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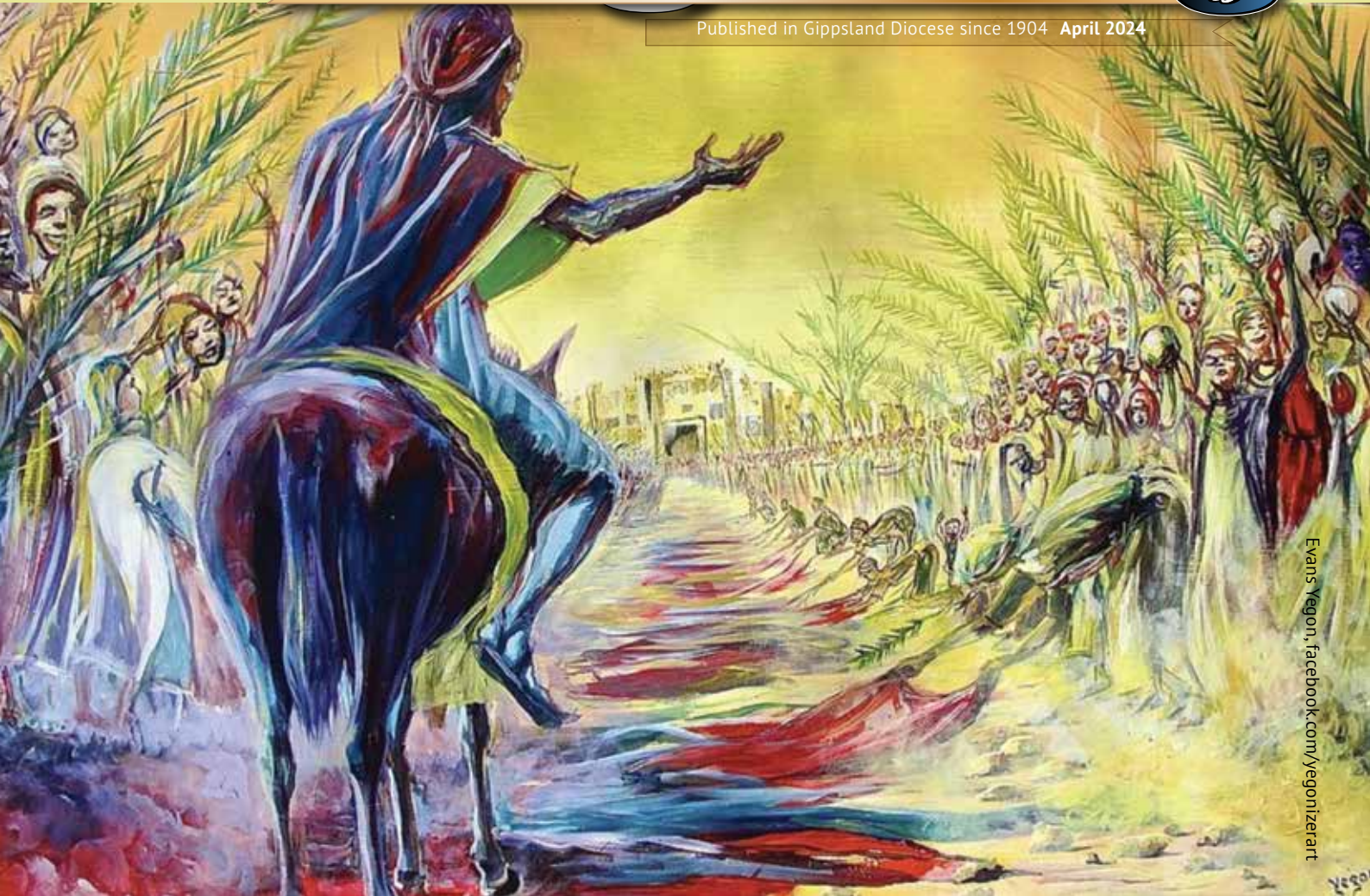
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CELEBRATING 120 YEARS

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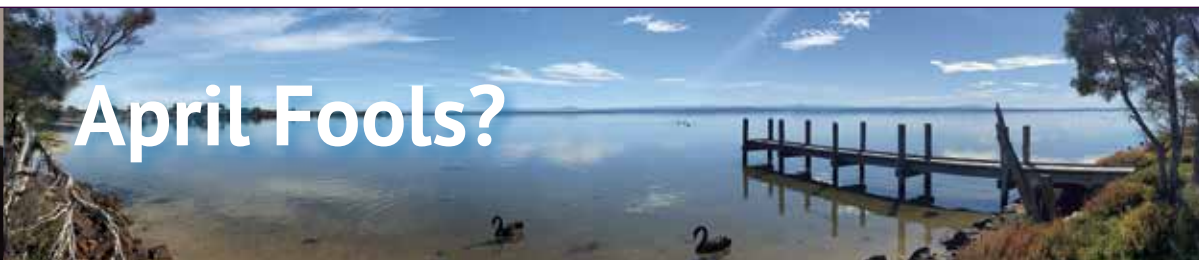
Evans Yegon, facebook.com/yegonizerart

See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey.

Zephaniah 9:9b



April Fools?



This year's near-coincidence of Easter Day and April Fools' Day is an interesting one, to say the least. All Fools' Day, as it's also known, is a day *par excellence* for 'fake news'. It is said to have its origins with the fool's errand of the dove sent out from the ark by Noah before the water had abated – on 1 April apparently, although I don't recall reading that in Genesis chapter 8!

In Victoria it also marks the early days of the International Comedy Festival. One year during this festival the ABC's Triple J breakfast radio ran a competition called 'Jesus, You've Got Talent'. The idea was that contestants would come to Federation Square dressed up as Jesus (you can just imagine the array of badly arranged bedsheets, old sandals and improvised beards on display), and then perform their favourite party piece: juggling cats, yodelling the national anthem, or whatever.

Public reactions on that Easter weekend confirmed the view of some that – even in the middle of a comedy festival – Christians have no sense of humour.

Had the resurrection taken place at the corner of Swanston and Flinders Streets that particular April morning, and a bleary-eyed Jesus was told by an over-zealous radio producer to fill out an entry form – and, by the way, great costume! – while waiting for his turn behind Jesus #7 over there with the ukulele, I wonder what he would have listed as his talent? After all, as father Abraham says in the parable: if people won't take notice of Moses and the prophets, nor will they be impressed even if someone should rise from the dead (Luke 16:31).

The demand for signs was, of course, something Jesus knew well: a gospel theme nicely parodied by Herod's song in *Jesus Christ Superstar*: "Prove to me that you're no fool, walk across my swimming pool."

During Lent and Holy Week we've been reminded of the fickle reception the works Jesus did perform received at the hands of various sets of judges; works such as pronouncing forgiveness, finding a place at table for the socially and thus economically marginalised, challenging oppressive or self-serving readings of life-giving traditions, naming injustice, and enabling the broken to find healing and wholeness. Each is an expression of his one great talent – extending divine hospitality.

On the third Sunday in Lent we heard St Paul speaking of the cross as folly: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Greeks. How much more so the account of an empty tomb, which in Luke's gospel is described as an "idle tale" (Luke 24:11), as fake news? For the women in Mark's gospel the message that the Crucified One has risen is so unthinkable as to be terrifying and, for fear more of its truth perhaps than its falsity, they flee in silence.

The Apostle Paul goes on in that letter to the early church in Corinth to call himself a "fool for the sake of Christ" (1 Cor 4:10); a fool because he subjected the prevailing rationalities of his Stoic and pharisaic worldview to the counterintuitive rationality of the cross: standing under it in order to understand the paradoxical shape of divine wisdom. No wonder he is declared mad by Roman Governor Festus (Acts 26:24) and mocked in the great philosophical centre of Athens (Acts 17:32).

According to Paul, that in which we put our hope is what to all the world looks like nonsense, leaving us the most pitiable of all people, if in fact Christ be not raised (1 Cor 15:19).

Yet Paul's experience, both from his Jewish pedigree and his calling to serve the Gospel among Gentiles, is that the God of Israel, the One Jesus called Father, has ever been in the business of bringing light out of darkness, and life out of death.

In his letter to the Romans (4:17), he describes God as one who makes the dead live and calls into being that which is not, with particular reference to Abraham, evoking a raft of stories of supposedly 'barren' women bearing children: Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel.

Sarah thinks it's laughable when she is told by divine guests that she will bear a son – "after I have grown old and my husband has grown old, shall I have pleasure?" Surely this is a joke – an April Fools' gag – as she checks the calendar. And, as the story goes, God, at least, does have a sense of humour, with the son duly born to Sarah named Isaac, meaning 'laughter'.

A few chapters earlier in Genesis, that dove which had come back with nothing from its first reconnaissance mission did return with a leaf from its second; and on the third outing it flew away to new life beyond the tomb-like and womb-like ark.

They'll say you're joking, Mary, when at length you stop running, draw breath and find your voice. But if you'd told us that you'd found him there, still, and cold, and lifeless, this eternal Word of Abraham's God, who calls into being that which is not – if you'd told us *that*, then we might have laughed.

With you, we return to Galilee, to where it all begins, and we search the scriptures, receiving your story – and ours – again and afresh; making sense of it in light of our experience, as you did – as people of faith have been doing ever since Abraham: shaping their lives with the story; shaping the story with their lives.

And in a glorious Eastertide we return to the starting point of the font, to the promises made at our baptism; and we renew there our calling to holy folly. Yes, on All Fools' Day we rejoice to be fools for Christ: April fools for him who – ever the Crucified One – is risen.

+RM



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.

Paynesville induction a joyous occasion



(L-R) Rev'd Dennis Webster, Bishop Richard, Robert Fordham and Richard Connelly in a moment of silent prayer before the service

■ Sue Fordham

Despite a hot and sticky evening, and the church being a building site, nothing was going to contain or limit the joy of the induction of The Rev'd Dennis Webster as Rector of St Peter's Paynesville.

It would be churlish to call this night "long awaited", for the people of St Peter's had been superbly served in the interim – first by Bishop Jeffrey Driver as Priest-in-Charge, then by locum priest The Rev'd Heather Toms, assisted by the Rev'ds

Tim Gaden and Jeffrey Berger.

But there was a sense of accomplishment or completion on the night of 27 February, the feast day of 17th-century priest and poet George Herbert, as Dennis was inducted into the parish as its priest and fellow traveller in this journey of the spirit.

Hymns written by George Herbert were sung and a sermon preached by Bishop Richard on the themes of priestly ministry and parish life in Herbert's time and ours.

"For all of its joys, ministry here, even in beautiful Paynesville, among the delights of East Gippsland, is hard yakka; it's tough going," Bishop Richard said.

He used a nautical metaphor in describing the strong cultural headwinds the church today faced in comparison to the more benign downwinds of Herbert's day.

But the priest as promoter of the encounter between humanity and God, the priest committed to prayer, the priest committed to the dignity and wellbeing of the whole person – this concept of priesthood is timeless. Dennis, Bishop Richard observed, was such a priest.

He finished by quoting Justin Lewis-Anthony in his book *If You Meet George Herbert on the Road, Kill Him* (subtitled *Radically Rethinking Priestly Ministry*) to conclude that priestly and parish ministry need to be set free to become three things: witnesses to the visible presence of God, watchpersons set apart as see-ers and proclaimers, and weavers of our stories with God's.

Having begun with a Welcome to Country by The Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy and in the presence of a large number of Dennis' previous parishioners from Gisborne, the symbols of ministry were presented, the licence read and presented to Dennis, and the traditional speeches of welcome made.

It was a wonderful evening of celebration and renewed commitment.

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Drouin welcomes new members of church household

(L-R) Rev'd John Webster, Calvin Langford, Melissa Fielden, Jesse McCoubrey, Alex Clover and Bishop Richard

■ Pauline Davies

On 11 February, Drouin Anglican Church welcomed Bishop Richard, who attended to officiate at one baptism and four confirmations of local parishioners during the morning service. Family, friends and sponsors supporting those to be initiated, as well as the regular Sunday morning parishioners almost filled the church, which created a feeling of anticipation and excitement.

In his sermon on the Transfiguration readings, Bishop Richard reflected on the journey of each candidate to this point, and spoke of a divinely woven thread in the tapestry of their lives that is the pattern of redemption. As we all prepared for Ash Wednesday in the week to follow, he encouraged us to look back and take stock: "If there are pieces in our past that we think don't fit in our present, let us look more closely for the divine pattern of redemption in our own lives and stories. For nothing is wasted in God's economy of grace."

The Rev'd John Webster baptised Jesse McCoubrey, the youngest member to be received into the Church. Bishop Richard then confirmed Jesse, his father Alex Clover, Melissa Fielden and Calvin Langford as, together with their sponsors, they affirmed their baptismal promises and their hope

in God's future, which meets us in the here and now through such rites of passage. Everyone then participated in the Eucharist where – as Bishop Richard had reminded us – Christ is always present, and we may see ourselves as God sees us in him, 'the Beloved'.

After the service, the congregation enjoyed morning tea in the gathering area, congratulating the newly confirmed parishioners, welcoming them into our Church with their family and friends, and sharing in the ministry of hospitality.



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All systems 'go' as first sod turned at St Peter's Paynesville

Rev'd Heather Toms turns the first sod, watched by parishioners at St Peter's Paynesville

■ Sue Fordham

Following the parish Eucharist on 4 February the people of St Peter's Paynesville gathered for the turning of the first sod in their long-awaited building program.

Ceremonially undertaken by The Rev'd Heather Toms, then locum priest at St Peter's, this was the first step in realising a dream begun under the leadership of Bishop Jeffrey

Driver two years ago.

The building update to the road frontage will allow for disability-compliant toilet and bathroom facilities, a new robing area, and expanded kitchen and fellowship area.

Parishioners have fundraised with pop-up bric-a-brac sales, personal donations and myriad other measures, including donations

from other community religious and non-religious groups.

There is great excitement among the people of St Peter's as they watch Gippsland builder Legend Homes erect scaffolding and get to work preparing the site.

Works are expected to be complete in July.

Harvest Festival at Poowong

■ Sue Wilson

Wild weather, fallen trees and the loss of power were things of the past come the Sunday morning in February when we arrived at the Poowong Community Garden to celebrate Harvest Festival. There was instead a light breeze and cloud cover to keep us cool and comfortable as we sat outside under the newly erected gazebo. A variety and abundance of freshly picked vegetables were laid out on a table.

We thanked God for the seed packed with hidden life, bursting with potential; and we thanked Him for all who sow and watch and wait; and for the ripening towards tomorrow's bread – His gift of food for a hungry world.

Those who have been doing the hard work of designing and gardening sang their theme song with enthusiastic and grateful hearts: "Inch by inch, row by row, gonna make this garden grow."

Prayer and partnerships at St Mark's Rosedale

■ Rev'd Lyndon Phillips

St Mark's hosted World Day of Prayer in Rosedale this year, the focus being Palestine. We are indebted to organist Rod Aitken (Heyfield Uniting and Heyfield Anglican churches), who selected hymns that embraced hope and unity into this desperate humanitarian situation. Our fellowship and our communal time of sharing and praying is always a joy that the closeknit community of Rosedale embraces. World Day of Prayer is scheduled annually and rotates around our faith communities, but our ecumenical fellowship is a constant within our community in many and varied ways.

Recently our churches combined to share in online Safe Ministry training, sharing a meal and discussing the topics raised in the training, which added an extra dimension to our understanding of safety and care. The openness of fellowship over many years has allowed us to be welcoming and inclusive.

Shrove Tuesday is another time of great fellowship and laughter that is diarised each year as a reminder to come together in fellowship.

Our Tuesday afternoon Craft 'n Chat folk, with our primary school community, generous individuals, and amazing traders, enabled the distribution of hampers within our community midsummer school holidays.

More recently, Parish Council met with Nigel, a representative of Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund (GERF). Nigel explained the volunteer structure of GERF and the availability of relief support that was available to Gippslanders following natural disasters. We as a faith community have agreed to continue our support of GERF as we reach out wider into our community to share the information of partnering with diverse groups that enables our communities to flourish.

Listening to community feedback in Latrobe

■ Jane Anderson

I'm happy to share with you our latest report for the last three months of 2023. In this report, we share what our community members have been saying. During this time, people in Latrobe were mostly talking about access to services. This made up about one-third of all the conversations with me.

Older community members who had lived in the Latrobe Valley for a long time felt that access to services, particularly health services, was much better in the past, when there was an emphasis on providing local facilities in smaller towns. These feelings of exclusion from health services in smaller towns extended to difficulties in getting access to cash and banking services, and in the closure of local food stores. Although many thought that services were probably around, they found it hard to locate them.

Another issue raised in Latrobe was the impact of social isolation on mental health. Community members advised that local mental health services have advised them of six-month waiting lists to access services, and that these delays were exacerbating other health issues. Other community members reported that local

mental health services have not returned their calls requesting appointments.

Safety fears were frequently raised, especially in relation to public transport. Community members reported experiences of people drinking on trains, resulting in frightening behaviour that required reports to police. Older community members and people with disabilities were especially impacted by disruptive behaviour on public transport, and reduced their social engagement as a result. People with disabilities reported being assaulted on buses.

During this quarter, we have observed changes in relation to how services are designed and funding allocated, how organisations work together collaboratively and how community voice is valued.

Life Skills Victoria's self-advocacy group is working with the Gippsland Disability Advocacy Institute and New Wave to develop a service model that ensures that the group receiving the service are the ones that run it.

Federation University's Physiotherapy Virtual Care Clinic is changing access to healthcare delivery. The virtual physiotherapy clinic responds to community needs and enhances student training within a

collaborative partnership. With the support of the Latrobe Health Assembly, people who do not have digital connectivity in their homes can access the services from community locations.

Among other activity, we have been advocating for continuity of aged care services, provision of gender-affirming care in Gippsland and provision of information to people about services that are available.

As part of my role, I prioritise the experiences of Latrobe communities and advocate for changes in systems that can improve their health and overall welfare. My focus is on reaching out to those who are often not heard and giving them a voice through a platform that can bring their aspirations and concerns to the attention of the government and services. Moreover, I strongly encourage governments and services to prioritise community input in the design and delivery of programs.

If you, or a group you belong to, would like to share your experiences with me, please get in touch on 1800 319 255.



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Wellbeing Centre underway for St Paul's secondary students



St Paul's Warragul Secondary School's Wellbeing Centre in progress



Architect's impression of the Wellbeing Centre

■ Paula Walland

A new Wellbeing Centre, dedicated to enhancing the wellbeing of the school community, is being constructed at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School's Warragul Secondary School.

The Wellbeing Centre will provide several purpose-designed consultation offices that will cater for an increased number of counsellors and psychologists,

allowing more students to access support when needed.

A shared multi-purpose reflective space for students and staff will offer a calm and quiet area, allowing and encouraging students to spend time thinking things through. The centre also includes an adjacent but separate room for those who would benefit from time away from others,

or who are accessing external services.

With a design inspired by the natural environment and built to emulate the flow of a river, the space will have muted tones, soft textures and curved walls that will soften the area and engender a sense of calm.

The building is set to be completed by the middle of this year.



Gippsland Anglicans

Committed in Christ

Gippsland Anglicans are grounded in Christ. We engage with the Church's living traditions as intentional inclusive communities where all are welcome, respected, safe, and valued.

Our identity is shaped by

- Scripture studied with reverence and rigour
- Worship that unites and inspires
- Ministry exercised by all the baptised
- Prayer which opens hearts to grace
- Diversity received as a gift of creation
- Growth in belonging and believing

Connecting in Service

Gippsland Anglicans share in Christ's mission. We hold fast to the vision of human flourishing Jesus called 'the Kingdom of God' and we reach out in partnership with good news for all.

Our ministry is marked by

- Listening to people's lived experience
- Looking outward in meeting needs
- Speaking into the big questions of the day
- Reconciling where there is injustice or injury
- Building up communities of care and trust
- Acting for the good of earth and all creatures

Creative in Spirit

Gippsland Anglicans are open to Christ's leading. We seek to respond to changing needs and new understandings, to be faithful and imaginative in bearing stories of hope for our time and place.

Our calling is discovered by

- Reflection on what disruption teaches us
- Readiness to try new things and ideas
- Engagement with local communities
- Collaboration in small and large projects
- Empowerment of children and young people
- Generosity in the use of our resources



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, Bidjara and Ngarigo/Monero peoples

Hundreds return to Gippsland Grammar to celebrate centenary



More than 130 Old Scholars and current families joined the Gippsland Grammar Foundation and Leadership team to launch the school's centenary at the Gippsland Grammar Gala at Maffco

■ Lisa Baker

It was a celebration 100 years in the making and Gippsland Grammar's community travelled from near and far to mark the centenary of Gippsland's oldest independent school.

Over three days in late February, more than 400 people attended Gippsland Grammar's four centenary events, including a gala at Maffco hosted by the Gippsland Grammar Foundation (the fundraising arm of the school), a book launch of two books the school has published to mark the occasion, a centenary thanksgiving Eucharist at the Chapel of St Anne, and a reunion barbecue for the former students of Gippsland Grammar School.

Gippsland Grammar Principal Michele Wakeham said the weekend of celebrations was an incredible success that brought together the school's Old Scholars with its current students and families.

"It was amazing to see so many people with so many fond memories of their time at our school return for our celebrations," Mrs Wakeham said. "Each of our events had its own distinct feel and was attended by a slightly different cohort of our Old Scholars and current families. My favourite part was watching old friends reconnect and listening to them reminisce. We can't wait to continue celebrating with everyone throughout the year."

Gippsland Grammar incorporates five schools: the original Church of England Girls' School Sale, St Anne's Church of England Girls' Grammar School, Gippsland



The school's current leadership team includes (L-R) Rohan Jayatilake, Michele Wakeham, Jie Van Berkel, Virginia Evans, Bo Power, Kate Ray, Lee Nethercote and Lori Field



St Anne's students Max Del Busso and Frankie Balfour blow out the candles on Gippsland Grammar's birthday cake at the launch of two books to mark the school's centenary

Grammar School, St Anne's and Gippsland Grammar School (STAGGS) and the Gippsland Grammar we know today, which has more than 1100 students and 280 staff. On 24 February the school launched two centenary publications: *Memories, Stories from 100 years of Gippsland Grammar* by Ann Andrew is a wonderful compilation of 100 stories from students from the school's earliest years until today, while its companion, *Wheelbarrow's Birthday*, is a children's book that reimagines 12 of those stories in a form more suitable for the school's youngest students.

Mrs Wakeham said "While *Memories* is for the coffee table, *Wheelbarrow's Birthday* is better suited to a child's bedside table. And together they capture the spirit of schoolyard storytelling."

Old Scholar from the Class of 1986 Hugh Williams shared his recollections of his school years in *Memories* and his story was also reimagined in *Wheelbarrow's Birthday*. He returned to his former school to join the celebrations and to speak at the book launch.

Mr Williams was a trailblazer in the early years of the internet and has worked alongside Bill Gates at Microsoft as well as at Google and eBay. He is the person who invented the infinite scroll, a piece of

technology used by billions of people around the world every day, and is also one of the world's foremost experts on internet search and data management.

More than 150 Old Scholars, including many former students from St Anne's Church of England Girls' Grammar School, joined Mr Williams at the book launch, including former Gippsland Grammar Board member and member of the Class of 1969 Val Jones, who said she was absolutely thrilled to return to the school for the event.

"Driving to Sale for the book launch I didn't quite know what to expect," Mrs Jones admitted. "But I found my classmates and memories flowed and I was surprised to see many people I knew, although I didn't know they were associated with the school."

"The day showcased how many different people work to make a school – not just students and teachers. A highlight for me was meeting Year 12 student Eden Levchenko who illustrated my story in the *Wheelbarrow's Birthday* book."

Another keynote speaker at the weekend's events was Lindsay Tanner. A member of the Class of 1973, Mr Tanner was the Federal MP for Melbourne from 1993 to 2010 and served as the



Old Scholar Alan Berry (Class of 1966) managed to fit into his old school blazer to be the unofficial 'best dressed' at the 'Gippsland Grammar School' reunion BBQ. Mr Berry borrowed the school tie of his neighbour to complete his outfit



Ann Andrew authored a book to commemorate Gippsland Grammar's centenary. Titled *Memories, Stories from 100 Year of Gippsland Grammar*, the book includes 100 stories from Old Scholars spanning the 100 years of the school's existence



Gippsland Grammar held a centenary Eucharist in the Chapel of St Anne at the Garnsey Campus to mark its centenary

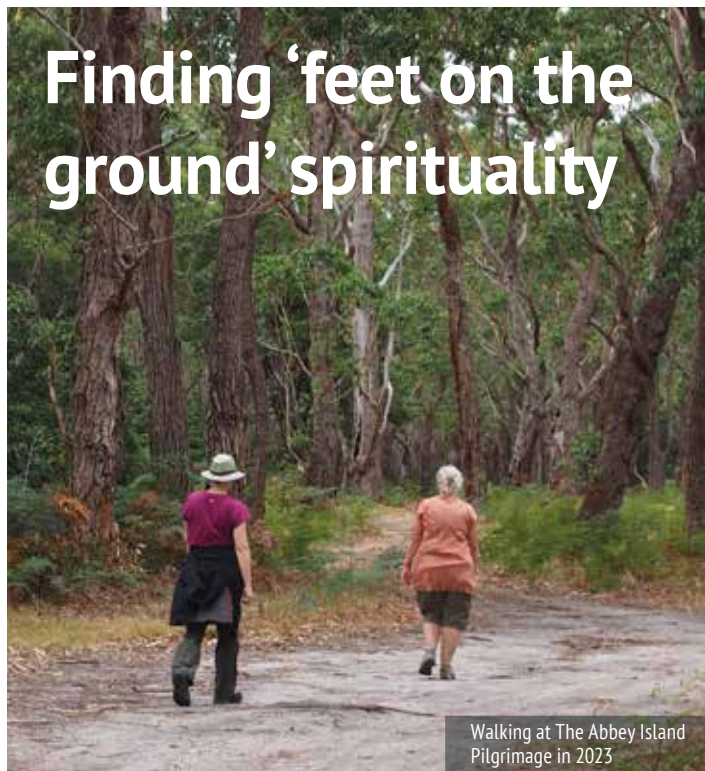
Minister for Finance in 2007–2010. Since leaving politics he has undertaken various senior roles including Director of Suncorp Group and Chairman of Essendon Football Club.

In his speech at the Gippsland Grammar School reunion on 25 February, Mr Tanner reflected on the values the school embodied when Australia was still under the White Australia Policy.

"The Gippsland Grammar School sent out signals to us as kids that probably seemed subtle at the time, which were that all people of all different racial origins should be treated equally, that racism was unacceptable and that racial discrimination was unacceptable," Mr Tanner told a crowd of about 90 of his former schoolmates at the reunion. "I absorbed these messages, and they had a big influence on me over time. They of course are now mainstream, thankfully, but at the time for a country Victorian boarding school were pretty unusual."

Gippsland Grammar will continue to celebrate its centenary throughout this year with a calendar of events that includes the launch of a historic 'Centenary Walk' at its annual St Anne's Day celebration on 26 July, events that celebrate multi-generational school families and a return of STAGGfair, the school's biennial fete. New scholarships have also been launched in the school's centenary year, including the Learn, Live and Lead Residential (boarding) Scholarship, Visual Art and Technology scholarships and an Indigenous scholarship.

Finding 'feet on the ground' spirituality



■ Dr Cath Connelly

Occasionally I am asked to explain the difference between being a tourist and a pilgrim. I like the description that as a tourist, you pass through the landscape; as a pilgrim, the landscape passes through you. Here at Gragin/Raymond Island we invite you to come as pilgrim.

It's our third year now of offering 'Island Pilgrimage: Walking the land, listening to Spirit, reflecting together'. The invitation is to come away and allow this beautiful, deep, grace-filled landscape to hold you. Pilgrimage is about 'feet on the ground' spirituality; it is a time where our physical walking allows space for the inner journey of transformation.

There will be times of input, space for reflection and silence, as well as walking the Island. Above all, it is time in creation – the land, the lake, the sea and sky. We will live into our growing awareness that the environment is to us friend and partner on the journey; together as one we are blessed by the God of all creation. We walk the land, yet this is not a strenuous pilgrimage. All levels of fitness are accommodated.

The pilgrimage happens on 15–19 April. Give it a go – it is a very special experience.



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Save the date



APRIL

- 11 *Hush Quiet Day: Spirituality from the Forest.* Facilitator: Dr Cath Connelly.
- 15–19 Island Pilgrimage: Walking the land, listening to Spirit, reflecting together. Facilitators: Dr Cath Connelly and Russell Smith.
- 24 The Creation Windows through Literature, Art, and Music. April focus: Fish, birds and animals. Facilitators: June Treadwell, Sue Fordham and Michael Fox.
- 27 Back to Raymond Island: Come and revisit those memories.

MAY

- 8 The Creation Windows through Literature, Art, and Music. May focus: Humans. Facilitators: June Treadwell, Sue Fordham and Michael Fox.
- 9 *Hush Quiet Day: Spirituality from the Rivers, Lakes and Oceans.* Facilitator: Rev'd Canon David Head.
- 10–11 Retreat: Men's Spirituality Mentoring Course. Facilitator: Rev'd Jeff Berger.
- 16–19 Retreat: Love is Letting Go of Fear. (Thursday – Sunday). Facilitator: Martin Hosking.
- 31 (to 2 June) Weekend Retreat: Meeting the Enneagram. Facilitator: Julia Fullarton.

JUNE

- 12 The Creation Windows through Literature, Art, and Music. June focus: Sabbath. Facilitators: June Treadwell, Sue Fordham and Michael Fox.
- 13 *Hush Quiet Day: Spirituality from the Mountains.* Facilitator: Dr Cath Connelly.
- 15 Open Day for Islanders.
- 24–28 Retreat: In the Footsteps of Meister Eckhart (Monday – Friday). Facilitator: Rev'd John Stewart.



Wine flows to fundraise for The Abbey

■ Richard Connelly

The Abbey Chapter, as stewards of The Abbey's mission of hospitality, spirituality and care for the environment has commenced a special fundraising endeavour.

The Abbey on Raymond Island is a cherished sanctuary within our community. Given its mission and significance, we ask for your support in drinking wine!

The fundraising campaign, which began in March, is encouraging people to purchase wine to be delivered direct to their homes. A range of delicious wines have been made available, and they have received good reviews.

To make purchases and for enquiries, please contact the Registrar, Richard Connelly: richardc@gippslandanglicans.org.au

The Abbey continues to run an active program of events throughout the year (see opposite page). As Gippsland Anglicans, you can receive a 10% discount on all Abbey accommodation bookings. To access this discount, please contact Anna Esdaile ((03) 5156 6580, info@theabbey.org.au), and mention the name of your parish.



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

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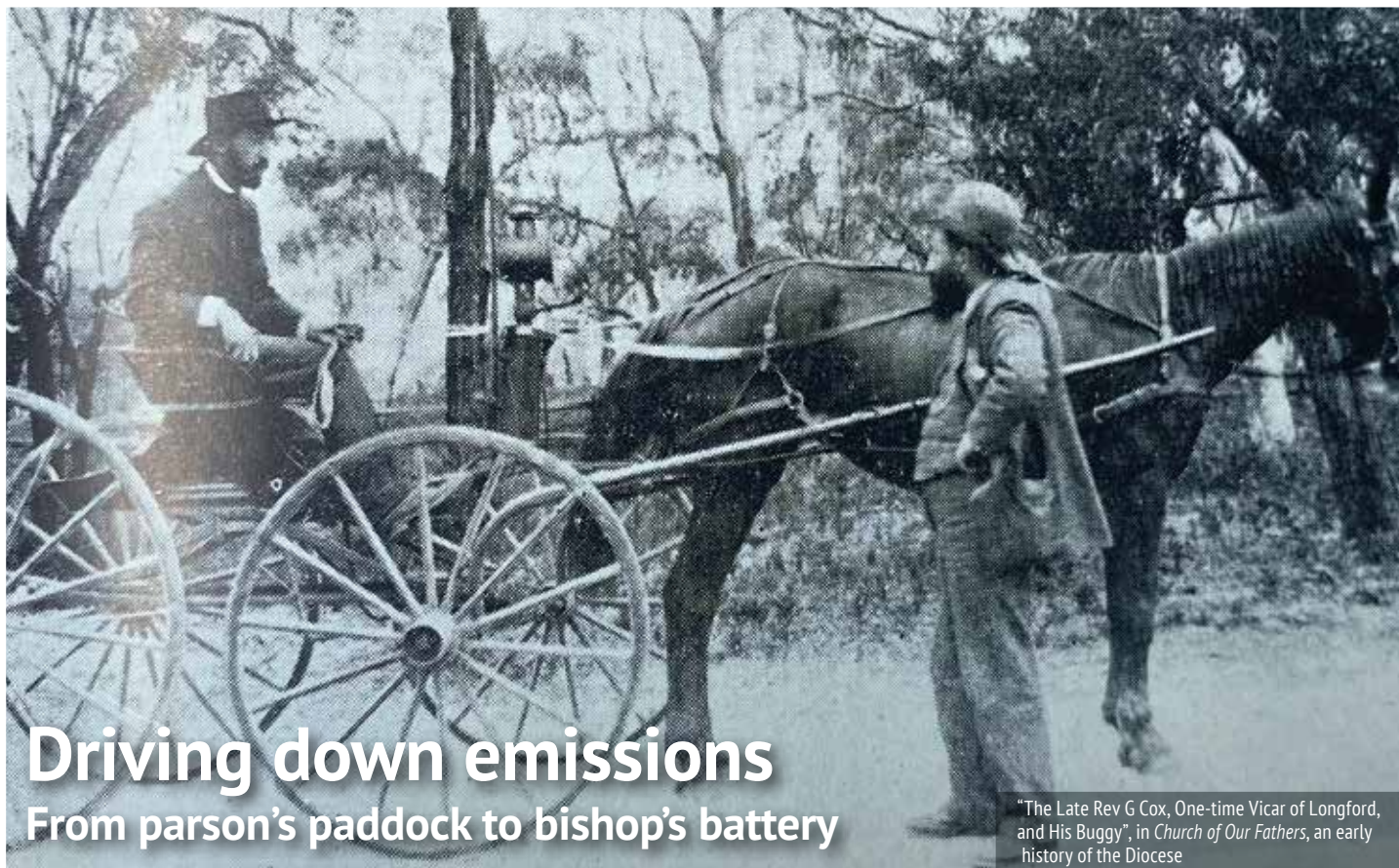
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Driving down emissions

From parson's paddock to bishop's battery

"The Late Rev G Cox, One-time Vicar of Longford, and His Buggy", in *Church of Our Fathers*, an early history of the Diocese

■ Jan Down

The rector of Rosedale, around 1910, was provided with a horse and buggy. This was briefly replaced by a motorbike, as the story is told in AE Clark's *The Church of Our Fathers* (1947). The next rector was back to the horse and buggy; the motorbike proved too expensive to run, while the horse could refuel on grass.

Gippsland's Bishop and Registrar are now recharging their cars on free energy from the sun (mostly), after the recent purchase of two BYD SEAL electric cars.

The Registrar, Richard Connelly, explained that the decision was largely influenced by motions from both the Gippsland Synod and General Synod, calling for action to minimise emissions in response to climate change.

The two Diocesan cars were due to be replaced and the choice of vehicle required a medium-term focus. The timing of the purchase was based on the release of a model capable of driving from Sale to Melbourne and return (and across the majority of the Diocese) on a single charge, with capacity to charge the vehicle from home overnight.

The Diocese also has budgetary responsibilities. "The cost of the purchase was only slightly greater than replacing the existing fleet; however, significant savings are projected over the life of the vehicles, given that they should be able to be retained for longer, challenging the

existing notion of 'needing' to replace a car every 4–5 years. And also given that, so far, the cost of running the cars is approximately only 40% of running diesel-powered cars, and when they can be charged directly from solar panels on both Bishopscourt and the Registrar's home, the cost of running these cars approaches \$0."

Both drivers find the cars handle well. The Registrar said, "They are very quiet, which is great for listening to podcasts,

music and making phone calls in the 'mobile office'."

Both note some drawbacks as well. Richard Connelly doesn't enjoy having to flick through many screens before driving off, to remove all the "annoying beeps and warning sounds" common in any new car.

Bishop Richard finds the car noticeably smaller than his previous Kia SUV, so this "requires an adjustment when packing robes, or for overnight trips, and it is lower



Jan Down

Bishop Richard and the Registrar, Richard Connelly, with their new BYD electric cars at Bishopscourt

to the ground, which I find slightly less comfortable when getting in and out. However, these are minor inconveniences when compared with the reduction in fossil fuel emissions (provided we hang on to these vehicles as the Registrar intends) and the savings on diesel (mindful that it cost well over \$100 every time I refuelled)."

Bishop Richard added, "The first bishops of Gippsland got around on horsepower – quite literally! I think the move to EVs for diocesan cars represents a commitment to reducing our carbon footprint as Gippsland Anglicans, in keeping with the mind of Synod and the work of ACTinG. Like any major transition in technology, some adjustment and compromise is needed in the short term, but within a few years EVs will be the norm. I like the juxtaposition of the charging station in the early 1900s garage-shed at Bishops court – it's a very Anglican holding together of 'Ancient and Modern', as per the title of that old hymn book!"

The Registry is keen to encourage individuals and parishes to consider EVs as their next purchase. The Registrar said "parishes can apply for ADF loans to purchase EV cars for clergy, with capacity for them to be bought by the priest at the end of the five year loan term."

Getting around Gippsland Diocese has always been a challenge, and new forms of transport, including the coming of the railways, have each had their impact on church life. More recently the COVID pandemic has given rise to other ways of connecting people, without the need to travel. A parishioner at one church commented recently on her involvement with an on-line Evening Prayer service: "I would *never* have thought there could be such depth of fellowship sitting at a computer screen!"

Retired priest The Rev'd Canon Jim Connelly, who was born in 1933, is a living record of the changes to transport around the Diocese of Gippsland. Growing up in Garfield, he remembers travelling to Bunyip by jinker, a small horse-drawn

cart. His first car, bought in 1936, was a Chevrolet Superior 260.472. Now he drives a hybrid vehicle, which gives him reliability, while also reducing carbon emissions.



The Church News, April 1969: loading hay onto a train for drought areas of the Tambo Valley



Geoff Pittaway

A truck driven by the Rev'd Geoff Pittaway, then Rector at Mirboo North, in 2018, taking provisions to drought-stricken families around Dunedoo, NSW

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Jan Down

Bishop Richard with the EV charger in the 1900s Bishops court garage



How some Muslim and non-Muslim rappers alike embrace Islam's greeting of peace

Aiden Marples

■ Margarita Guillory and Jeta Luboteni

Ever since the United States' "war on terror" began, American media has been rife with stereotypes of Muslims as violent, foreign threats. Advocates trying to push back against this characterisation sometimes emphasise that "Islam means peace," since the two words are derived from the same Arabic root.

Indeed, the traditional Muslim greeting *al-salamu alaykum* means "peace be upon you." Some Americans were already familiar with the phrase, thanks to an unexpected source: hip-hop culture, which often incorporated the Arabic phrase.

This is but one example of Islam's deep intertwining with the threads of hip-hop culture. In her groundbreaking book *Muslim Cool*, scholar, artist and activist Suad Abdul Khabeer shows how Islam, specifically Black Islam, was a crucial part of hip-hop's roots – asserting the faith's place in American life. From prayerlike lyrics to tongue-in-cheek references, Islam and other religions are woven into hip-hop's beats.

That's the focus of a class we teach at Boston University. One of us is a professor of religion, history and pop culture, while the other is a graduate student in Islamic Studies.

MORE THAN "HELLO"

In Muslim cultures, *al-salamu alaykum* is more than a way of saying hello. It points to the spiritual peace of submitting to God – and not only in this life. Saying "peace be upon you" is a prayer that God will grant heaven to the person with whom you are speaking. Many Muslims believe that *salam* is also the greeting heard upon entering heaven.

The Quran instructs Muslims that "when you are greeted with a greeting, respond with a better greeting or return it." This means that the proper response to *al-salamu alaykum* is, at a minimum, to respond in kind: *wa alaykum al-salam*.

This exchange has been adapted by several rap artists – including Rick Ross, who does not identify as Muslim, and turns the phrase's meaning on its head. Ross uses the greeting in the hook of his song *By Any Means*, referencing a famous speech by civil rights leader Malcolm X, who was a minister of the Nation of Islam for many years until shortly before his assassination. In 1964, Malcolm X declared African Americans' right "to be respected as a human being ... by any means necessary."

Half a century later, Ross rapped,

By any means, if you like it or not
Malcolm X, by any means

Mini-14 stuffed in my denim jeans
Al-salaam alaykum, wa alaykum al-salaam
Whatever your religion kiss the ring on the Don

Ross' use of the phrase, right after he mentions Malcolm X, appears to insinuate that if one wishes him peace, he will wish them the same. However, if one wishes him violence, he will not hesitate to respond in kind.

"PEACE TO ALL MY SHORTIES"

Other hip-hop artists have used *al-salamu alaykum* in many different ways, including lyrics that show broader familiarity with the laws of Islam. For example, it is sometimes contrasted with pork, which is prohibited in Islam, and by extension, the police – the "pigs," in derogatory slang – though it is more common for non-Muslim singers to use it in this way.

"Tell the pigs I say *Asalamu alaikum*," Lil Wayne says in *Tapout*, a song that has little else to do with Islam. Joyner Lucas likewise raps, "I say As-salāmu 'alaykum when I tear apart some bacon," in the song *Stranger Things*. Combinations of the sacred and the profane are present throughout hip-hop, not limited to references to Islam.

Finally, many rappers, particularly those who are Muslim, use the greeting in a more straightforward manner. In their 1995 song *Glamour and Glitz*, A Tribe Called Quest raps:

Peace to all my shorties who be dying too young
Peace to both coasts and the land in between
Peace to your man if you're doing your thing
Peace to my peoples who is incarcerated
Asalaam alaikum means peace,
don't debate it

Here they affirm and assert that the core of the greeting is one of peace and harmony – not only between people, but between all of God's creations.

SHARED IDENTITY

But even if Muslims come in peace, society may not see them that way – and that experience of discrimination often comes through in some lyrics. Rapper French Montana, who immigrated to the Bronx – the birthplace of hip-hop – from Morocco, raps in his 2019 song *Salam Alaykum*:

***In Muslim cultures,
al-salamu alaykum
is more than a way of
saying hello. It points
to the spiritual peace of
submitting to God – and
not only in this life.***

***Saying “peace be upon
you” is a prayer that God
will grant heaven to the
person with whom you
are speaking.***

As-salamu alaykum,
That pressure don't break,
It don't matter what you do,
they still gon' hate you

It's a harsh recognition that whatever one's actions, whether violent or peaceful, they may still result in racism – a realisation he shares with some fellow Muslim rappers in Europe.

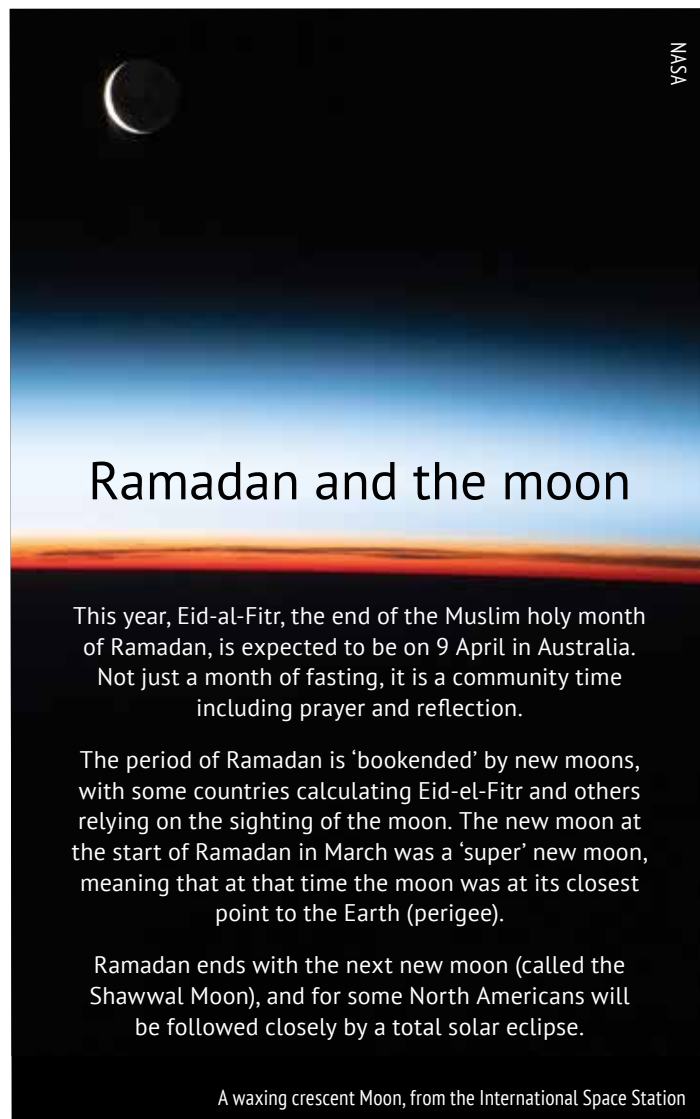
A comedic take on this is done by Zuna and Nimo in their 2016 song *Hol' mir dein Cousin*, where at the start of the song, Nimo states he has a shipment of “haze” (marijuana), but at the end of the video, it turns out the shipment is of “Hase” (bunnies). Yet, throughout the song the rappers speak about violence and drug trade, painting a conflicting picture of innocence versus guilt.

Fatima El-Tayeb, a scholar of race and gender, calls hip-hop a “diasporic lingua franca” in her 2011 book *European Others*, highlighting how an art form created by African Americans, and speaking to their experiences, has become one of the main ways minorities around the world speak about their struggles and successes. Some young Muslims in Europe, for example, use hip-hop as a key way to assert their sense of belonging in societies.

In hip-hop, *al-salamu alaykum* is not treated as though it were part of a foreign culture. These rappers' beats create a space where it's OK to be Muslim – a space in which Islam is not merely tolerated, but recognised as a valuable part of pop culture.

Margarita Guillory is Associate Professor of Religion at Boston University. Jeta Luboteni is a PhD Student in Religion at Boston University

First published at theconversation.com



Ramadan and the moon

This year, Eid-al-Fitr, the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, is expected to be on 9 April in Australia. Not just a month of fasting, it is a community time including prayer and reflection.

The period of Ramadan is 'bookended' by new moons, with some countries calculating Eid-el-Fitr and others relying on the sighting of the moon. The new moon at the start of Ramadan in March was a 'super' new moon, meaning that at that time the moon was at its closest point to the Earth (perigee).

Ramadan ends with the next new moon (called the Shawwal Moon), and for some North Americans will be followed closely by a total solar eclipse.

A waxing crescent Moon, from the International Space Station

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How to prepare your nervous system for new goals

Ross Findon

■ Beth Kurland

My husband became a great cook during the pandemic. Me, not so much.

I like the food I make, but when it comes to entertaining, I let my husband take over because he has mastered the art of cooking. The difference between our cooking often comes down to one secret ingredient or spice that I hadn't thought about.

I thought about that difference when I recently came across a startling statistic: about 80% of people who make New Year's resolutions feel like they've failed within the first few months. So, what's the "missing ingredient" that most people overlook or don't know about that can make all the difference when it comes to behaviour change?

Drum roll please ... I propose it's your autonomic nervous system.

WHAT DOES YOUR AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM MATTER?

When we understand how our autonomic nervous system (ANS) underlies everything we do, we can begin to craft strategies keeping this in mind. Specifically, we can increase cues of safety to our nervous system, so that we can move toward our goals with greater ease.

Here's a brief, deeper dive: Below the surface of awareness, through a process called neuroception, our brain and nervous system are constantly scanning for cues of threat/danger or for cues

of safety. When there are more cues of threat, our ANS goes into protection mode.

That makes sense, especially for our Stone Age ancestors who needed to dodge those sabre tooth tigers. In a state of protection, our fight-or-flight system engages to defend us from a predator by preparing us to fight or run away (modern day translation = inner experience of stress, frustration, anxiety, fear, anger, etc.).

Or, if the threat feels overwhelming, we might go into a freeze response/playing "dead" (modern day translation = shutting down, feeling stuck, procrastinating, feeling hopeless, avoiding, staying in bed). These responses are adaptive for dealing with true threats, but not so helpful when trying to approach goals or change behaviours.

However, when we neurocept more cues of safety than threat, something different happens in our nervous system. Our social-engagement system gets turned on. From an evolutionary point of view, a nervous system grounded in cues of safety allowed our ancestors to feel safe enough to explore, invent, connect and engage in prosocial behavior with one another, be creative, and experience all manner of renewing emotions.

In our modern lives, when our nervous system has enough cues of safety, we are in a better state to approach goals, tackle challenges, think creatively, and access a whole array of inner resources

(confidence, calm, courage, self-compassion, perspective, etc.) to help us move forward toward our goals.

So how do we translate this into setting intentions that stick, and taking actions that empower us to move toward our goals? Here are a few suggestions.

1. TURN DOWN YOUR STRESS RESPONSE, TURN ON YOUR "YES" RESPONSE

How we frame goals to ourselves matters. Come up with goals that feel safe enough that your nervous system can say "yes" to them. A "yes" can often be experienced in the body as a sense of more openness, a more relaxed feeling around the heart, a sense of greater ease; a "no" in the body often feels tighter, contracted, and constricted around the heart and chest, or in the stomach. Let's look at a few examples of what someone's goals might be:

- I want to lose weight.
- I want to stop yelling at my kids.
- I want to get rid of the clutter in my house.

For many people, these kinds of goals, with their focus on what you don't want, can be read as a kind of "threat" in the nervous system. But take a look at these revised goals, focusing on what you want to say "yes" to instead:

- I want to have vibrant health and energy and nourish myself with healthy foods.
- I want to create a loving environment where my kids can thrive and learn from their mistakes.
- I want to create clear and clean spaces in my house where I can feel at ease and thrive.

Notice how these statements land differently in your nervous system when you read them.

Importantly, sometimes even framing things by what we want to say yes to can feel like a “no” in the nervous system, so it’s important to “listen” carefully. If our body is reading our goals as a cue of threat, we can pay attention and reframe to make it feel more “safe” for the nervous system. For example, “I want to say yes to public speaking” may feel like a “no” in my body, but it may feel more approachable and less threatening by shifting the language in this direction: “I want to say yes to sharing my ideas that I’m passionate about so I can make a difference to others.”

2. MAKE A SPECIFIC ACTION PLAN THAT FEELS SAFE FOR YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM, AND DON’T LEAVE IT TO CHANCE

Often when we set goals, we do so in a way that is vague (not specific) and/or we create goals that can feel daunting, both of which can be cues of threat for our nervous system and make it harder to move forward. For example:

- I want to start exercising every day (vague and daunting).
- I want to eat healthier (vague).
- I want to declutter my house (daunting).
- I want to launch this creative project (vague and daunting).

Notice too, how these goals leave things to chance (or to hope). I hope that I will just wake up tomorrow and feel like exercising. I am taking my chances that I’ll be in the mood to declutter my house starting tomorrow.

Instead, break things down into small steps that feel “safe” and manageable for you and your nervous system to approach; then come up with a specific action plan that does not leave anything to chance (the nervous system likes things that are clear and predictable). For example:

Tomorrow, I have a 15-minute exercise video picked out and ready to go. I have blocked off time first thing in the morning and put it on my calendar. I have my exercise clothes and sneakers on the chair by my bed, ready to go.

I reached out to a friend as an accountability buddy, and I’m going to text them as soon as I finish the workout, so they can cheer me on (and I’ll do the same for them).

Make sure that whatever you pick feels “safe” for your nervous system. Check in with your body and see as you picture taking this step whether you get an inner “yes I can approach this” or “nope, I’m frozen” response. If it feels too daunting, make it smaller. Decluttering my house feels overwhelming. Going through one drawer tomorrow feels manageable.

Those small steps, when done consistently, create the momentum from which we are ready to take on more.

3. MAKE A PLAN FOR DEALING WITH OBSTACLES (THINK OBSTACLE COURSE)

When I was a kid, I used to love obstacle courses, having to climb in, out, over and through things trying to get to the finish line. It was a fun adventure, and obstacles were a built-in part of this.

In life things are rarely linear or perfect. We will for sure encounter obstacles along the way, and yet often we have an expectation that it shouldn’t be this way. Then, when we come up against an obstacle, we feel like something’s wrong, or that we’ve failed. This mindset is a big cue of threat for our nervous system and can cause us to not only get derailed, but give up. What’s the antidote for this?

First, we need to shift our mindset, to expect that we will encounter bumps and jolts and missteps along the way. We can think of these as challenges that help us reassess what is and isn’t working, and that can guide us to make tweaks that support us in moving toward what matters.

Second, we can practice cultivating an encouraging voice of self-compassion. We often think that being critical with ourselves will help us accomplish our goals. It rarely does. We likely wouldn’t berate a friend or loved one for running into a speed bump and getting derailed, yet we do this with ourselves often. When you fall short with something, talk to yourself the way you would talk with a dear friend. Be kind, encouraging, and take the long view (this blip, seen from a bigger perspective, is just part of being human and hardly needs to be the thing

that stops you from moving forward again tomorrow.)

Third, we can plan to bring some discomfort along for the ride with us as part of our journey. There is inevitably some discomfort in change. We might feel nervous about starting something new; we might have to tolerate cravings to make healthier choices; we might have to counter feelings of “I don’t feel like it” to initiate a new routine. Rather than needing to get rid of that feeling or waiting for it to go away, we can make some space for it, lovingly put it in the back seat as we step into the driver’s seat, moving toward what is important to us. That discomfort may just be your nervous system trying to protect you from what it perceives as “threat.” Thank it for trying to protect you, and let it know that you can see a bigger picture, you’ve got this!

Fourth, we can make a specific plan for working with obstacles that will likely arise. You can do this by anticipating what you know will come up, and using the obstacles that do come up as a springboard for creating strategies for yourself. For example:

When I come up against resistance or self-doubt about continuing this project, I’m going to remind myself that this is just part of my nervous system trying to protect me. I’m going to connect in with all the reasons why this project really matters to me, and the ways I think it will make a positive difference for people. I’m going to recall some of the past projects that were challenging that I was able to complete. Then I’m going to commit to just sitting down for ten minutes today, that’s all. After ten minutes I’m going to give myself permission to re-assess if I want to continue today or not. I’m willing to feel a bit of discomfort in order to move forward, toward what matters, at my own pace.

When we can remember this secret ingredient of paying attention to our autonomic nervous system, we can invite in greater cues of safety for our nervous system from the get-go. From here, we create the conditions in which our seeds – our dreams, our goals, our intentions – can take root, grow and flourish.

Beth Kurland is a clinical psychologist, public speaker and author.

This article originally appeared on *Greater Good*, the online magazine of the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley.



Hui learns in matrix of relations

Over 50 scholars and clergy ended three days of deep reflection, relationship, intention and action with closing words from Archbishop Don Tamihere and a Eucharist led by visiting leaders Archbishop Martinez Bassotto and Archbishop Chris Harper in September.

"Learning happens through a matrix of relations." This was the observation of Hong Kong-born, US-based theologian Dr Kwok Pui Lan, at the close of the first day of the Anglican Indigenous Leadership Initiative (AILI).

Arriving that afternoon as strangers, from indigenous cultures that have little contact with one another, delegates taking part in the AILI departed on Wednesday 27 September as friends, colleagues and kin, each one with fresh knowledge and understanding to take home to their respective nations.

During the mihi on that first day, leaders had been asked to share their whakapapa (genealogy), their background, a view on leadership and a food that reminded them of home. Answers were both familiar – banana loaf, chicken curry, kamokamo, rewena – and more exotic. Acai berries, collard greens, hot buttered popcorn and moose steak all featured

from those who had travelled the furthest.

Archbishop Tamihere says spending time getting to know one another during this special introductory afternoon set the tone for the AILI and its ultimate success. "Methodology is as effective as outcomes," he says. "There is no journal, no book on what it means to be an Anglican leader in light of indigeneity. We are writing it, now, through wananga – and building relationships is the first step we take."

The final morning began with a Eucharist led by Rev'd Zhane Tahau-Whelan and preacher Archbishop Leonard Dawea who offered a profound reflection on the martyrs of Melanesia. Archbishop Leonard urged the hui to commit themselves to the work ahead, lifting up the example of both historic and more recent martyrs of Melanesia whose commitment to peace, and sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel, had sowed the seeds of the Church.

The hui then moved in groups to consider three important aspects of leadership as they pertain to indigeneity and Anglicanism.

Dr Jenny Te Paa-Daniel (Ōtepoti) led a group discussing theological education, and how it could be reshaped into a

"redemptive solution" to the current situation, which is, in some cases, a traumatising experience for indigenous scholars.

It was suggested that a kaitiaki group establish to ensure priorities are identified, met and regularly reviewed – these could include an audit of the current education landscape (everything from informal Bible study to theological qualifications), identification of training opportunities required, leading cross-sector collaboration, and removing whakamā (shame or stigma) and elitism from educational opportunities.

"We want to guarantee success, so that our scholars take their rightful place within the academies of the world," concluded Dr Te Paa-Daniel.

Archdeacon Susan Wallace (Te Waipounamu) reported back on her group's interrogation of governance and structure, mooted a local coalition, seeded by those attending AILI, that would meet annually. "Through collective self-determination, we would work towards a transformation of institutions. We might offer indigenous governance training and intentional mentorship, opening our arms to other indigenous people within our Communion and across the world."

Simon Heath and Vianney Douglas spoke of transforming kura, the possibility of creating an indigenous curriculum “and bringing in both educationalists and students to understand, what are the underlying values? What is the graduate profile, what are our children’s hopes on graduation? Investing in them now means they can be the focused leaders we hope for.”

Closing remarks from Archbishop Tamihere suggested leaving the wānanga having reframed what it means to be indigenous, to be colonised, to be controlled.

“These are words that relate to negativity. What if we decide to develop a pedagogy of the free? Then, our theology would not speak of being oppressed, imprisoned, subjugated. What would that look like?”

He told the gathering they had become the founding establishment of a global wānanga of loving people and thanked them for being here, spending time and sharing.

“The one connecting thread that draws us together is friendship. Whanaungatanga, mātaranga, indigeneity, and the idea of kaitiakitanga. It’s all been slowly forming, here, as in Mark Chapter 4. Jesus tells us to scatter good ideas. Some will land on paths and not take root, some will land on brambles and suffocate, some will be stolen away by the birds of the air, but some will fall on good soil. We trust in that process,

Jesus tells us to scatter good ideas. Some will land on paths and not take root, some will land on brambles and suffocate, some will be stolen away by the birds of the air, but some will fall on good soil. We trust in that process ...

and it’s been deeply inspiring to observe that.”

The three-day wānanga concluded with a Eucharist presided at in Portuguese and English by Primate of Brazil, Archbishop Marinez Bassotto, alongside preacher Archbishop Chris Harper. Archbishop Chris shared the riches of a Cree translation of the Beatitudes and

urged delegates to take their messages, developed at the wānanga, to the world.

“We have been very blessed to be able to gather under one roof, in one house for a short while. To share our commonalities, our prayers, our voice and our song. At the very beginning, I offered this message: that we all have one song, a song that all of us sing with one voice. And that is our life experience.

“You are the ambassador. The Almighty blesses you and has given you these gifts, these words, these steps and this moment.”

Courtesy Anglican Taonga and Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa

Some Māori words and meanings

hui	a meeting or gathering
kaitiaki	a custodian or trustee (especially within natural environments)
kaitiakitanga	guardianship
kōrero	truth, honesty
kura	education
mātaranga	Māori knowledge
mihi	a formal greeting or acknowledgement
wānanga	a seminar or conference
whakamā	shame or embarrassment
whanaungatanga	kinship

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“We...make [ministry] significant in our cultural way.”
The Revd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy



“We are learning and we are on this journey of reconciliation and healing together.”

The Revd Kathy Dalton

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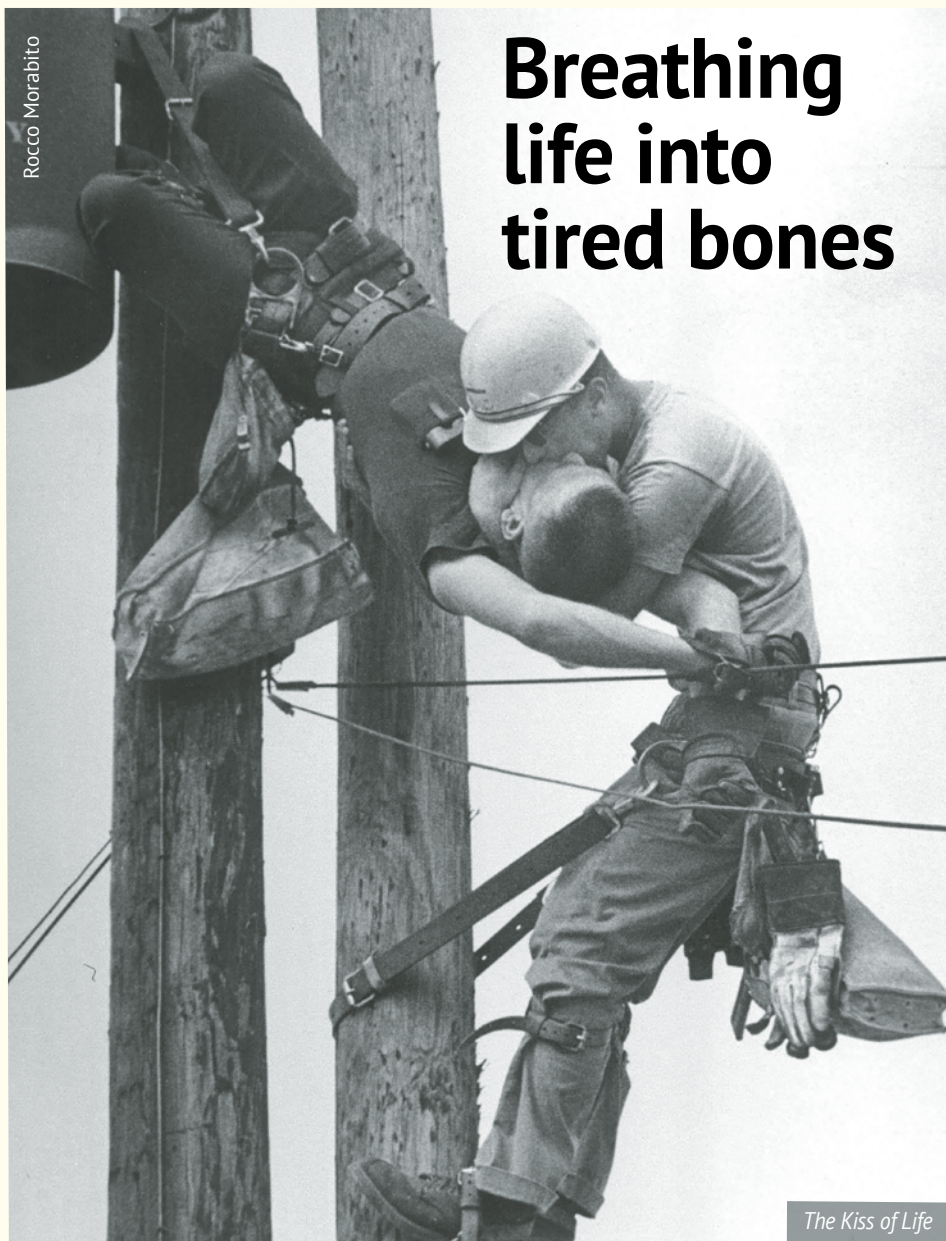
Gippsland Anglicans is raising funds to continue its support of Aboriginal Ministry. The Revd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy (L) and The Revd Kathy Dalton (R), pictured here with The Rt Revd Dr Richard Treloar, Bishop of Gippsland, work together to support the spiritual needs of Aboriginal people across the 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.



Rocco Morabito

Breathing life into tired bones



The Kiss of Life

powerful one. As one journalist describes it, “There’s an eerie elegance to the photo – two men in midair, posed like dancers. One hangs upside down with his arms over his head. The other cradles him and presses their faces together.” The photo resonates because of its unsettling beauty. It presents a dramatic and life-saving rescue, high on a utility pole, where life literally hangs in the balance between two men’s leather safety straps.

The ‘kiss of life’ photo brought to mind for me the remarkable image that God presents to the prophet Ezekiel. “Sometime later, I felt the Lord’s power take control of me, and his Spirit carried me to a valley full of bones. The Lord showed me all around, and everywhere I looked I saw bones that were dried out. He said, “Ezekiel, son of man, can these bones come back to life?” (Ezekiel 37:1-3). I wonder how many times we have asked that same question. Can these bones come back to life? In those moments of failure that seem irredeemable; in the midst of a relationship breakdown with little hope of reconciliation; in the face of crumbling institutions, failing political and social structures; or simply in those moments of weariness when we feel like we have nothing more to give. Can these bones come back to life?

God answers this question for Ezekiel in the same way that JD Thompson responded to the sight of his friend Randall’s lifeless body – with life-giving breath. In the vision, God animates the dry bones with His breath as a picture of reassurance that the people of Israel, taken captive and displaced from their homeland by the Babylonians, would be restored to a new life. “My Spirit will give you breath, and you will live again. I will bring you home, and you will know that I have kept my promise. I, the Lord, have spoken” (Ezekiel 37:14).

In those moments of despair, when all seems lost and we can’t see a way forward, God promises to breathe new life into us. And this is not some abstract and impersonal promise, but the heartfelt promise of one who sees a friend in dire need and rushes to respond. So next time it feels like you are hanging by the safety harness with nothing more to give, do not lose hope but ask instead for God’s breath to revive and restore you; the same God who himself hung from a pole and breathed his last, only to rise again three days later.

■ Rev’d Daniel Lowe

On 17 July 1967, electrical linesman Randall Champion almost lost his life. While performing routine maintenance on powerlines in Jacksonville, Florida, Champion accidentally came into contact with a low voltage line at the top of the pole. Thrown back unconscious, he hung upside-down, his safety harness preventing him from falling any further. His good friend and co-worker, JD Thompson, rushed to Champion’s aid and, while unable to administer CPR, he was able to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation until Champion began to breathe again. Thompson then unclipped his friend and carried him over his shoulder to the ground, where people continued to work on him. Champion was moderately revived by the time paramedics arrived, eventually making a full recovery. He lived another 35 years, dying in 2002 at the age of 64.

God answers this question for Ezekiel in the same way that JD Thompson responded to the sight of his friend Randall’s lifeless body – with life-giving breath.

This remarkable moment was captured in a stunning image by photographer Rocco Morabito. The photo, named *The Kiss of Life*, received the 1968 Pulitzer Prize for Spot News Photography. Morabito was in the area on an unrelated assignment when he looked up and saw Champion dangling from the pole. He called an ambulance, grabbed his camera and started taking photos. The resulting image shown is a

Rev’d Daniel Lowe is Senior Chaplain at St Paul’s Anglican Grammar School.

Bearing with one another in love

■ Sally Woollett

On 1 March this year, as they have done every year since 1932, churches around the world held services to mark the World Day of Prayer.

This year's theme was 'I Beg You – Bear with One Another in Love', and the program was prepared by an ecumenical group of Palestinian Christian women.

Developed through prayer and reflection many months ago, the theme is now calling to us in a time of devastation for Palestinians. In the days leading up to her World Day of Prayer service at All Saints Poowong, The Rev'd Dr Canon Fran Grimes said, "This year's World Day of Prayer was prepared by Christian Palestinian women over a year ago, months before the current conflict broke out. It seems to be in God's perfect timing that the whole world will focus prayers on Palestine and Israel this Friday."

The 2024 worship theme is based

around the Ephesians 4 prayer, "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"The reading from Ephesians 4 begs us to bear with one another in love," Fran said. "A plea from Palestinian Christians who suffer so much from Muslim and Jewish neighbours. Our prayers at Poowong will be for our fellow Christians to stay strong in proclaiming Christ's message of peace and reconciliation."

As World Day of Prayer Australia describes it, "Through preparation and participation in the worship service, women worldwide learn how their sisters of other countries, languages and cultures understand the biblical

passages in their context. They learn of the concerns and needs of those women and to empathize and feel in solidarity with them."

The World Day of Prayer calling was not only for adults; in the children's program young people were asked to "imagine how the world could be more loving."

Ninety years ago, Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal 'Atatürk' paid tribute to the ANZAC soldiers who fell at Gallipoli. His words, now engraved on the ANZAC monument at the Kemal Atatürk Memorial in Canberra, speak of the possibility of consolation and hope beyond war.

... you are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace.

There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments to us where they lie side by side in this country of ours. ...

Praying Palestinian Women

This year's World Day of Prayer artwork, *Praying Palestinian Women*, was created by visual artist and design student Halima Aziz. Growing up in Palestine, Halima lived through the war in Gaza in 2008. She now lives in Germany.



Halima says,

I believe that through my artworks and other talented Palestinian artists' artworks, people will understand more clearly how we Palestinians feel and what we have to go through. Everyone should care about it because it's a human rights issue. I hope and believe that one day Palestine will be free and that we will be able to peacefully return back to our homes and our families.

Artist statement

This artwork is made in honour of the World Day of Prayer. Through her artwork, the artist represents three Palestinian women praying together in nature in a peaceful place. In her work, the artist has different motives and symbols that indicate the origin of these women and their cohesion.

The following symbols feature in her artwork.

Olive trees/branches are a sign of everlasting and abundant life because they can live for thousands of years. Some of the olive trees in Palestine today were there during the time of Jesus.

The golden roots are underlining the fact that the Palestinians will always exist and as they exist, they will always resist for their rights and freedom. It's painted in gold because it's something precious, something no one can take away from the Palestinians because they are deeply rooted.

Poppy flowers are abundant and meaningful to Palestinians. They remind Palestinians of loved ones who have given their lives for their country.

Traditional Palestinian dresses like the *tatreez* (embroidery), *thobe* (dress) or the white scarf. It represents the Palestinian people and is full of art and history.

The keys are a symbol of the hope to return back to Palestine. Palestinians always carry their keys of their homes they were driven out of with them, no matter where they are around the world, and they pass it on to their children so they will never lose hope.

The Cherry Orchard

By Anton Chekhov

(transl. Constance Garnett)

Heron Books, first published 1904

■ Richard Prideaux

Russian playwright Anton Chekhov's most popular play has a bright and happy feel, which covers the sadness of the key figure in the narrative, Madame Ranevsky (Lyubov Andreyevna), owner of the cherry orchard. Lyubov has just returned from France to her failing estate in Russia, having spent many years in a flawed relationship following her husband's death through alcohol abuse. Lyubov had previously left the cherry orchard property after her son drowned in the deep river alongside the orchard. The merchant Lopahin, a friend of the family, works very hard to persuade Lyubov to sell the orchard to pay off their serious debts.



Ryoji Iwata

While all of this sadness and negotiation takes place, a happy merry-go-round of lighthearted love affairs and romance dances across the stage. Lyubov's 17-year-old daughter Anya, her 24-year-old adopted daughter Varya, maid Dunyasha and governess Charlotta mix things up with the eternal student Trofimov and clerk Epiphodon.

The play draws to a climax with the selling of the cherry orchard for a vast sum thanks to the skills of Lopahin; we are left in the dark about the future of the romances. Chekhov's skill in challenging the reader to worry about who should love whom and what should be done with the cherry orchard keeps the audience alert and awake, and highlights the skilled uncertainties and doubts that emerge from his earlier classic plays *Uncle Vanya* and *The Seagull*.

REVIEW

Humankind: A Hopeful History

By Rutger Bregman (transl. Elizabeth

Manton and Erica Moore)

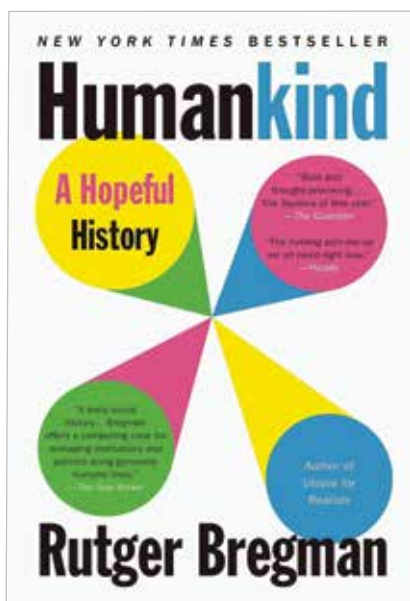
Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020

■ Cynthia Grove

One of the things we think about in Advent is hope. As I wrote this we were deep in the heart of Advent, so perhaps in the heart of hope.

This book by Dutch historian Rutger Bregman was a joy to read. It is not overtly Christian, yet the author is the son of a Christian minister, and to me the Christian ethos permeates this book. It is indeed a book of hope, although some of the examples the author mentions might test one's existing beliefs. It is a book about testing one's ideas of the possible, about seeking new ways of being human (and Christian) in the modern world.

The book takes the reader on a journey, including a real and documented case of schoolboys getting wrecked on a deserted island, a wartime truce, Easter Island, psychological studies on prison and on experiments with electric shocks. I was tempted to list some of the chapter headings but decided that would be a mistake.



The book is well researched and provides a more positive look at some of the beliefs about humanity that we may take for granted.

This book filled my heart, enthused me and made me wish everyone would read it, especially young adults between 16 and 20 who have their lives – and, by extension, their worlds – to form. It asks the reader to

look behind the surface of things, and the tried-and-true patterns, to discover the art of the possible. The ideas in this highly challenging book invite readers to take risks and to question (not necessarily reject) existing beliefs.

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The Gippsland
Anglican

Letter to the editor

I am writing to extend my heartfelt congratulations to *The Gippsland Anglican* on the occasion of its 120-year anniversary. This milestone is not only a testament to the publication's enduring commitment to serving the community but also a celebration of the history and traditions that have shaped our region. TGA has been an invaluable source of information, inspiration and connection.

As the Principal of Gippsland Grammar School, I am particularly delighted to note that your significant anniversary coincides with our own centenary celebration. In reflecting on this, I am reminded of the importance of community partnerships and collaborative efforts in nurturing the growth and development of Gippsland and the Anglican faith and presence within it.

As we celebrate, let us not only look back with pride on our achievements but also forward with a shared commitment to

continued promotion of faith, community service and education. I look forward to the ongoing collaboration between Gippsland Grammar School and TGA as we embark on the next chapter of our respective journeys. May our organisations continue to thrive, informing and connecting our community for many more years to come.

**Michele Wakeham, Principal,
Gippsland Grammar School**

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The Cock Crowed

Bereft and bemused,
aghast at his own words
of betrayal.
He could not understand
how he,
the sturdy, stalwart fisherman,
had cravenly denied
his friend, his Lord.

Fear of authority?
Well yes, he had always been
a good observant Jew
until he heard
"Come, follow me and
I will make you
fishers of men."
How had he let
his fear rise up
and cause him to deny
what he knew was truth?

He had never liked to get
too close to the scribes and Pharisees,
their knowledge daunted him.
John knew them,
could talk with them
but not he.
He was a plain man,
a good fisherman
but no more.

So why,
why had Jesus called him –
this brawny, none-too-smart
fisherman?

What had Jesus seen?
The man who called him
"the Messiah, son of God"?
Why not the man who tried
to swerve him from this path to death?

Too much –
his head was spinning,
fear and grief warred within.

Desire came, to drown
this mental agony in wine
but Jesus' eyes
would not release
his mind.

This man,
going now to his death,
had called him.
No choice now,
whatever the pain
whatever the consequences
the only path was to follow his Lord.

Stripped now of his confidence,
he shuddered
knowing not what might befall
only knowing he must be true
to the one he had just denied.

And as that truth filled him
it over-rode the still insistent fear
with a peace and certainty
that shook him and made him weep
for fear, for loss, for shame.

© C.J. Grove 2016 (Inspired by Station 6 in *Stations of the Nativity, the Cross and the Resurrection* by Raymond Chapman.)

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