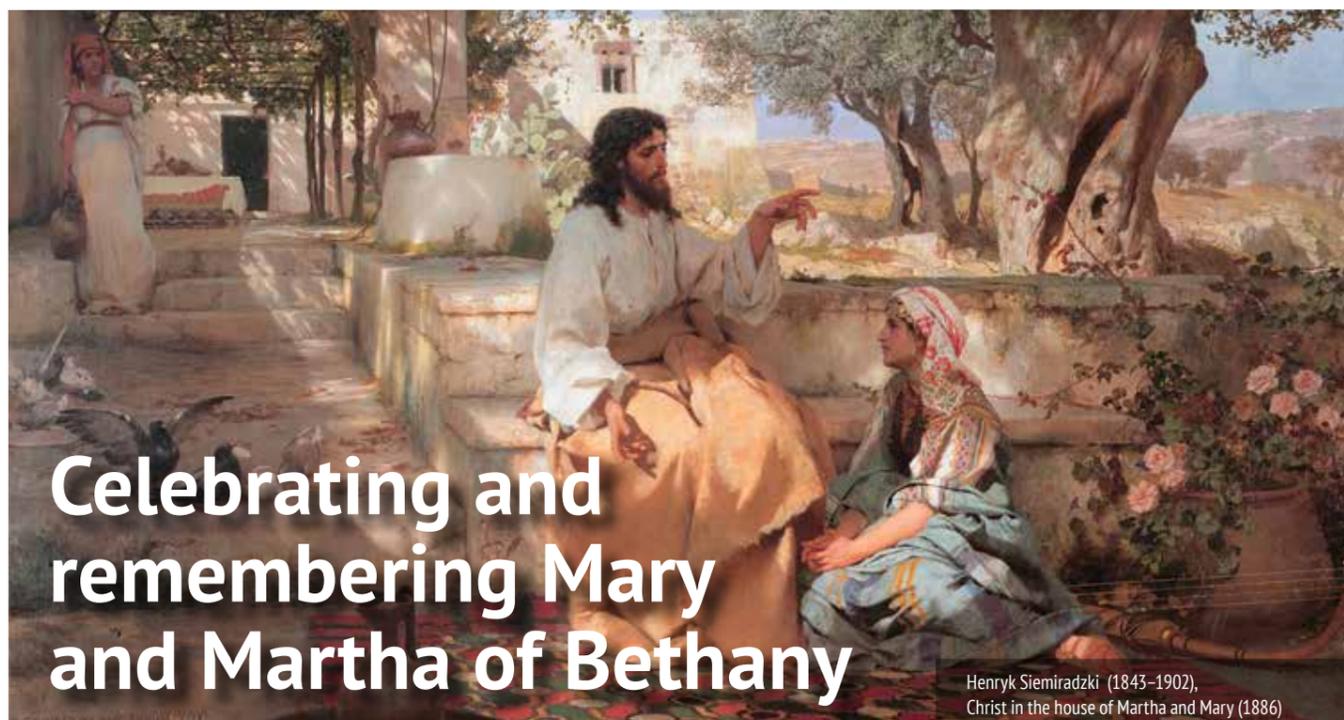
Year 5 student Ayla said she found cooking for other people enjoyable and meaningful.

"It is nice to think about how we are helping our community by just cooking a few meals such as puttanesca and orange cake. It made me grateful for having three meals to eat every day."

Gippsland Grammar calls the program the Giving Garden Project, lending a hand all year around. It is supported by the school's Lorna Sparrow Fellowship, awarded by Gippsland Grammar Foundation.

We are Gippsland Anglicans – Committed in Christ, Connecting in Service, Creative in Spirit. We are committed to providing a safe environment for all, especially children and vulnerable people. We acknowledge the First Nations people of this region as the traditional custodians of the land on which the Diocese of Gippsland serves, and pay our respects to past, present and emerging Elders of the GunaiKurnai, Boonwurrung, Bidawal and Ngarigo/Monero peoples.





Celebrating and remembering Mary and Martha of Bethany

Henryk Siemiradzki (1843–1902),
Christ in the house of Martha and Mary (1886)

■ Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding

In the Parish of Trafalgar we use fifth Sundays of the month to honour our two smaller centres by holding whole-parish gatherings, which alternate between Thorpdale and Yarragon. The near co-incidence of the feast day of Mary and Martha of Bethany with the fifth Sunday of July meant that we arranged to celebrate and remember these two most remarkable followers of Jesus through a service focused entirely on the few narratives about Mary and Martha in the gospels (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-16; 11:17-43 and 12:1-7). The four gospel scriptures formed the 'narrative' backbone of a service of prayer, praise and proclamation, which we punctuated with songs and points of interactive prayerful reflection.

The songs for Mary and Martha are few and far between, but research turned up some real gems. We started with John L. Bell's *There Is a Line of Women*, the fourth verse of which invites us to "Sing a song of Anna who saw Christ's infant face; and sing a song of Martha who gave him food and space; and sing of all the Marys who heeded his requests, and now at heaven's banquet are Jesus' fondest guests." Elizabeth J. Smith, one of Australia's most prolific hymn writers, contributed *When Jesus Went to Bethany*, which concludes, "When Jesus went to Bethany, two sisters loved him faithfully. May we, like them, both learn and serve, and fill this household with our love." (We fitted Dr Smith's lyrics to the well-known tune *Old 100th*, but Tallis' Canon would

work too.) Local song writer Digby Hannah contributed our children's song, which really lays bare Martha and Mary's inter-sibling conflict. "Said Martha, 'It's really my right to protest. I'm working so hard here while Mary just rests.' Jesus said, 'Mary has chosen the best. Martha, come talk to me too.'" *A Prophet-Woman Broke a Jar* is a delight to sing to the tune of *Megerran* once its modulation in the third stanza is confidently embraced. "A prophet-woman broke a jar by Love's divine appointing. With rare perfume she filled the room, presiding and anointing. A prophet-woman broke a jar, the sneers of scorn defying. With rare perfume she filled the room, preparing Christ for dying."

Musically we possibly saved the most arresting songs till last. In response to the drama within the last Gospel reading, we sang Sydney Carter's *Said Judas to Mary*. Most congregations pick up this folk-like tune very easily, and its lyrics lay bare a conflict when Judas criticised Mary's generosity and extravagance in anointing Jesus' feet with expensive perfume. The very final song was the *pièce-de-résistance*: a simply-accompanied song by John L. Bell and Graham Maule entitled *I Will Give What I Have to the Lord*. The footnote rubric says, "This is a woman's song and is best sung in the style of a French café chanson with a piano accordion accompanying. The more unaffected the voice, the more convincing the testimony." (Where is Edith Piaf when you need her?) This song is like an answer to Christina Rossetti's beautiful Christmas question: "What shall I

give him ...?" In the last verse, Mary explains why she believes, and the variety of things she can give to Jesus.

It's because he'll receive, that the likes of me believe God has time for the poor.
He has shown us heaven's door.
Be it perfume and care, be it anger or despair,
I will give what I have to my Lord.

The tune has multiple 'sequences' (the same pattern repeated at different pitches), which makes it also easy to pick up. And Bell writes some radical, raw and truthful lyrics that resonate strongly with the gospel.

The entire immersion in the narratives (read and sung) of Mary and Martha allows some deep interactive reflection on questions like 'If you're a "Mary" what can Martha teach you? If you're a "Martha" what can Mary teach you? How do you respond in the face of criticism and push back when you give of your most extravagant and generous to the Lord or his work?'

After the first use of this liturgy we adjourned to the Yarragon Hotel for lunch, where we could all enjoy sitting like "Marys" for a while and getting to know one another across the geographical spread of our three centres. Later in the week, we took Mary and Martha "on the road" to a mid-week quiet service and then to an aged-care residence, Andrews House, where Mary and Martha continued to inspire, challenge and offer a balance to our tendency to do either too much "sitting and listening" or too much "going and doing."



Successful first pilgrimage walk in Croajingolong

Three pilgrims on the Wilderness Coast Walk take an opportunity to stop, rest, delight and contemplate

■ Rev'd Jude Benton

During 2023, the Cooperating Parish of Croajingolong has undertaken two sermon/Bible study series, the first being on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, and the second a course called Emotionally Healthy Spirituality. In both series, parishioners have been challenged to be proactive in developing their own rhythms and rituals of prayer.

From these series the idea of having a parish pilgrimage walk kept emerging: people wanted a physical journey that mirrored the spiritual and emotional journey we were on.

In late July, the ladies' evening homegroup trialled a two-day, one-night pilgrimage walk. Beginning with communion at St Peter's Mallacoota, three women with ages spanning four decades walked, talked and prayed the 11 kilometres along the section of the Wilderness Coast Walk to Shipwreck Creek. Each time we stopped we would intentionally rest, before reading together Psalm 121. We would then share what had delighted us along the preceding part of the journey, and what we were contemplating as we walked.

We were met at Shipwreck Creek by the delightful smell of a campfire, on which one of the husbands already had stew cooking and coffee brewing. The

remaining two husbands met us with tents and camping gear, before we all spent a delightful evening talking and laughing around the fire. For two of the men this was the first time they'd met, and the collegiality forged showed the power of being outdoors in nature.

The next morning, five of us set off towards the Benedore River, the next stop along the Wilderness Coast Walk, which could eventually extend all the way to Marlo. The oldest member of the group wisely stopped at the first beach, and enjoyed a few hours of quiet contemplation and prayer, surrounded by the wonders of nature. The remaining four pilgrims walked a 20-kilometre return track, with deep and personal sharing happening along the way.

When we arrived back at Shipwreck Creek, we closed with communion of coffee, cake and leftover stew – and a chance to share what the two days had meant to each of us.

The overwhelming feedback was that this was an amazing opportunity to pause from normal daily life and to re-encounter God in a fresh way. It was also agreed that this was a format of prayer and worship that we could definitely do again, and that we would invite more people along next time.



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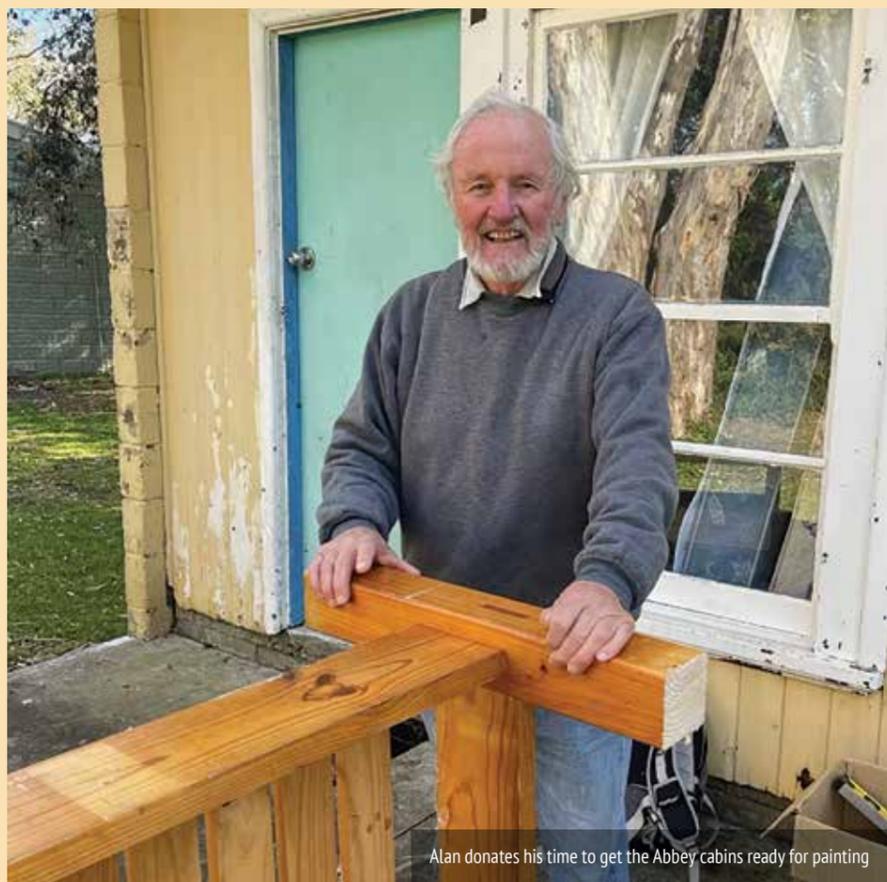
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Gifts of generosity

■ Dr Cath Connelly

This month's shout-out is to generosity. Stephen takes items to be recycled at the tip, Alan helps prepare the cabins for painting, members of Ringwood Church of Christ are blitzing the cabins with a concerted re-painting, Rich dismantles bunks and transforms them into single beds, Rosemary weeds the Memorial Garden, Robyn sews curtains, Deb and Dave cater for retreats, Russell donates time and a leaf-blower and a most generous donor is providing split-system air-conditioning for the A-frame. Anna, Tony, June, Sue, Robert, Jeff, Karen, Cherry, Julia, Graham, Richard, Marguerite – each of you contribute so much to The Abbey. Forgive me for those names I have forgotten.

It is deeply humbling to know that so many of you hold the vision of this most sacred space. A heartfelt thank you.



Alan donates his time to get the Abbey cabins ready for painting



Gragin (inset) in Gunaikurnai Country is a 'thin place' in the Celtic understanding (main image: Scotland's Iona Abbey)

Care for Creation: Listening to First Nations and Celtic voices

A Wellspring Iona Pilgrimage to The Abbey, Gragin (Raymond Island)

■ Rev'd Joy Connor

The little Holy Island of Iona of Scotland in the Western Isles has long held a fascination for Australians. The island is home to the Iona Community, with its roots in the early Celtic Christian tradition, where the ordinary and mundane are seen as embedded in God's love. The sense of interweaving between the seen and the unseen is reflected in the rich poetic, earth-centred liturgy of Iona worship and leads naturally to a passion for justice and Care for Creation.

The Wellspring Community in Australia began in the 1990s, inspired by the Iona Community and the need for a renewed relationship between spirituality, justice and our own sacred creation for people of faith across denominational divides.

The Wellspring Community of Australia, The Abbey Raymond Island (Gragin) and the Iona Community, Scotland invite you to a Listening Pilgrimage, where the Celtic Christian spirituality from Iona in Scotland meets the First Nations wisdom of the land, on 15–19 October. There will be a free open day on 18 October for day pilgrims. The Care for Creation Pilgrimage on Gragin (Raymond Island) is part of a much larger Wellspring Iona Pilgrimage across six states of Australia during October 2023.

Gragin (Raymond Island), in Gunaikurnai Country, is a 'thin place' in the Celtic understanding, a place where the Spirit is moving and the land and relationships between First Nations people and later comers are being healed as they work to restore the land and waters.

We will be listening to the leader of the Iona Community from Scotland, Rev'd Ruth Harvey, a Church of Scotland Minister and a Quaker, about the Iona Community, their work on climate change and its spiritual significance and Traditional Owners as they intentionally seek to learn from their Elders' past. We will hear the story of the Abbey and the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland's faith journey as they confronted the past and learned from First Nations people.

Time will be spent in meditation, journaling, reflective times around the fire at night with music from Celtic harpist Cath Connelly and a *Ceilidh-good craic* (fellowship). On 18 October, day pilgrims can be part of morning worship at 9.30 am, join an Iona-style pilgrimage on the island and contribute to a community art work.

The leader of the Iona Community will also be preaching on 15 October at the 11 am service of the Wesley Uniting Church in Melbourne.

Book for the pilgrimage (cost between \$350 and \$550, all inclusive) and the free open day at Wellspring-community.org.au.

Save the date



SEPTEMBER

- 12: *Hush*. A retreat day on the Island. Sacred Photography with Jenny and Peter Batten
- 13: The Creation Windows through Literature, Art and Music: *Light from Darkness, Sun Moon & Stars, the Firmament* with Sue Fordham and June Treadwell
- 14: Celtic music session

OCTOBER

- 15–19: Wellspring Iona Pilgrimage – Healing the Land in Gunaikurnai Country

Please note that the Raymond Island ferry is closed for maintenance 2–22 October. The originally scheduled Abbey program for October has been moved to other dates. The passenger ferry is still running so you are able to come and visit The Abbey.

NOVEMBER

- 23: Ecumenical Advent Conversation



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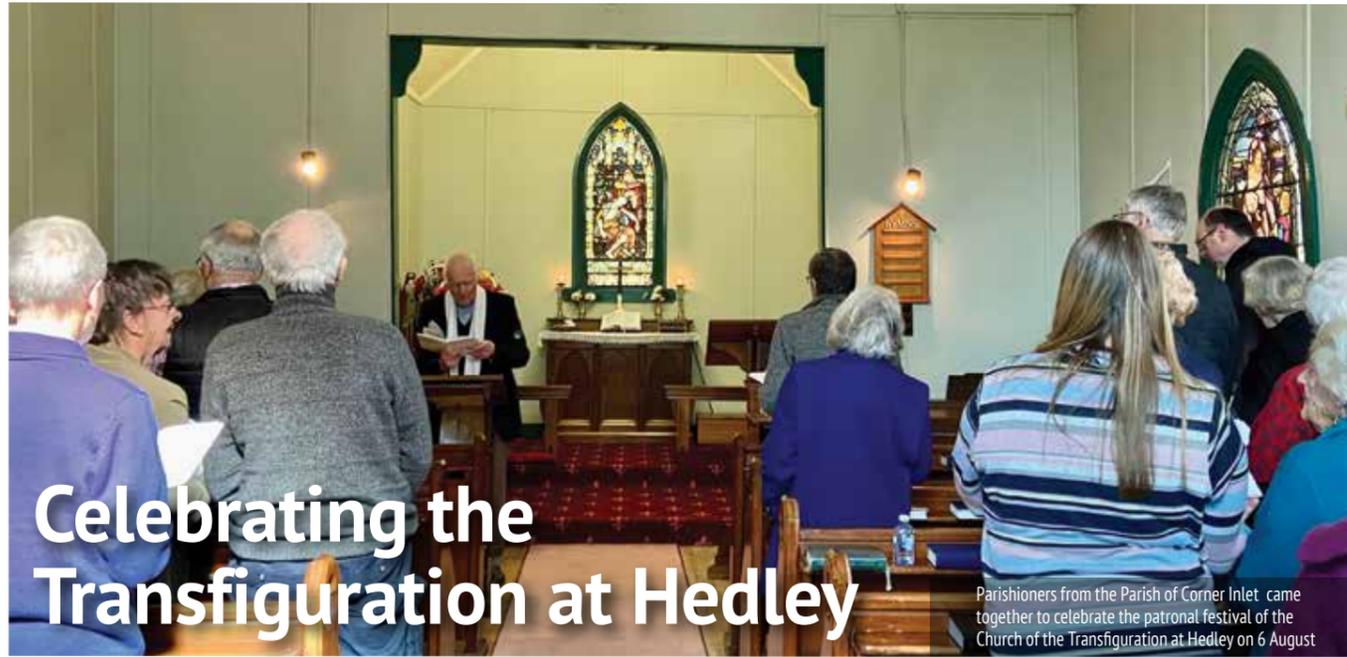
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Celebrating the Transfiguration at Hedley

Parishioners from the Parish of Corner Inlet came together to celebrate the patronal festival of the Church of the Transfiguration at Hedley on 6 August

■ **Carole Williams**

One year ago the Church of the Transfiguration at Hedley in the Corner Inlet Parish celebrated the centenary of its church with a special service conducted by Bishop Richard. The service also acknowledged the church's patronal festival of the Transfiguration of Christ.

Although with time the Hedley congregation had diminished to just half a dozen faithful churchgoers, on that occasion the church was filled to capacity with the many people who have shared

services, events and memories at Hedley in the past.

This year, on 6 August, the church was again attended by many folk from the wider parish to celebrate its patronal festival and 101 years of continual service to the district.

Rev'd Neil Thompson conducted the service, preaching on the Transfiguration of Christ to all who had come along to join their Hedley friends in Christ. Musician Kerry Tudor was accompanist for the hymns.

Large stained glass windows are a special feature of the Hedley church, each one telling a story and donated by past members of the congregation. Their deeply brilliant colours complemented the polished furnishings and beautiful flowers displayed for this special day.

Fellowship was enjoyed over a delicious hot lunch served by the Hedley ladies in the local hall, with the guests from Christ Church Foster adding contributions to the meal.

Combined Churches of Yarram enjoy community meals

■ **Rev'd Ian Smith**

On 4 August some 40 people gathered to share in the second community meal organised by the Combined Churches of Yarram at Anglican Church Parish Hall. The hosting of these meals has been shared around the churches, with the Uniting Church playing host this time, providing the food and the welcoming atmosphere.

A great time of fun, catching up and storytelling was had by all. Those attending enjoyed soup and toasties and a wonderful selection of deserts, washed down with coffee and tea.

The Combined Churches were pleasantly surprised and grateful for a donation from the RSL in Yarram towards the cost of running these community

meals. This gift will enable the community meals to continue into the summer months, when we envisage holding barbecues on the first Friday of the month.

The next community meal is being planned for 5.30 pm on 6 October. All in the community are welcome to come and participate.



Some of the friendly community meal hosts

Implementing the Victorian Child Safety Standards

Visit gippslandanglicans.org.au/resources/safe-ministry

This year, TGA is highlighting the 11 Child Safe Standards to help us think, talk about and improve the way we do things in our ministries.

This month we take a look at Standard 7: *Processes for complaint handling and concerns are child focused.*

What is this standard about?

Standard 7 is about:

- the importance of a complaints process
- hearing the child
- being child-focused – from child and family perspectives
- handling of prior concerns – remembering that the average time for disclosure is 23 years.

Everyone in the parish should know how to report abuse allegations and raise child safety concerns – and feel comfortable doing so.

The diocesan complaint handling process is outlined in the Safe Church Policy and in all training provided by the Safe Ministry Authority.

All complaints and reports of misconduct are to be directed to the Director of Professional Standards. This process is outlined on the diocesan website and on notices displayed on every parish noticeboard and in every parish bathroom.

Where the Diocese receives a complaint or information relating to reportable conduct, or a complaint that relates to issues of whether a member of clergy or a church worker is fit to engage in ministry, the Diocese may consider that complaint in accordance with the *Professional Standards Act 2017* and the protocol for responding to complaints of abuse and harassment.

If there is imminent danger of violence – report directly to police (000)

Our policies and processes take into account:

- mandatory reporting requirements
- the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- failure to report legislation
- all forms of abuse – including grooming.

Consider

- Who can people raise a complaint with? Is it a designated person or group of people?
- How can children make a complaint? Is there a designated person/group?

What to do now

- Assess what complaint handling processes there are in your parish. You may have good practices, but they need to be written down.
- Write down your complaint handling process so that it is:
 - easy to understand
 - culturally safe
 - accessible
 - child focused.
- Take any complaint seriously.
- Keep records of complaints.

Adapted from *A Parish Guide to Implementation of the Victorian 11 Child Safe Standards.*

Please donate to support Aboriginal Ministry in Gippsland



Your donation to Aboriginal ministry is vital.

Gippsland Anglicans is raising funds to continue its support of Aboriginal Ministry. The Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy (L) and The Rev'd Kathy Dalton (R), pictured here with The Rt Rev'd Dr Richard Treloar, Bishop of Gippsland, work together to support the spiritual needs of Aboriginal people across the vast area of Gippsland. They are regularly called to other places and interstate to provide culturally appropriate support and care.

Please scan the QR code or visit www.gippslandanglicans.org.au for options.





Interior of the church at Saul

‘Turning the tide’ in Northern Ireland

■ Rev'd Graeme Liersch

The name of Saint Patrick is well known to all in the West; after all, Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated by many with frivolity on 17 March each year. In short, Patrick, a slave boy in Ireland, escaped back to England – only to return to spread the gospel years later. He did this in response to a vision he received from God.

On his return to Ireland, Patrick landed on the eastern shore of Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland, just south of Belfast.

St Patrick, inspired by Christ, took on the Druids, the dominating faith of the time, leading a 'turning of the tide' – a wave of conversions that turned the region, and ultimately Ireland, into a Christian country. The first of the locations to turn and the first place he set up a church was in a barn at Saul, just East of Downpatrick on the edge of the Lough. A small Church of Ireland church now stands in its place.

The centuries have passed, people of faith have come and gone, and paganism has made a return to the region.

It is with this background that Bishop David McClay of the Diocese of Down and Dromore invited 60 missionaries from around the world to come and help lead the diocese over a two-week period in 'turning the tide' once again.

Six of the missionaries were from Australia, including The Rev'd Canon Dr

Fran Grimes from Korumburra, and The Rev'd Susan Liersch and myself from Wonthaggi, taking part under the leadership of SOMA Australia (Sharing of Ministries Abroad).

The main aim was to point people to Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, just as St Patrick did hundreds of years ago.

The mission commenced with a commissioning at Banbridge, on 2 June. From there we were allocated to different teams, spread throughout the parishes of the diocese.

I was tasked with leading a team of four to Killinchy, just north of Saul, that included Susan and two young men, Sam and Zeke, from Manchester, England.

The Killinchy parish has two centres, Kilmood and Killinchy, as well as numerous villages, and over the next week we engaged with a men's group, young mums, elderly citizens, teenagers, a music group and bell ringers, and carried out some door knocking. All culminated with a confirmation service held at the Kilmood Church, led by Bishop David on 8 June.

The confirmation was emotionally moving and we, the team, were humbled to pray for the Bishop, the Rector of the parish, and any others who sought to renew their faith, receive healing or deal with any other matter.

From the Killinchy parish, Susan and I moved on to the Donaghcloney parish, which has two centres, Donaghcloney and Waringstown, where I led a weekend mission that included Bishop Praises from Nigeria.

We attended several events in the grounds of the rectory, which had been turned into a meeting place for the weekend. The events included a family fun day, teaching by Bishop Praises and myself, a witness talk by Susan and a team prayer walk through the village of Donaghcloney.

It was in Donaghcloney that we first became aware of the ongoing political divide in Northern Ireland and the spiritual oppression present.

June/July is marching season and in Donaghcloney the 'Orange people' had their own band hall and had been practising for the 12 July marching day.

This day is significant for many of the Protestant people and yet controversial for Catholics, as it celebrates the 1688 Revolution and victory of Protestant King William of Orange over Catholic King James II in 1690, which ensured a Protestant ascendancy in Ireland.

From Donaghcloney, Susan and I joined a team at Newtownards, at the top of Strangford Loch and only 17 kilometres east of Belfast.



One of Ulster's wall murals

Newtownards has several housing estates controlled by Loyalist groups that fought against the IRA during the Troubles in Northern Ireland in the 1970s to 1998. Every now and then the different groups fight for control of an estate. One such fight took place on an estate we were visiting.

One group had attacked another, and retaliation occurred. The retaliating group's leaders were arrested and taken into custody. When the expected release on bail didn't occur, the group met to decide on their next set of actions.

We found ourselves in the middle of the estate when this meeting was taking place, just a couple of doors down from where we were.

It was a very nerve-racking time, with much suspense. We prayed, asking the Lord to intervene, and not let them do anything unwise. Throughout the meeting we received updates and if something foolish was being proposed we would focus our prayers on that idea not being adopted.

This went on for some time until the group came up with what was perhaps the best response we could expect. The police liaison officers would be asked to stay away for a time, the minister could stay, and they would conduct a provocative but non-violent march past the other Loyalist group estate to the police barracks in Newtownards.

It was a relief, but we asked God for more. We asked that He expel the evil from the estate and that they would call the march off. Praise God, we felt the oppression lift, and the march was called off a few days later.

Such is the ministry of a mission team. There is much more I could write about, but this can be kept for another time.

What did we learn?

- Spiritual warfare is all around us.
- Complacency allows the devil to get a foothold.
- Don't neglect the word of God: read your Bible. Passages of scripture that came to mind as we prayed in the estate were not only comforting but inspiring.
- Prayer is paramount to a life of service and change.
- When the chips are down, God can and will 'turn the tide', if we let Him.

- Take the risk, don't be a passenger, get involved and serve, because this is what He has called us to do.

It was a joy and delight for each of the team to be invited and serve in this way. And I thank God that He used us for His glory in not only the traditional ways, such as a confirmation, but also in a tense situation.

Rev'd Graeme Liersch is Rector at Wonthaggi/Inverloch.

Greetings from Bass/Phillip Island's new Locum Priest

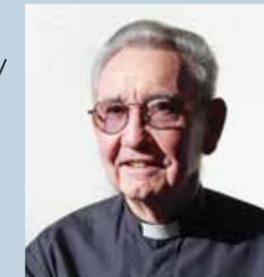
■ Rev'd Liam Matthews

Bishop Richard has appointed me (Rev'd Liam Matthews) to be Bass/Phillip Island's Locum Priest and I am honoured to have been entrusted with this ministry.

I have been in ordained priestly ministry for 40 years. As a young man, I spent six years in the British Army Medical Corps.

Shortly after discharge, I entered the Anglican Society of St Francis (SSF). I spent 13 significant years in ministry, six of which were in the Solomon Islands, where I was ordained priest.

Upon my return to the UK, I had three years in a parish outside of Nottingham, followed by eight years in a Team Ministry in the Diocese of St Albans, Hertfordshire. I then became Rector of a United Benefice in Bedfordshire.



I emigrated to Australia in 2003 with my Australian wife, Madeleine. I was called to minister in North Albury, NSW, although the two Albury parishes in which I was located were in the Victorian Diocese of Wangaratta. I served as Rector of parishes with four centres of worship.

In late 2008, I took up an appointment in the parish of St Eanswythe and St Clements in the west of Melbourne and had the privilege of nurturing a Māori Anglican congregation based at St Eanswythe. It was during this time I served as Archdeacon of Williamstown.

I retired to Inverloch in January 2015 and in retirement have engaged in locum ministries in Gippsland, Melbourne and Wangaratta.

Lessons from Christian Endeavour, “A Training School for the Church”

■ Dr Ruth Lukabyo

In the early 20th century, Christian Endeavour (CE) was the largest youth organisation in the world, with more than four million members. In Australia, there were 75,000 members, and in 1938 Australia had the strongest CE union in the world, in proportion to our population.

Today, CE has faded from memory and few young people have heard of it. But are there lessons that we can learn from this remarkable youth organisation?

The first CE society was formed in 1881 by a congregational pastor, Francis Clark. Clark believed that there was a youth problem in the churches. When young people finished Sunday School at the age of 14, there was a gap before they became adult members in the church. Because there was nothing for them, there was a danger that they would drop out. Churches held social events like tea parties, tennis matches, musical soirees and picnics. These events, however, were failing to retain young people as they were “lured” away by other worldly entertainments.

Clark established CE to train youth, not to entertain them, and he believed that churches and families had a responsibility. They were to train young people by instructing and modelling Christian life and service (Proverbs 22:6). Clark was in part reacting against the revivalism of the day. He believed that parents could nurture a child's faith so that the child would never know themselves not a Christian. Clark's priority was retention, not outreach, but he believed that a high commitment ministry would also attract those from non-Christian families.

In the words of his autobiography (*Memories of Many Men in Many Lands*, 1922), Clark composed the object of CE “To promote the earnest Christian life among its members, to increase their mutual acquaintance and to make them more useful in the service of God.” He wrote a constitution and a manual, *The Christian Endeavor Manual*, which were sent to pastors around the world. Those who embraced CE were largely from Congregational, Methodist and Baptist churches.

The prayer meeting was the foundational activity of a CE society. Clark wrote in the pledge that every member had to

attend every week and take some part. According to his manual, “The society teaches that no Christian is too young, too inexperienced, too obscure, too bashful, to make some genuine contribution to the life of the meeting.” This contribution could be a paper, testimony, prayer, or an edifying verse of scripture.

Clark also required each member to make a pledge. Members promised to read their Bible and pray every day, attend church services, prayer meetings and the consecration service. They promised that they would “strive to do whatever He (Jesus) would have me do, ... and that just as far as I know how, throughout my whole life, I will endeavour to live a Christian life.” (*The History of the Pledge*, *The Golden Link*, Nov. 1894). The pledge trained the young people to live a Christian life committed to obedience and service.

Clark stipulated that each society would have a consecration service once a month. At the service, members were asked to search their hearts and consider whether they had been devoted to Jesus in the past month and how they could do better in the future. At the end of the consecration service there was a roll call, and every member was called to declare their allegiance to Christ, “Am I on the Lord's side? Do I serve the King?” CE was formed at the height of the holiness movement amongst evangelicals, which emphasised consecration or submitting your will to that of Christ. This is reflected in the hymn composed by Frances Ridley Havergal in 1874, *Take My Life and Let It Be, Consecrated Lord to Thee*.

The final way that CE trained young people was through committees. Every member had to be part of a committee, including the look-out committee, prayer meeting committee, social committee, missionary committee, and others. My favourite is the sunshine committee, which, according to Clark's manual, brought “good cheer and practical service” to others. Committees trained younger members in important skills like the ability to lead, speak, organise, encourage, pray, give and be a witness.

The training of CE involved a high commitment. In fact, when Clark first suggested his idea to the 57 young men

and women in his living room, they balked and had to be convinced. Even his wife, Harriet Clark, was shocked at the commitment and, as she listened to her husband in the kitchen, she burnt the batch of cookies she was baking!

In our churches today, we don't call young people to the same level of commitment, and pastors are still worried about the high drop-out rate. Perhaps there is something we can learn from the CE strategy? For us the task remains: how can we train young people, not just entertain them?

I believe we need to provide mentors who will disciple youth and walk alongside them. This will mean more than teaching them Christian truths; we need to encourage young people to participate, organise and lead. There is a challenge, because – as Clark warned his readers – often older Christians and pastors talk too much and have a propensity to take over.

The Fuller Youth Institute has studied churches that are effective (*Growing Young*, 2016) and found that these churches offer young people “keychain” leadership. That is they entrust youth with the keys to the church instead of centralising authority.

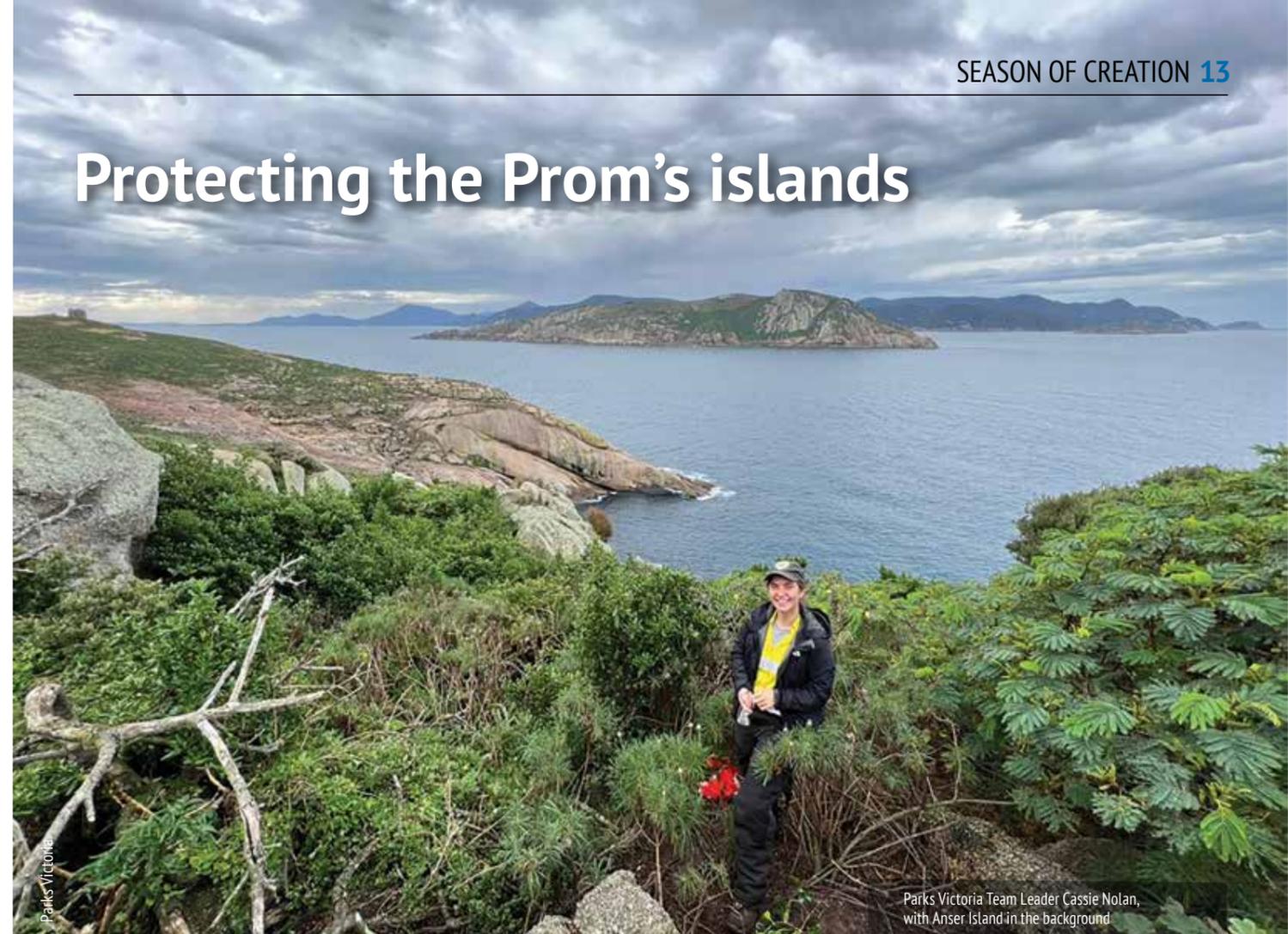
Churches need to give young people more space and empower them to lead, even if we could do the job more efficiently and professionally ourselves. This could involve organising an event, becoming a member of the parish council, sharing a meaningful verse or giving testimony of God's work in their life.

CE warns us that we can underestimate young people. In 1892, J. B. Jackson, the honorary secretary of the CE union in Victoria, said, “The records of societies before us are in many instances astonishing. It has been said that we ask too little of her young people.”

Do we ask too little of our young people? Let's be inspired by the model of CE and organise ministry in our churches, ministry that is not *to* youth but *with* youth (B. C. Hull *A Brief Overview of the Christian Endeavor*, 2019).

Dr Ruth Lukabyo is a senior lecturer and the Dean of Women at Youthworks College in Sydney.

Protecting the Prom's islands



Parks Victoria Team Leader Cassie Nolan, with Anser Island in the background

■ Parks Victoria

Using helicopters and highly skilled professionals, Parks Victoria and Pennicott Wilderness Journeys are protecting native wildlife on the islands surrounding Wilsons Promontory National Park.

The islands are home to significant seabird species such as the short-tailed shearwater, fairy prion and little penguin, along with colonies of Australian fur seal.

The natural environment is under threat from exotic, invasive weeds crowding out native vegetation and nesting habitat for seabirds.

This year, two visits in April and May saw staff from Parks Victoria and environmental tourism operator Pennicott Wilderness Journeys treat invasive weed species and survey native and invasive plant species.

Simply getting weed removal crews to the islands is a challenge, as their remote location and rugged terrain mean they can only be visited by chartered boat or helicopter. The weather needs to be perfect: no rain and only light winds – rare conditions for the Prom.

Once on the island, crews trek to find invasive weeds among the thick undergrowth and animal burrows.

While Parks Victoria conducts annual weed removal works on these islands, this year's partnership with Pennicott Wilderness Journeys has allowed rangers and contractors to dedicate twice as much time as usual to the project.

The environmental tourism operator's provision of staff, equipment and financial support has meant more resources for weed removal on the Corner Inlet Islands, and Kanowna Island, where Parks Victoria rangers also surveyed the island's endangered native plants.

“By eradicating these weeds which are

degrading key ecological attributes, we aim to restore the natural balance and ultimately ensure the long-term conservation of these precious offshore islands,” says Brett Mitchell, Area Chief Ranger of Wilsons Promontory National Park & Marine National Park, Parks Victoria.

The Wilsons Promontory National Park encompasses a range of different environments. It forms part of an Aboriginal cultural landscape that contains physical and intangible heritage, and places significant to Boonwurrung, Bunurong and Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner groups

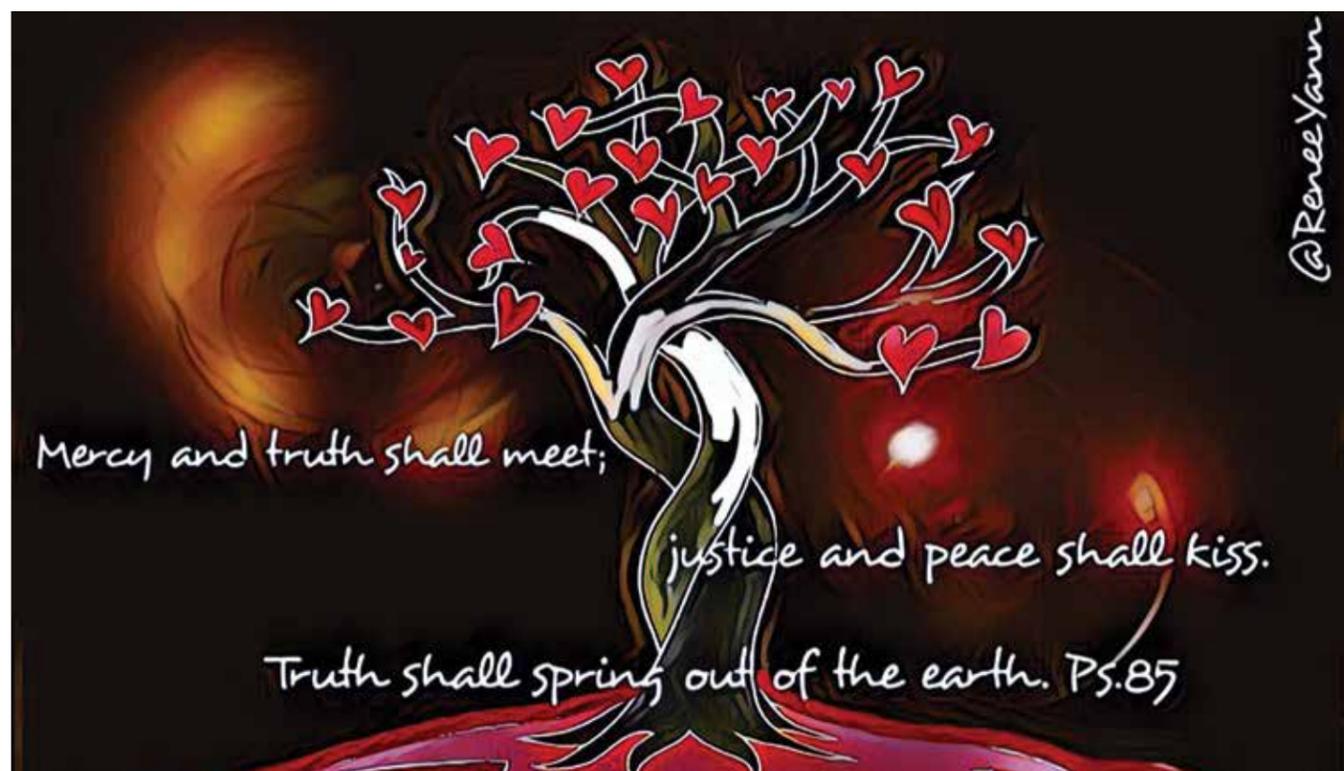
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Let justice and peace flow

■ Dr Cath Connelly

*Truth and Mercy have met together.
Justice and Peace have kissed.*

(Psalm 85:10)

In his 1999 book *The Journey Towards Reconciliation*, John Paul Lederach* imagines that Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace are no longer just ideas. In Lederach's imagination, each of these traits becomes a person with the ability to talk. He sets up a scenario in which Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace all meet for conversation in a room to explore conflict resolution from their own perspective.

I wonder what it would be like to invite these voices to be present when we consider the climate crisis and our faith-based response?

TRUTH

Truth speaks with a clarity, shining a light onto the facts of a situation. We hear Truth's voice in the scientists who tell us of the dire predictions of our climate future. We see Truth's voice in the videos of icesheets melting and rainforests being cut down. On Raymond Island there is evidence of the shoreline decreasing as the waters rise. The 40-centimetre rise by 2100 predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change would severely erode the island; a rise of one metre or more would destroy the Gippsland Lakes system.

Mercy allows room for repentance, for second chances, for causing damage without losing the opportunity to grow and fulfil our dreams.

Lederach expands on Truth's voice by asking her, "If discovering you is so crucial, why are you so hard to find?" She thinks for a while before replying, "I can only appear where the search is genuine and authentic. I come forward only when each person shares with others what they know of me, and when each one respects the others' voices. Where I am strutted before others, like a hand puppet on a child's stage, I am abused and shattered, and I disappear." Surely we have moved beyond the need to convince people of the reality of our global crisis, and yet truth appears to morph as people find their own interpretations of the scientists' predictions and of our own lived experiences of changes to climate.

Truth speaks a harsh yet necessary voice. Lederach asks Truth who out of the other three voices she most fears. "Without hesitation she points to Mercy. 'I fear him,' she says quietly. 'In his haste to heal, he

covers my light and clouds my clarity. He forgets that Forgiveness is our child, not his alone."

MERCY

Mercy asks of us that we forgive the times when we have been naive in our ill-considered abuse of Earth's natural resources. He says that we need compassion towards those who cleared the land of its trees and wildlife with the intention of creating a livelihood for themselves and their families. Mercy asks, "What freedom is there without life and relationship? Our child Forgiveness was birthed to provide healing."

When looking at the climate crisis, Mercy's role is to bring forward the eternal grace of new beginnings. Mercy invites us all to participate in the re-creation of our damaged planet by planting trees, by wisely choosing to invest in future-building companies focused on renewable energy, human rights, health care and education, by being mindful of what we eat, wear and purchase. Mercy allows room for repentance, for second chances, for causing damage without losing the opportunity to grow and fulfil our dreams.

Lederach asks Mercy who, out of Truth, Justice and Peace, he most fears. Mercy is quick to point to Justice as the one who most sits in opposition.

JUSTICE

Justice can seem harsh in his need to bring resolution to situations of inequality, greed and wrongdoing. Lederach has the voice of Justice say, "My task is to make sure that something is done to repair the damage wreaked, especially on the victims and the downtrodden. We must restore the relationship, but never while failing to acknowledge and rectify what broke the relationship in the first place."

What would Justice look like when brought to the issue of climate change? What is a faith-based response to Justice when we are exhorted to forgive seven times seventy? Justice asserts that we have an obligation to our neighbours, both human and other animals, not only because it is in our interests to maintain our planet, but because it is the right, moral and ethical thing to do. Justice points out that the actions that are destroying our planet are often embedded in systems and structures beyond the individual. It is the call to fight for abundant life for everyone and every creature, not just for some.

No one is saying that justice is easy when it comes to climate change. People have mortgages to pay and children to educate. Justice is about accountability. As Lederach says of Justice, "Love without accountability is nothing but words. Love with accountability is changed behaviour and action. This is the real meaning of restoration. My purpose is to bring action and accountability to the words."

Who then does Justice fear when we consider the climate crisis and our faith-based response? Peace.



Let Justice and Peace Flow
Season of Creation 2023

PEACE

Peace holds communities together, with the encouragement of security, respect and wellbeing. Without peace, justice can be nasty; vicious cycles of accusation, bitterness and bloodshed exist. Peace is about right relationships. It is peace on an international stage that is at greatest risk in our climate crisis as nations face widespread limits on water, clean air and arable land. Relationships between nations are already fractured as we reach limits. Peace-building efforts must become more climate sensitive as we better prepare for and adequately respond to what are increasingly complex peacebuilding contexts.

Lederach asks Peace, "And who do you fear?"

"Not who, but what and when," Peace replies. "I fear manipulation. I fear the manipulation of people using Sister Truth for their own purposes. Some ignore her, some use her as a whip, some claim to own her. I fear times when Brother Justice is sacrificed for the sake of Brother Mercy.

I fear the blind manipulation when some will sacrifice life itself in trying to reach the ideal of Brother Justice. When such trickery takes place, I am violated and left as an empty shell."

Lederach concludes his exploration of Truth, Justice, Mercy and Peace by pointing out that, in fact, they need each other. The Season of Creation is asking that we let justice and peace flow. So, too, are Truth and Mercy invited to the conversation. It is a difficult table to sit around and an utterly essential one for us to move forward in our response to the climate crisis. This moment in history calls for an urgent, courageous, visionary response. This is where people of faith rise up. We know how to be visionary and courageous; it is in our commission as Christians. Let us sit around the table. Let our voices be heard.

Dr Cath Connelly is Director of The Abbey at Raymond Island.

* All quotes are from John Paul Lederach, *The Journey Toward Reconciliation*, Herald Press, 1999, chapter 4.

East Gippsland art exhibition a dedication to birds

Lakes Entrance born artist Mathew Evans has been obsessed with colour and nature his whole life. Owning and running a successful salon in Lakes Entrance, he paints hair by day, and canvas by night.

Australian Annihilation – a free exhibition of Mathew's work at the East Gippsland Art Gallery from 8 September to 14 October – is a series of abstract and figurative paintings curated to tell a truly Australian story.

The loss of an estimated three billion animal lives during the 2019/20 fires weighs heavily on Mathew. During the fires, he witnessed a single wing fall from the sky, with flickering embers, and land on the ground. Although partially charred and discoloured, without a doubt this wing once belonged to a male eastern rosella.

Painting and drawing is a vehicle for Mathew to explore his present-day world and find peace with his place in it;

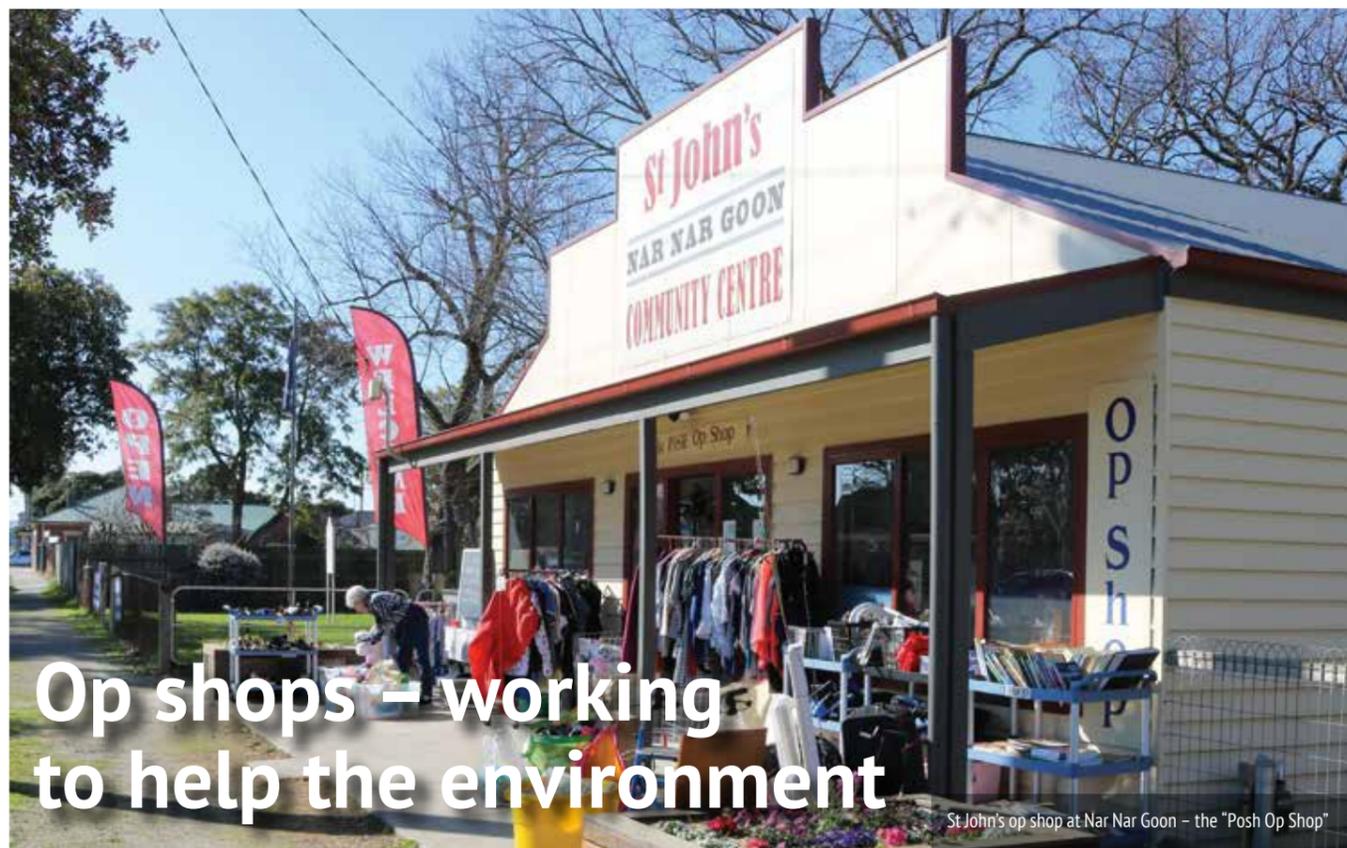
reflecting on past experiences and histories that connect him to the now. He is always searching for meaning, and hiding meaning in artworks.

The familiarity that Australians have with the plumage of our native bird life is so unique and distinctive. This series was conceptualised with the idea of being able to identify a bird without necessarily seeing a bird. Mathew wanted to dedicate his series to these creatures and celebrate their beautiful appearance and their stunning personalities.



Mathew Evans, *Gymnorhina*, oil on linen

For more information, contact East Gippsland Art Gallery, 5153 1988, info@eastgippslandartgallery.org.au



Op shops – working to help the environment

St John's op shop at Nar Nar Goon – the "Posh Op Shop"

■ Rev'd Cathy Turnbull

There are so many benefits to shopping in an op shop. Op shops are known as places where you can get a bargain. Because of this they are also places where members of the community who are struggling financially can purchase clothing and other items at a cheap price. They are also great places to connect with others, to volunteer and to create community.

If you ever spend a week with op shop volunteers you get some idea of the enormous amount of clothing that is only worn once or twice before being donated. Even more ends up in landfill.

Few people these days are willing to wear clothing until it wears out. Our desire for new is so prevalent across the western world that we find ourselves buying new clothes without ever thinking about the consequences. Now, with online shopping, it is easier than ever to purchase clothing whether we actually need it or not. According to ABC News reporter Claire Moodie, the Australian Fashion Council calculated that in 2018–19 the average Australian bought 56 items of new clothing a year, including socks and underwear. We are among the biggest purchasers of clothing in the world.

According to Martina Igin, managing director at Earth.Org, fast fashion brands are producing twice the amount of clothes today

than in the year 2000. Each year, as much as 92 million tonnes of clothing ends up in landfill across the world. This is equivalent to a rubbish truck full of clothes going to landfill every second. The fashion industry alone is said to be responsible for nearly 10% of global carbon emissions.

Each item of fast fashion we purchase comes at a huge cost for every step of its production. Most clothing today is made up of natural material mixed with plastics and even metals. The production of the base material (such as cotton) comes at an environmental cost: the travel miles for growing, producing product, cutting, sewing and shipping before the clothing even arrives in the shops or on our doorsteps are responsible for huge emissions, and the industry uses huge amounts of water. Then, when the fashion changes, the shops often discard the leftover stock, which ends up in local landfill or is sent to poorer countries to end up in huge, environmentally damaging stockpiles.

As well as effects on the environment there is the human impact on those who are exploited in the manufacture of clothes for profit-driven companies. Exploitative work practices are still common among mainstream fashion brands.

Awareness of the waste generated by the

fashion industry is growing. Op shops are now being recognised as important places of reuse – keeping clothing and household goods out of landfill, giving them a second or even a third life. This is attracting people to op shops because they care about the environment and want to do their bit in response to climate change.

We urgently need to reconsider our consumer habits when we purchase clothing. Op shops are a great first step. Look in your local op shop before looking for new clothes. When you have finished with an item of clothing, if it is still in good shape then donate it to your local op shop so it continues to have a life. By doing so you reduce the amount of clothing bought new, which ultimately reduces the amount of clothing manufactured. You also give greater value to the item of clothing as it finds a second or perhaps even third home, and the cost to make the end product has gone further.

Our op shops are one great step towards a better, cleaner, healthier world for all. Before you shop, remember to op shop!

The Rev'd Cathy Turnbull is Deacon-in-Charge at St John's Anglican Church in Nar Nar Goon, also home of the "Posh Op Shop". She is a member of ACTiNG.

Vale Ross Smith

24 January 1938 – 22 June 2023

■ Rev'd Bruce Charles

The funeral service celebrating the life and faith of Ross Smith was held at the church of the Ascension, Inverloch on Thursday 6 July. The church was filled with parishioners and people from various stages of Ross's life.

Growing up in Sydney, Ross worked as a bank clerk, school teacher and immigration officer, while living in England for a time, then as a journalist back in Sydney. This experience enabled him to join the Australian Army as a public relations officer, serving in Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne. He had two tours of Vietnam, retiring from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel to enter politics and become the member for a newly formed seat of Glen Waverley in 1985.

As a member of the Kennett government from 1992 to 1999, Ross was government whip from 1996 to 1999 and the opposition whip from 1999 to 2002. He was on a number of parliamentary committees, and perhaps the most significant committee was the Liberal Party's Police and Emergency Services and Corrections Policy Committee, of which he was chair. The First Responder Program came out of this committee, whereby firefighters are trained to treat injured people at accidents if the ambulances have not arrived. Ross was also very active in education, particularly in implementing the education reforms initiated by the Kennett government, the development of the work experience program and various scholarships for young people.

Two significant commitments that he undertook near the end of his time as an MP, and continued with, were as a board member for the Sir Edward Dunlop Medical Research Foundation and a director of the Institute in Basic Life Principles Australia Inc. since 2002, the latter being a part of his commitment to education.

On retiring from state politics, Ross served on the Monash City Council from 2002 to 2005 and then the Bass Coast City Council from 2005 to 2012.

During his time in government, both state and local, Ross was a hard-working advocate for his constituencies. He was a talented politician, described by colleagues as being an excellent networker, honourable, compassionate and an economic 'dry' – regarding the free

enterprise system, although not perfect, as better than any other system to provide the greatest good for the greatest number. This philosophy also helped him to negotiate the complexities and compromises necessary in politics, while still maintaining his integrity. A colleague, Murray Thompson, said of Ross, "His life journey experience gave him a certain authority and practical wisdom. At a personal level he was respectful, thoughtful and kind; always immaculately presented. He was also gregarious and an engaging raconteur." This practical wisdom not only helped Ross get things done but also to be able to see the big picture.

Bass Coast Shire and the Parish of Wonthaggi and Inverloch benefited greatly from Ross and his wife, Sarah, moving to Inverloch. They have been members of the parish for over 20 years. Ross served on the Parish Council, was a member of Synod and a member of the board of electors. One of his and Sarah's lasting achievements was the establishment of the op shop around 2000. Apart from promoting the op shop, Ross organised the rosters. His experience as government and opposition whip in the Parliament was evident when volunteers were not asked "Will you be on the roster?" but rather "When will you be on the roster?"

Ross was a family man; a dependable presence for Sarah and their family. He has a daughter, Harriet; two stepsons, Richard and James; and three daughters from his previous marriage, Alexina, Jann and Sarah. All of his children have spouses, and there are nine grandchildren.



Ross was a man of deep faith, devoting his life to public service. His faith was reflected in every aspect of his life, and evident to all who knew him. The Eucharist was central to his faith life, as was the discipline of morning and evening prayer – particularly in engaging with the readings of the day and often discussing them with others.

Bishop Richard and the Rector of the parish, Rev'd Graeme Liersch, shared communion with Ross not long before he died, which he very much appreciated. Bishop Richard was not able to be present at the funeral but extended his "greetings and condolences to Ross's family and to all who gather to remember and give thanks for a great servant of the Victorian community and of the Anglican Church."

We can wonder what service God has for Ross in the 'Communion of Saints'.

The Rev'd Bruce Charles is a former Rector of Wonthaggi/ Inverloch.

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A Voice off pitch

■ Murray Hannah

Aboriginal issues have some importance to me. As a school boy I was very much involved with my parents in running a Sunday school attended *en bloc* by children from the Ballarat Children's Home; many were Aboriginal people. My parents had a real heart for those kids and we occasionally had them in our home. Later, my older brother and his wife adopted two Aboriginal children, who were encouraged to maintain connections with their Aboriginal heritage.

I am no expert in Aboriginal matters, but I am sympathetic. I have read a little around the history of colonisation and Christian mission in this country. History is important, especially for those suffering its continuing consequences. Our shameful history looms large in the Voice 'Yes' campaign. But would this model of a Voice be good for Australia? In voting on a permanent change to our constitution, we must look closely at the amendment and its wording before deciding whether it is something that we can vote for.

There are two problematic phrases that occur in section (ii) of the amendment to the Constitution:

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to the Parliament and the Executive Government of the Commonwealth on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Here, the term 'Executive Government' includes Prime Minister and Cabinet, the public service and government agencies. Including it in the amendment is designed to help the Voice effect far-reaching change by giving it access to the inner workings of government and its administration.

Representations made by a Voice to Parliament would be transparent; however, representations made to the Executive Government would not be transparent. Cabinet deliberations are rarely disclosed. Public service discussions are generally not public. Not everything is revealed or documented. My observation, having worked in the public service as a research scientist for 38 years, is that bureaucrats generally take a path of least resistance. It is easiest to avoid conflict. If the Voice is to be "accountable and transparent" (as described in the Voice design principles

agreed by the First Nations Referendum Working Group), then 'Executive Government' should be removed from the wording.

The wording, "... on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples" is also problematic. It would be appropriate for the Voice to make representations on matters *particularly* affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, for example the delivery of services, infrastructure, land rights and cultural practices. But the wording also includes matters that relate to them as ordinary Australians. In effect, it allows representations to be made on any matter. A qualifier is needed in the wording, such as "particularly" or "especially", to confine representations to relevant matters.

These two features of the wording, one giving access to executive government, the other placing no constraint on matters for representation, are too broad. They position the Voice potentially as a tool in the hand of activists to proactively pursue agendas beyond its purpose. Some proponents of the Voice have reassured us that the Voice wouldn't be making representations on wide-ranging issues. Under this clause, however, it remains that it could, and surreptitiously at that. The temptation to do so would be hard to resist.

More circumspect amendment wordings have been suggested. One example, given by Louise Clegg in a Sydney Institute debate, is as follows:

Section 51 The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to ...

(xxvi.) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws after Parliament has received representations about the proposed laws from a body established by the Parliament to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Clegg's suggestion delivers constitutional recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. It specifies a body in the Constitution to represent Indigenous peoples on relevant legislation. It does what was requested in the first step of the Uluru Statement but is less complicated

than the current amendment and gives greater flexibility to Parliament to adapt to circumstances with the passage of time.

Similarly, Fr Frank Brennan (*An Indigenous Voice to Parliament, Considering a Constitutional Bridge, 2023*) has independently suggested a different wording but with content similar to Clegg's. He characterises the current proposed amendment as "too fixed, too simplistic, it won't fly and the Australian public will not accept it."

The most powerful argument for a Voice is that of justice. We have Indigenous peoples dispossessed, especially in remote communities, with poor housing, low health and life expectancy, substance and social abuse. Aboriginal leaders have requested a Voice to Parliament in the constitution. If there is even some chance that the proposed Voice will succeed in addressing the problems, there is an argument to go with it.

I find myself caught between this call for justice and the fact that the amendment is flawed. Should we hold out for a better option? I would like to think that Australian society and our governments are capable of allowing, indeed are already encouraging, the Aboriginal communities to take control of their destiny. In their *Voice to Parliament Handbook (2023)*, Thomas Mayo and Kerry O'Brien, in arguing for the Voice, provide four examples showing how successful programs can be when communities and government collaborate. These examples all happened without a permanent constitutional Voice.

For me to vote 'Yes' in the referendum, as a minimum the wording of section (ii) would need to be fixed. Words are important, especially in a constitution. There has been plenty of opportunity for the Prime Minister and the small, non-diverse group in control of the drafting process to fix the wording. Unfortunately, they have doggedly refused to do so (as is well documented by Brennan). Unsurprisingly, this Voice has not attracted broad support. What could have been a coming together may turn out to be an opportunity lost; a voice off pitch.

Murray Hannah is part of the congregation of St James Buln Buln, Parish of Neerim South.

Voice to Parliament

What if the 'yes' and 'no' sides got together to create it?

■ Dr John Bellavance

The Universal Peace Federation Australia (UPFA), a non-government organisation in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, maintains that a national vision for a Voice to Parliament cannot be achieved through political compromise alone but must involve a commitment to personal change and shared values. One of the problems we face today is the separation between values and actions. Ignoring values has led to unethical practices of individuals and businesses, technological development and political action. UPFA propose a summit to discuss how we can create a Voice that will be embraced by all Australians.

UPFA proposes a new mindset and paradigm – a 'headwing' – to address these challenges. To find solutions to the critical challenges of our time requires us to move beyond the political, ideological and economic theories and policies of left and right. We need to move beyond these divides and find shared values. Through restoring morality and cooperation we can move towards better outcomes.

For activists seeking to reform and bring about change in society the lesson of 'headwing' is to find common ground based

on views that are different from ours and mobilise the power of our shared sense of a common humanity and destiny. The terms 'common-humanity', 'identity politics' and 'common-enemy identity politics' were coined by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt. Common humanity identity politics was practised by Dr Martin Luther King, who took this approach to achieve civil rights by appealing to the shared American ideals of life, liberty and happiness. Dr King took the approach of humanising opponents and appealing to their humanity. Lukianoff and Haidt maintain that if we want to create welcoming and inclusive communities, we should be doing everything we can to turn down the "us versus them" mindset and turn up the sense of our common humanity.

People who adopt the worldview of "us versus them" lose a sense of the values we share and what binds us as people. Common-enemy identity politics leads to a mindset that life is a battle between good people and evil people, which is opposite to the view that we should try and understand the views of others and find common ground. Conditions of peace and prosperity generally turn down this "us versus them"

mindset. When a community succeeds in turning down this mindset, there is more room for individuals to construct lives of their own choosing, and there is more freedom for creative mixing of people and ideas.

For example, when we look at how we are dealing with climate change in Australia, we see the left and the right proposing solutions that appeal to their own political and economic interests, ignoring the good practices of the left and the right in favour of self-interest. Of course, this does not work because the best solutions cannot be found only on the left or the right.

There are moral and spiritual values above the left and the right that can bring differing political and policy perspectives to work together. When conservative and progressive politicians have the best interest of the people of the country at heart, they can work together based on a shared purpose and values.

Dr John Bellavance is Oceania Coordinator, International Association of Academicians for Peace, and Vice-President, Universal Peace Federation Australia.



From
the
editor

didn't get them bound he was going to be in danger of losing some. Peter Lendon from the Moe/Newborough Parish has bound all issues from 1904 onwards into large volumes covering roughly five to seven years.

TGA is aiming to reach 120 individual subscribers in its 120th year, and I am delighted that Gippsland Anglicans are now enquiring about how they can support the hard work that goes into producing each issue. Bishop Richard says:

Each month I receive a number of diocesan papers from around the country and, reciprocally, TGA reaches every other Registry Office in the Province. Not only does TGA keep us connected with each other as Gippsland Anglicans, since the earliest days of the diocese it has been an important link with the wider Anglican Communion of which we are a part. Thank you for helping us to make it so, through your contributions and your commitment to maintaining and growing its readership.



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Please consider helping us reach our goal of 120 subscribers by purchasing a subscription for yourself, a friend, or as part of your organisation. For \$65, you will receive *The Gippsland Anglican* and *The Melbourne Anglican* 11 times each year, direct to your door.



Three Great Untruths – considered through a Christian lens

Casey Horner

■ Rev'd Daniel Lowe

Social psychologist and author Jonathan Haidt suggests that, in perpetuating what he calls three great untruths hindering healthy discourse and understanding, we are doing ourselves a great harm. These three untruths can be summarised as:

- “What doesn't kill you makes you weaker”
- “Always trust your feelings”
- “Life is a battle between good people and evil people”.

In the August issue of TGA, I explored how the first of these untruths can be seen being played out and what an alternative picture might look like.

**Part B – “Use the Force, Luke!”
(Always trust your feelings)**

“Luke, you've switched off your targeting computer, is something wrong?”
Anyone with any exposure to the Star Wars universe knows what comes next. Amid the chaos of the battle, Luke hears the wise counsel of his recently departed mentor, Obi-wan Kenobi, who whispers, “Luke, trust your feelings.” Luke then switches off his targeting computer and – using the Force as his guide – fires his missiles and destroys the Death Star.
I can't help but wonder just how much this moment, and the prevailing narrative of the Star Wars universe, has helped to shape

Increasingly, students conflate trauma with emotional discomfort. But emotional discomfort is simply not the same as trauma.

the psyche of our day. Whether it is the NCIS protagonist, Leroy Jethro Gibbs, insisting that we “trust our gut”, or Ernesto de la Cruz from Coco singing “The rest of the world may follow the rules, but I must follow my heart”, the message is that our feelings are our best guide in life.

But let's go back to Star Wars for a moment – the prequel episodes specifically – where we follow would-be hero Anakin on his journey to becoming uber-villain Darth Vader. “You don't need guidance, Anakin. In time, you will learn to trust your feelings. Then you will be invincible” says Supreme Chancellor Palpatine in *Star Wars: Episode II - Attack of the Clones*. Writing for *Patheos* magazine, Terry Mattingly observed, “No wonder Anakin Skywalker seems so confused. Every time the Jedi apprentice turns around, a spiritual master tells him to trust his feelings, search his feelings or follow his feelings. Trouble is, the young

super-warrior in *Star Wars: Attack of the Clones* is a tornado of feelings. He feels love. He feels hate, ambition, desire, frustration, fear and fury.”

Which leads us to the second of Jonathan Haidt's three great untruths: “Always trust your feelings.”

The first great untruth, that what doesn't kill you makes you weaker, leads to an unhelpful desire to shield young people from possible 'trauma'. In Haidt's words, “By over-protecting our children we are setting them up to be weak, to be more easily damaged, to be more easily discouraged”. The language of safety and trauma is now applied to experiences and topics where it never would have been before. Increasingly, students conflate trauma with emotional discomfort. But emotional discomfort is simply not the same as trauma. Now add to this an unhelpful elevation of feelings as the most accurate way to make sense of our experiences and you have a recipe for disaster.

So, what is wrong with always following our feelings? Feelings are not always bad. Emotions are an intrinsic and wonderful part of being human, and Haidt is not suggesting that all emotions should be ignored. From a Christian perspective, we only need to look at the Psalms to see the full range of emotions being expressed, such as anger, fear, joy, love and sadness. And in the gospels, we see Jesus experiencing the full gamut of human

emotion. Humans are created as emotional beings. The danger lays in giving too much weight or putting too much trust in our emotions. Here are two reasons Haidt suggests about why always trusting your feelings can be unhelpful.

1. Negative feedback loops

Emotional reasoning can have negative consequences. It often leads to negative cognitive feedback loops. Individuals who suffer from anxiety and depression often start from a place of low self-esteem. And because they feel so badly about themselves, they selectively seek out “proof” to confirm their negative self-beliefs. These “proofs”, in turn, further reinforce the original negative beliefs.

One way this happens is through catastrophising: turning minor setbacks into disasters.

Another symptom is generalisation: taking one setback and re-casting it as a comment on one's entire experience in life. A third symptom is mind-reading, assuming (nearly always falsely) that others have a negative opinion of them, without any proof.

You may well have seen this played out in your own home. Imagine the child who comes home declaring in great distress, “Everyone is laughing at my haircut!” After some sympathetic conversation you establish that one or two people made a

comment in class about funny haircuts that may or may not have been referring to your child. By the end of the day, in the child's mind, “everyone is laughing” at their haircut. Their distress might be real, but it has been brought about by faulty emotional reasoning.

2. Misperception

Another dangerous manifestation of emotional reasoning can be seen in the phenomenon of misperception. Too often, emotional reasoning causes us to misperceive the world around us. Faulty emotional reasoning can cause young people to mistakenly feel targeted, and this strengthens the desire to shelter from emotionally triggering experiences – even speech that they merely disagree with. They “are encouraged to follow their feelings; if they feel offended by something then they have been attacked. They're supposed to not question those feelings,” Haidt says.

3. Modelling how we manage feelings

The great untruth is that we should always trust our feelings, but the counter for this is not that we should never trust our feelings. The end goal is not to suppress or crush or even invalidate the things our young people feel. Instead, we want to help young people to understand what is, potentially, a countercultural message that their feelings do not need to rule them and in fact they

might sometimes be deceived by them. Proverbs 25:28 says, “Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.” If we don't learn to deal with how we feel, we will manipulate ourselves and leave ourselves open to being manipulated by others.

A great way to help young people evaluate and regulate their emotional reasoning is by modelling it ourselves. If you catch yourself heading down a negative feedback loop or potentially overreacting to something, make a conscious effort to verbalise for your child the thinking process that you go through in recognising and moderating your response. Let them hear, as much as is appropriate, how you manage your feelings. And if you see them getting caught up in faulty emotional reasoning, help them to pause and reassess. Essentially, you want to say to them, “You've switched off your targeting computer; is something wrong?”

“Test me, Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love” (Psalm 26:2-3).

In the next edition of TGA, I will look at the implications of Haidt's third great untruth: that life is a battle between good people and evil people.

Daniel Lowe is a School Chaplain at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School.

NEW! GIPPSLAND ANGLICANS ON AIR

The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland is delighted to partner with Life FM in a brand-new program featuring local Anglicans in conversation on matters of modern life. Join us on the airwaves of 103.9 Life FM. Search 'Gippsland Anglicans On Air' for program details.

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Biblical Critical Theory

How the Bible's Unfolding Story Makes Sense of Modern Life and Culture

Christopher Watkin

Zondervan Academic, 2022

■ Richard Prideaux

Dr Christopher Watkin is Associate Professor in French Studies at Monash University in Melbourne and has an international reputation in the areas of modern and contemporary European thought, atheism and the relationship between the Bible and philosophy.

The critical theory named in the title refers to any approach to political philosophy that focuses on society and culture to attempt to reveal, critique and challenge power structures.

Watkin has modelled this major work of Christian and philosophical thinking on Augustine of Hippo's magisterial *The City of God* in 426 CE. *The City of God* analyses fourth-century Roman culture alongside a grand sweep of biblical literature.

Watkin's work is equally monumental and demanding. In 28 dynamic chapters, Watkin introduces his readers to a wide range of theological, philosophical and biblical ideas including trinity, creation, humanity, sin and society, the cross, resurrection, eschatology, identity, culture and a host of other topics

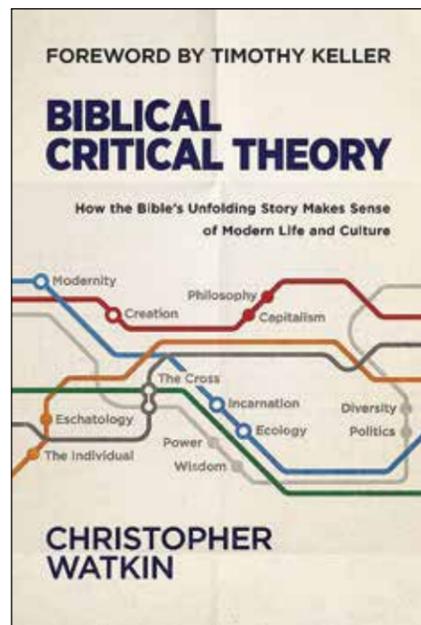
that include all the major events of the biblical story from Genesis to Revelation.

A major feature of this work is Watkin's introduction to the fierce assault of philosophic thinking on the biblical narrative, challenging many of the assumptions that moderns have assumed to be taken for granted.

His targets include Marx, Heidegger, Foucault, Russell, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Camus.

Watkin's reply to the philosophical attack is well supported by an equally articulate collection of sympathetic and Christian thinkers including David Bentley Hart, Terry Eagleton, Colin Gunton, C.S. Lewis, Leslie Newbigin, Bonhoeffer, Pascal, Alvin Plantinga, Jacques Ellul, Chesterton, Midgely and many others too numerous to name.

Each chapter finishes with a series of helpful study questions and suggestions for further thought and action, so this book would make an excellent small group study series.



A distinctive and helpful feature of Watkin's approach is his use of diagrams. One very common example is the use of diagrams with two opposing ideas in their own squares, with neither idea capable of moving forward. Watkin then adds to the diagram a biblical or Christian solution, which diagonally cuts across both squares to provide a way forward. These diagrams themselves would make excellent discussion starters.

Biblical Critical Theory is an intimidating and challenging read and would not do for someone new to theological or philosophic

discussion. More seasoned Christians, however, can rejoice that here at last is a book that not only challenges but unpicks and defeats many of the controlling thought centres dominating 21st-century Western thinking. New attacks on Christian faith in this post-Christian era require equally valid and newly formulated Christian responses, and here Watkin has delivered in spades.

Watkin has written an amazing book that will be frequently referred to in theological training and conversation for many years to come.

The Queen is Dead

Stan Grant

Fourth Estate, 2023

■ Rev'd Canon David Head

Stan Grant is well known to many as an ABC TV presenter and commentator, and a proud Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi man. *The Queen is Dead* is his fifth and most recent book. Like his other books, it is most insightful, challenging and well written.

This is a book every Australian should read, especially in preparation for the coming referendum. However, you may find it an uncomfortable experience – as I did.

This is a very angry, raw, deeply honest and, as described on the back cover, “viscerally searing and emotionally compelling book on the bitter legacy of colonialism for indigenous people.”

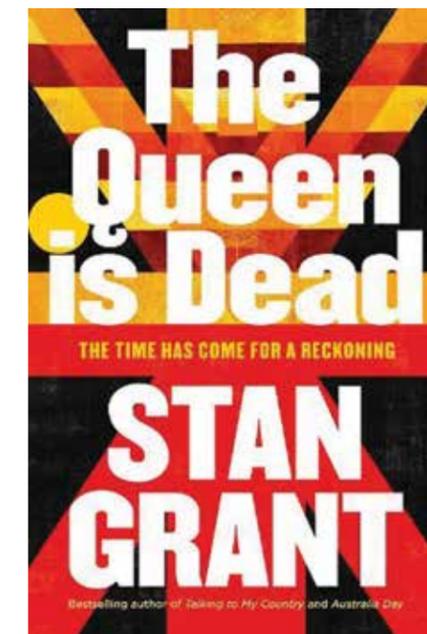
Be challenged and be discomforted as you read this wonderful but deeply painful memoir of Stan and his unpacking of what it means to be an Australian as a First Nations person. He reflects on his own and his family's history, and the deep traumas that white Australia has visited upon them. He reflects on some well-known examples of recent racism, particularly in sport, and why this is so painful for First Nations people, and yet

for most white Australians seems almost normal or at least not that big an issue.

Stan has been an ABC reporter in many parts of the world, often in places of deep conflict and suffering, and he reflects on how white colonialism has often been the root cause of or enabled so much of the pain and dysfunction that infects our world.

The death of Queen Elizabeth in September last year was a time of deep anguish for him. He recognised her greatness but also the more painful things she as Queen represented. So many people openly mourned her loss, both as Queen and as a mother and grandmother, but most people failed to even begin to acknowledge and reflect on the reality that is attached to the Crown of England and its wealth and power. The British Empire's expansion, under the crowned kings and queens, saw so much endorsed brutality, invasion, dispossession and genocidal loss of the original inhabitants, across many nations.

I had very mixed emotions at the death of Queen Elizabeth. She was a great leader and diplomat, and a person



of great integrity and dignity. However, for many years I never really saw her as my queen in Australia; legally she was, but she had very little real power or relevant meaning to me as a modern Australian.

This book is full of powerful and enabling insights into Grant's thinking and reality as a First Nations person. Near the end of his book, Grant says, “My faith tells me God put me here ... There is too much suffering, too much pain, too little justice. But there is always love and it is love that keeps my people alive.”

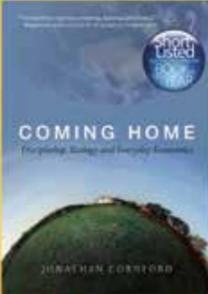
Accessible Book Club!

during Season of Creation (1st Sept - 4th Oct)

Accessible Book Club is a way for all Gippsland Anglicans to join in a friendly and welcoming group to read and discuss a recommended book. Using radio and online places, people from all corners of Gippsland can connect and grow during Season of Creation 2023.

It's easy to join in!
Each week, read a chapter of the chosen book, or listen on 103.9 Life FM. Then come to an online catch up to share your ideas. You'll need internet access for the group time. Your Parish will help if you don't have that at home.

The book we are discussing is **Coming Home**, by Jonathan Cornford (Morning Star Publishing), pictured right. Copies can be purchased from www.mannagum.org.au/publications



Let Justice and Peace Flow
Season of Creation 2023
A Mighty River
May 9, 24

Coming Home by Jonathan Cornford, 2019, Morning Star Publishing.



Use the QR for full details about Accessible Book Club, or visit www.gippslandanglicans.org.au

Coming Home helps Christians better understand how we live out discipleship at home. The discussion times for the chapters are:

- **Introduction and Chapter 1: Hospitality** (6pm, 7th Sep)
- **Work and leisure** (6pm, 14th Sep)
- **Consumption** (6pm, 21st Sep)
- **Sustainability** (6pm, 28th Sep)
- **Giving** (6pm, 5th Oct)
- **Savings and investment** (6pm, 12th Oct)
- **Debt** (6pm, 19th Oct)
- **How do these things affect our relations with others, the Earth and God?** (6pm, 26th Oct).




Have your say in TGA!

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

* Please include your name and suburb for publication.

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



Coming up



Abbey events – see page 6

Uncharted Waters: Christian Ethics in a Rapidly Changing World

10 weekly online conversations on ethics and Christianity. ISCAST series begins 28 September. iscast.org.au/events.

Safe Church Refresher workshops

St James' Traralgon
10 November, 5–8 pm.
Register by 8 November at trybooking.com/CGDLX.

St Paul's

SPRING PLANT SALE

Saturday
14 October 2023
9am – 3pm

Plants • Gardening books and knick-knacks
Wind chimes • Cakes • Raffle
Local experienced gardeners available on-site

Devonshire Teas

Delbridge Hall
153 Cunninghame Street Sale

2023

SEASON OF CREATION PRAYER



Creator of All,

From your communion of love life sprung forth like a mighty river and the whole cosmos came into being.

On this Earth of overflowing love, the Word was made flesh and went forth with the life-giving waters proclaiming peace and justice for all creation.

You called human beings to till and keep your garden. You placed us into right relationship with each creature, but we failed to listen to the cries of the Earth and the cries of the most vulnerable. We broke with the flowing communion of love and sinned against you by not safeguarding the conditions for life.

We lament the loss of our fellow species and their habitats, we grieve the loss of human cultures, along with the lives and livelihoods that have been displaced or perished, and we ache at the sight of an economy of death, war and violence that we have inflicted on ourselves and on the Earth.

Open our ears to your creative, reconciling and sustaining Word that calls to us through the book of Scripture and the book of creation. Bless us once again with your life-giving waters so that the Creator Spirit may let justice and peace flow in our hearts and overflow into all creation.

Open our hearts to receive the living waters of God's justice and peace, and to share it with our suffering brothers and sisters, all creatures around us, and all creation.

Bless us to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams of the living waters of God's justice and peace may become a mighty river all over the Earth.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ.

Amen.



SEASON OF
CREATION

seasonofcreation.org

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