

The Gippsland Anglican

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Cathedral celebrates new ministry

Sue Jacka and
Philip Muston

The Rev'd Susanna Leigh Pain was installed as the new Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, Sale, on Saturday 3 September.

Ms Pain comes with 26 years of ordained ministry experience as a parish priest, chaplain, spiritual director and lecturer in Canberra, Adelaide, Cowra and Sydney. She is the great grand-daughter of Bishop Arthur Pain, the first bishop of the Diocese of Gippsland.

A feature of the memorable service was the liturgical dance that accompanied the Epistle reading from 1 Corinthians 13, read by Susanna's husband the Rev'd Nikolai Blaskow. The six female dancers added depth and significance to this well-loved passage on love with their interpretive dance movements.

In her homily, Susanna explained how her strong sense of call to ministry as a Dean had been reinforced continually as God provided her with the symbol of a pomegranate, initially at a retreat for spiritual directors. "It spoke to me of fruitfulness, and Jesus' calling to bear fruit, the fruit of my relationship with God", she said.

"It also spoke of overflowing generous hospitality, with seeds spilling in abundance, and it spoke of community: the seeds grow together in the fruit. It is okay to be ordinary, to be every-day, but with God, the results can be surprising!" The motif of the pomegranate recurred in the ensuing weeks in the shape of decorations in St Paul's Cathedral on her visit for her interview, at Bishops court, and later at a retreat she was leading at for the Uniting Church chaplains back in Canberra.



Photo: Trevor Balm

The Very Rev'd Dr Andreas Loewe, Dean of Melbourne, the Very Rev'd Susanna Pain, newly installed Dean of Gippsland, the Right Rev'd Kay Goldsworthy Bishop of Gippsland, the Very Rev'd Chris Chataway, Dean of Ballarat, and the Very Rev'd Ken Goodger, Dean of Wangaratta

Speeches of welcome came from Mr Arthur MacPherson, representing St Paul's Chapter members, the Rev'd Sue Scott from Sale Uniting Church, representing the local ministers' association, and Wellington Shire's Mayor, Councilor Darren McCubbin who, dressed in full mayoral robes, gave a colourful and impassioned speech about the historic relations in Sale between Deans and Mayors.

Susanna is the 23rd Dean of St Paul's and it was impressive to have four of our past Deans present for the induction, with the liturgy including some thoughtful variations from the usual Gippsland form for such events. She and Nikolai are looking forward to becoming part of the Cathedral parish and the Gippsland Diocese.

Several other dioceses were represented at the installation. Bishop Stephen Pickard represented Canberra-Goulburn and the Australian Centre for Christianity and culture.

Boating to breakfast

Grant Woolcock – Sale

St Paul's Cathedral's Men's Breakfast Group recently extended an invitation to other MARSH Men's groups

to join them in taking a boat to breakfast. The group also welcomed the new Dean, the Very Rev'd Susanna Pain, to her first St Paul's Men's Breakfast Group meeting.

They met at the Port of Sale at 7:30 am where they boarded *The Rubeena* for a cruise down the Sale Canal to the Latrobe River. They then cruised under the

Swing Bridge before returning to Sale.

The captain of *The Rubeena*, Mr. Alan Lewis, has an intimate knowledge of the history of the Canal and the river system. He noted that during the cruise they would pass five aboriginal canoe trees. Alan also joined the group for breakfast which was at the Equus Restaurant.



Photo: Peter Mielke

The breakfast group on board The Rubeena

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The first sitting of the new Federal Government is under way, and is evoking various responses from us.

Many found Senator Pauline Hansen's first speech eerily reminiscent of one she made a number of years ago, still dominated by fear and anxiety of being overrun by people different from us. We may feel anger, fear and real concern about the wellbeing of school mates, neighbours, and work colleagues who are Muslim.

MP Julian Lesser raised issues of mental health and suicide in Australian communities as he told of the night his father died and his desire to see enacted the social reform needed to rebuild caring communities where people notice the signs and can reach out to each other. This speech reminded many of us of people we love who have died tragically, of family, friends, neighbours, members of our churches. People who struggle with issues of mental health day by day.

Other reporting has centred on the proposed plebiscite on same sex marriage. In a letter to the Bishops of the Anglican Church last month, the Primate Archbishop Philip Freier described the proposed plebiscite as one of the more contentious topics of 2016. He writes, "Anglicans have adopted a variety of positions taken in good conscience based on their Christian understanding of the



Bishop Kay Goldsworthy

For better, for worse...

principles and issues, and this is right and proper". The Archbishop goes on to say that he is personally welcoming of the plebiscite, while aware of the need to ensure that the tenor of the debate remains positive.

Some believe that a nationwide poll will give a clear indication of where Australians stand on this issue. Others believe that the opportunity for hate speech, for the views of people to be misrepresented, and the huge cost, financial and otherwise, are all reasons not to go ahead. My own position is

that I hope that the government would abandon its plans for a plebiscite and that Members of Parliament be allowed a free vote on legislation. As Archbishop Freier wrote, Christians are not of one voice in this matter, and to this end I have also written to the Prime Minister asking that he reconsider this proposal.

Who am I concerned for? Those who are isolated. People who bear the shame of feeling that they have let down their Christian family because they are gay and yet hope for some kind of family life modelled by their married parents. Gay Christians who are praying that hateful voices or fists won't get raised. Christian parents who

can't tell their parish community about the family they love. Young people, isolated people, those who are bowed under the weight of harsh judgement. Those for whom life on the very, very edge of family and community has been a long and often powerless life experience. Those who have heard the talk of church as family and known it hasn't meant them. Jesus' call to those who are heavily burdened to come to him is one I want to echo.

As we think through what marriage means and what family looks like we may find ourselves challenged and confronted by issues long swept under the carpets of our churches.

We will have to take stock of what we believe it means to be human, of what we can hope for as people created in the image of God. We will be faced again with questions about how scripture continues to reveal God's love for us as people who have been brought into a living hope, which is imperishable, undefiled and unfading. We will face real pastoral questions of how we describe and experience "family" in our parish, school and other communities.

So, whether or not there is a plebiscite or a parliamentary vote, there will continue to be plenty of biblical, theological and spiritual work for us as Anglicans to do. We will struggle together in Christ as we seek understanding of how God's love calls us to live in unfamiliar territory as people who desire the love of Christ to be known by everyone.

The Gippsland Anglican

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DIOCESE OF GIPPSLAND

Under the auspices of the Safe Church Training Agreement of the National Council of Churches in Australia

Safe Church Awareness Workshops 2016

will be held at

St Paul's Anglican Church, Korumburra
Saturday 20 August 2016 9:30 am to 4:00 pm
and

St Paul's Anglican Church, Warragul
Saturday 22 October 2016 9:30 am to 4:00 pm

To register please email: your name, parish, position in parish, contact email and phone to: registryoffice@gippsanglican.org.au

Cost: \$30 (Invoiced after the event) BYO lunch

Enquiries to Brian Norris or Sue Court on (03) 5144 2044



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The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland does not tolerate abuse, misconduct and harm in its Christian community.

The Diocese is committed to ensuring all people in contact with the Church can participate in a safe and responsible environment. If you may have been harmed by a church worker, or know someone who has, please come forward.

The Director of Professional Standards, Cheryl Russell, is available, and will maintain confidentiality, on telephone 03 5633 1573, on mobile 0407 563313, or email cherylrussell1@bigpond.com

Photo by Tom Dathan, courtesy Gasfield Free Seaspray



Seaspray and district residents celebrating the ban

Locked gate, celebrate

Jan Down

Anti-fracking community groups around Gippsland and across the state are celebrating following the announcement by the Victorian Government on 30 August of a permanent ban on the exploration and development of all onshore unconventional gas in Victoria, including hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) and coal seam gas.

The permanent legislative ban will be introduced to Parliament later this year. The Government will also legislate to extend the current moratorium on the exploration and development of conventional onshore gas until 30 June 2020.

Ursula Alquier, Friends of the Earth/Lock the Gate Coordinator Gippsland, commented “This has been an extraordinarily hard fought win for all the communities across Gippsland and Western Victoria; this amazing outcome shows us that people power works and that when we pull together and put our differences aside and fight for what’s right, we can prevail”.

The decision comes as part of the government response to the 2015 Parliamentary Inquiry into Onshore Unconventional Gas in Victoria, which received more than 1600 submissions, mostly opposed to onshore unconventional gas.

In his last Synod address in May 2014, the late Bp John McIntyre expressed concern about the effect of fracking on the agricultural industry in Gippsland and encouraged Gippsland Anglicans to join in with the Lock the Gate movement.

Since then a number of Anglicans have been actively involved and many more have quietly supported this

determined, highly organised and creative campaign to have a permanent ban on unconventional gas mining in Victoria.

TGA has followed developments over the past two and a half years, beginning with an introduction to the issue by Archdeacon Philip Muston in March 2014. Commenting on the recent decision, Philip said that “Gippsland people, including

“This has been an extraordinarily hard fought win..”

Anglicans, from National Party people through to the Greens, had been solidly in support because of concern for farms”, and are now “rejoicing in Premier Daniel Andrews’ decision”.

The Rev’d Geoff Pittaway spoke at the Declaration Day in Mirboo North on 9 February 2014, when the area was declared “coal and coal seam gas free”. Having been invited by organisers, he agreed to speak so as to contribute a Christian perspective. (See comment on this page.)

Archdeacon Edie Ashley attended the Declaration Day at Eagle Point on 12 April last year, along with four Paynesville parishioners, Graham Barnett, Michael Fox, June Treadwell and Eleanor Patterson. Michael Fox has been a member of the local Lock the Gate group and helped conduct a survey of residents (TGA May 2015).

After the Eagle Point Day, Edie Ashley wrote a theological reflection for TGA on the Christian call to care for creation, with respect to the environmental dangers of unconventional mining.

She recently commented “I am delighted that the government has listened to the very real concerns of people from across all walks of life, and made a courageous decision that will protect our land and its wellbeing for present and future generations”.

Concerns about the potential for toxic chemicals to enter the groundwater, and about the disposal of contaminated water produced in the mining process, were raised by Dr Ann Miller, a parishioner at St Paul’s Cathedral in Sale, in TGA (May 2015). Dr Miller outlined her theology of creation underlying her reasons for being opposed to coal seam gas mining.

Victorian Lock the Gate Coordinator, Chloe Aldenhoven, when asked why she thought the government had made this decision, said “I think they saw the overwhelming community opposition and people across the political spectrum coming together, saying we’ve got to put our water first, our agriculture first and maintain what we have for future generations... We are incredibly relieved.”

For previous articles on this topic in TGA see: gippsanglican.org.au

COMMENT

Ban is a good start

Geoff Pittaway

Over recent years I have become aware of the complexity of the arguments surrounding new onshore coal mining and gas exploration, including fracking. For some years Mirboo North citizens have been fighting the mining leases that exist over this greater area, and there is no doubt that they have greatly welcomed the ban on onshore gas exploration and mining in Victoria recently announced by the State Government.

In more recent times the community has received added support from the local Shire representatives which helped to inform the decision by the Premier and Minister for the Environment.

It is clear that we will have need for the base load of electricity to be supplied by coal mining, especially in the Latrobe Valley, for many years to come. It is also clear that there will need to be much greater investment in alternative energy sources by government and private industries if they are to satisfactorily supply the energy needs of the state in the decades to come.

However, the ban on CSG and other forms of onshore mining is a great victory for those who have spent hundreds of hours seeking to have the government ban applied in Victoria. Many communities have spoken out vociferously against all forms of onshore mining, over and against the voices that would have wanted to see a quick profit and the syphoning of (in particular) gas reserves into overseas markets. For once, the voices of the ordinary people – farmers, townsfolk, community groups, mums and dads, and children – have been heard and recognised.

It is to be hoped that we will see a much broader reliance on different forms of energy in the future, and that governments will not buckle to the voices – and funding – of the mining corporations and businesses that have controlled our energy production over many years. There will need to be considerable and considered thought given to how this will be achieved, but the ban on onshore unconventional gas mining in Victoria is a good start.

The Rev’d Geoff Pittaway is Rector of Mirboo North.

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Interest rates for deposits with the A.D.F. effective from 1 September, 2016 are:

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A LASTING GIFT: A bequest to the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland or your parish

The Church, over the years, has been blessed with the generosity of Anglicans and others in support of its mission. One way you can support this ideal in a relatively easy way, is to make a gift through your will. In the first instance, of course, you will consider carefully the needs of your immediate family and friends before proceeding with a bequest to the church.

We offer a way of helping you to carry out your wishes. Your gift, through your bequest, will be very much appreciated. You may wish to support the Diocese of Gippsland as a whole, or your own parish, or for a particular purpose.

Making your bequest in your Will is a simple procedure, although in preparing or amending your Will you should always consult a solicitor. The Registrar of the Diocese of Gippsland has information to assist you in making a bequest, including the form of words you and your solicitor might want to use.

Telephone Brian Norris on 03 5144 2044, or go to www.gippsanglican.org.au and search ‘bequests’.



A journey of pilgrimage and prayer

Pilgrimage, journey, prayer

The Camino: a template for life's journey

Sue Fordham

"Doing" the Camino is big business today. Tour companies offer an endless variety of packages: the full distance from France to Santiago, Galicia in Northern Spain, different sectors of the route, the last spectacular 100 kilometres, self-guided tours, guided tours, walking tours, cycling tours, secular tours, religious tours...

For Christians, the significance of the Camino is the prayerful and reflective journeying to the shrine of St James the Great in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. The remains of St James, having been brought by boat from Jerusalem, are said to be buried there.

While today there are dozens of pilgrimage routes to Santiago, depending on your starting point, the main one follows an earlier Roman trade route.

The Camino was an important focus of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages but declined during the Black Death and Protestant Reformation. By 1980 only a few pilgrims a year made the journey. By 1987 the route was named a World Heritage site and pilgrim numbers have exploded since.

The Abbey on Raymond Island is hosting a weekend workshop, 14-16 October, on the pilgrimage as a template for life's journey and images and experiences of the Camino will be used as the framework for this.

The Rev'd John Baldock, a senior priest in the Melbourne diocese, will be the facilitator. The weekend will mirror a hugely successful Lenten exhibition Fr John organised of Earl Carter's photography in St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne last year. It included 40 very large print photographs from the Camino commissioned by Penguin Books, which now enhance two wonderful cookbooks.

The pattern of the weekend will combine images, prayers, stories and reflections supported by a purpose produced booklet.

A variety of packages for the weekend workshop is available, from a daily rate, including meals, to a whole weekend rate including meals with or without accommodation.

Please contact Anna at the Abbey for information and registration: 5156 6580 or info@theabbey.org.au

Moe Antique and Collectables Fair

The second Moe Antique and Collectables Fair will be hosted by the Moe Anglican Parish on Saturday 8 October.

The central location at Albert Street Primary School proved an excellent site last year, attracting visitors from across Gippsland. This year the fair is extending with outdoor market stalls as well as some more vintage/veteran vehicles on display.

Entrance fee is again only \$5.00 for adults with children free. Antique Appraisal services are to be provided by Steven Axe between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm; however the Fair will run from 9:30 am until 3:00 pm.

Kiosk and BBQ refreshments will be available for purchase throughout the day. A few vacancies for outdoor stallholders may still be available. Please enquire at the parish office: 51271119 or contact Mary: 5127 2929.

Come on retreat!

The 2016 Diocesan Retreat, open to both laity and clergy, will be held at The Abbey on Raymond Island in November and Anglicans across the Diocese are encouraged to join in this opportunity for spiritual renewal.

The retreat, to be conducted by the Reverend Ken Parker, recently locum priest at the Cathedral, will commence on Friday 4 November at 5:00 pm and conclude at 3:30 pm on the following afternoon.

The cost of the retreat has been contained with a fee of \$135

including shared accommodation and all meals from Friday evening through to the retreat conclusion. A single accommodation supplement is also available.

Whether a regular retreat attendee or someone considering coming for the first time, all are welcome as we take time together for a period of prayer and reflection.

For further information and bookings please contact Anna at The Abbey 5156 6580 or info@theabbey.org.au



View across to Paynesville from Raymond Island

Harvest Festival and Stewardship Sunday

Carolyn Raymond Morwell

St Mary's held a Harvest Festival and Stewardship Sunday in August. From the many gifts God has given us, we all brought food items to be sent on to Anglicare. The produce was brought up to the altar and blessed as part of our giving.

We also brought produce from our gardens, and items we had made: jams, chutneys, a painting and other things we had created. These were sold and the money sent on to Anglicare.

The service reminded us of all we had been given: material goods but also abilities and talents, skills and opportunities. How we see God's generosity will impact on how we act as stewards of all that we have received. Do we see these as gifts or do we see these as our right? Do we feel grateful or are we possessive of what we see as belonging to us?

The Rev'd David Head reminded us of our responsibilities to support the Church, to give what we can, and to use our talents to spread the Good News of God's love. We were reminded that gratefulness is at the heart of prayer.



Some of the congregation with the food items blessed and ready to be given to Anglicare

HiPPY Coordinator, Jade Walsh, wins “Emerging Leader” award

Cathrine Muston

Confidence is what has helped young Koori Educator, Jade Walsh win the “Emerging Leader” Award at the recent Anglicare Victoria Chairman’s Awards night.

When Jade left high school she was unsure of what she wanted to do with her life. Never having had paid employment, and with a young family of her own, she applied for a traineeship at Anglicare Victoria in the HiPPY program. HiPPY stands for Home Interaction Program for

Parents and Youngsters and encourages parents to spend regular time with their pre-school aged children doing educational activities. The parents are supported by home tutors who provide materials and links to other community members through home visits and regular group activities.



Jade Walsh, Koori Educator and winner of the Anglicare “Emerging Leader” award

Coordinator of the program came up, Jade was ready to apply.

Jade, now 30, has demonstrated leadership qualities by mentoring others and developing the HiPPY team and this has been recognised by this award.

She is currently a member of the Reconciliation Action Plan

Committee that is enabling Anglicare Victoria to better address issues of disadvantage and work more collaboratively with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Jade provides enthusiastic and sensitive support for her home tutors and the community members who participate in the HiPPY program. Her aim? To build in others what she has been able to find in herself: confidence!

Jade was employed on a traineeship in 2014 and it was during this time that she found her passion. Her work in the community enabling others gave her skills, but more importantly, it built her confidence. She took on other roles with Anglicare Victoria, gaining further insight into how the Koori community could better access services, and also studying a Certificate III in Education Support. So, when the position of

Prison Playgroup wins Chairman’s Award for Innovation

Cathrine Muston, Community Development Officer, Anglicare

The Anglicare Victoria Chairman’s Awards provide an “opportunity to recognise and celebrate some of the extraordinary efforts and achievements of staff, volunteers and clients”.*

The awards have several categories, and the “Kids Time with Dad” program which is run by Parentzone Gippsland in Fulham Correctional Centre, was nominated for “a person or team who has introduced a new idea or approach in their particular area of focus, which has helped to improve client or agency outcomes”. The “Kids Time with Dad” program has certainly done that.

While Anglicare Victoria, through Parentzone Gippsland service, has been successfully running the “Being a Dad” program in Fulham Correctional Centre for more than 4 years now, the men in the program expressed a need for a supported group for themselves and their children that would rebuild and strengthen the parent/child relationships through play activities. As a result, “Kids Time with Dad” was developed.

One of the significant factors in reducing the likelihood of a person reoffending is family relationships. “Kids Time with Dad” aims to assist Dads to put into practice the things they have learnt from completing the “Being a Dad” course as well as giving them an opportunity to be involved in some quality time with their children with the support of the coaches from Parentzone and Correctional Centre staff. By building family relationships, and strengthening their role

in their children’s lives, it is intended that fathers will make better decisions and be less likely to reoffend upon release.

“Kids Time with Dad” enables fathers to rebuild their relationships with their children in an environment that is child-friendly, with activities organised to enable positive interaction between father and child. Usually the noisy and stressful environment of family visiting time at Fulham makes such interactions difficult.

The benefits of the program have been many. Pat Wellls, Team Leader of Parentzone, tells the story of one father who has now found a new experience of enjoyment, warmth and connection with his children through sharing time together singing with his music and keyboard at “Kids Time with Dad”.

Another father had never had sole care of his baby. Through “Kids Time with Dad” he has been able to spend hours nursing, talking and playing with his daughter and tending to her needs. He has expressed his gratitude to Anglicare for providing him with this opportunity.

One child was always shy and reluctant to engage

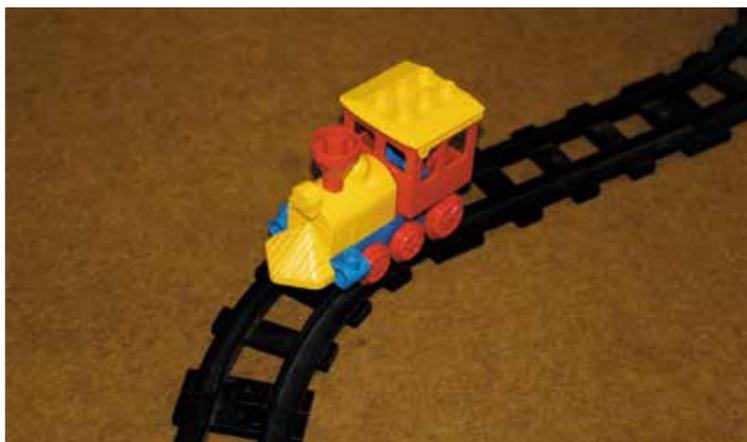
with his father during family visiting times. After spending individual time with his dad in fun and interactive activities, he is now eager and excited to engage with dad during family visiting times.

The approach in building relationships with guardians and children has resulted in all children being happy to leave mum or their guardian to go in to the prison with Anglicare staff to be with their dad.

Being in prison is not a comfortable place to be, but for men to find hope for a future away from their past, it is essential that some of us put ourselves into uncomfortable places. The children and families of prisoners, as well as the Parentzone Gippsland team, have been doing that with remarkable success.

So this award is a great encouragement for Parentzone Gippsland, as well as for the people who volunteer their time to this program. And it is hoped that with such support, that these children and their families will have a “better tomorrow”.

*Quotes from Anglicare brochure promoting the awards



Expressions of interest are sought from lay people for a position on the Anglicare Parish Partnerships Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee oversees the work of Anglicare’s Gippsland Community Development Officer, Ms Cathrine Muston, and makes available Parish Partnership grants to parishes. It is a combined work of Anglicare and the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland.

Applicants must be happy to work within the mission, aims and objectives of the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland and of Anglicare.

Meetings are bi-monthly and usually held in Morwell during the daytime. Expressions should be made to Bishop Kay Goldsworthy at the Anglican Registry in Sale.

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Vale Joan Condon

1918–2016

Thelma Langshaw

Although Joan had only been in the district since 1939, she was Omeo and to most residents, no matter what their religion or race, she was always there – and now she's not. "Granny" Joan was one of the last of her generation born into the aftermath of WW1. That generation experienced men who came home from war damaged in body and mind, and mourned those who never returned. They grew up, literally, during the Great Depression and the hard years of the thirties.

Joan was always the nurse, making "hospital beds" and bandaging her dolls, and though her father tried to dissuade her, she eventually trained as a nurse at Sale.

Coming to the district just before WW2 began, she grew to love the area and married Syd on his last leave. He was away for five years.

Apart from nursing, Joan was seconded to the Land Army for a six week period of cooking for the shearers at the Hinomunjie Shed. Eventually her cooking for "the shearing" extended from 1939–2013!

The women provided three meals, morning and afternoon teas and supper; it was a generation of stoicism and resilience, qualities

Joan demonstrated when she was widowed at a relatively young age. Going back to nursing after her personal life had undergone upheaval, she found the work-place had changed a great deal and she was faced with shift-work, often commuting to Bairnsdale 125 km away, yet still managed to run the farm.

She travelled "home" to England on her own, and once travelled to South America to learn about fine merino production.

Age did not weary her – in her sixties Joan took part in an extended trip on horseback from Valencia Creek to Merrijig – taking it all in her stride: eight days in the saddle, rough mountain terrain, sleeping and eating "rough".

Joan was awarded Life Governorship of Omeo District Hospital in 1991 and until recently – nothing stopped her – also working for the Mothers' Club, and anyone else who needed her. It's a gentle district joke that if Joan arrived, you knew you were in trouble – but it was always said with respect and admiration, and not a little relief that she was there.

Joan was the epitome of Christ's workers, not only as a model for any church warden or Sunday School teacher, but as parish council member for many years and a Synod representative, once women were allowed.



Joan Condon

As there were, of necessity, many visiting clergy, they were all welcomed and cared for at the farmhouse at Hinomunjie.

Joan leaves her beloved daughter and son-in-law Geof, and their daughters Heather and Jillian. She was so proud of her two great grandsons Oscar and George.

In closing I'd like to tell a private little story. Joan often said to me "When I get to heaven and meet the Lord, as I hope I will (then pointing her finger) I will say to Him – "Lord, how dare you let people put all that money and effort into big fancy buildings for worship, when people all over your world are starving and unhoused?"

But I like to think that before she had the chance to speak, He would lay His hand gently on her shoulder and say "Well done, good and faithful servant". Vale Joan, one of the greatest witnesses for Christ I have ever met.

The Rev'd Thelma Langshaw is Honorary Priest in Charge at Omeo.



Johanna Haasjes at the WaterAid information stall

Daffodils and Diamonds

Heather Scott
Leongatha

The Leongatha Daffodil Festival celebrated its 60th anniversary this year with the theme "Diamonds". St Peter's church was as usual beautifully decorated with daffodils and other spring flowers, arranged as "Flowers in Praise" by the local churches.

The display took up the diamond theme, with

sparkling crystal and jewels, ball gowns and wedding dresses, and photos and memorabilia from members of the church family who have celebrated 60 years of marriage.

Delicious refreshments were served by St Peter's Guild, who were kept extremely busy. Visitors also took the opportunity to visit Johanna Haasjes at the WaterAid information stall and to browse the books at the library book sale.



Displays at the Daffodil Festival

Active Bystander Workshop

Jan Misiurka
Newborough

Gender violence has been in the news over the past few years and Newborough MU have decided to face this issue in a positive light by providing a workshop where individuals can learn that by speaking out, you are not only taking a stand for yourself, you are letting others know that violence in all forms is not OK.

Statistically it has been shown that sexism, discrimination and violent situations can be stopped in many cases when a person intervenes on behalf of the person being abused!



Dr Ree Boddé

An Active Bystander Workshop, led by Dr Ree Boddé will be held on Friday 11 November from 10.00–1.00pm at St Aidan's, Torres Street, Newborough. Donation is \$10, or free to those on a fixed income or benefits. Contact: Jan – Mob: 0475 067 145, Phone: 5127 1879, email: gippyrose@gmail.com or register through Facebook: just search for AB Training Workshop.



Yarram parishioners enjoying fish and chips at the rectory

Hospitality in the Yarram Parish

Glenda Amos

During September we focussed on hospitality as a way of listening and learning from each other.

Hospitality was recommended by Jesus as a way of meeting those whom we perhaps don't

always meet in our daily lives. Whether we invite people to our homes, to our church or to another place in the community, we need to make them feel welcome and comfortable. We might also need to humble ourselves to make our guests feel at ease.

The Reverend Jo White

invited members of the parish to a Friday night evening of fish and chips and a film at the rectory on 2 September. With the assistance of our local fish and chip shop we were able to order in for 21 guests who enjoyed individual boxes of yummy food.

Then we settled in the lounge to watch *The Intern* which was a fascinating film with lots of laughs about interaction between different generations. Many wise words and actions were shared with younger characters by the grandfather figure. At interval we enjoyed ice-creams in cones. It was a simple way of sharing hospitality, with many of those present helping to serve or pack up after we had eaten.

Perhaps this is also an opportunity for us to look more intentionally at how we offer a welcome to those who come to church. Hebrews chapter 13 says "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it".

A country of contradictions

'Duty Bound by Honour and Tradition' – an exhibition by Julie Mielke

Jan Down

A trip to northern India in 2014 inspired the works by Sale artist and cathedral parishioner, Julie Mielke, held in September at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre in Melbourne.

While in Northern India, Julie learned about acid attacks and the extent of violence against women in India. When a woman in India marries, Julie explained, traditionally she goes to live with her husband's family, taking a dowry with her that has been agreed on beforehand.

These days, however, the husband or his family often demand more from the wife's family after the wedding. If the demands are not met, the woman will sometimes have acid thrown in her face. There are thousands of dowry associated deaths and injuries every year, with survivors becoming outcasts in society.

There is an irony in some of these colourful, vibrant paintings that show the beauty, especially of the women's clothing – Julie has a love of textiles – while also speaking of the painful experiences of many women. Julie commented, "This is what India's about. It's a country of contradictions". She has seen women in beautiful

saris who live in slums, and she has no idea how they manage to stay so clean and elegant.

Some of the paintings in the exhibition simply depict aspects of Hindu culture and tradition, such as "Peacock" – the national bird of India which has many mythological associations – while others comment on injustice and violence.

"The Dowry" shows a ute piled high with household goods. Julie said she saw many similar vehicles while travelling on freeways in India, causing some amusement. This witty painting may also speak to Australian viewers about greed and consumerism in a more general sense, beyond the Indian context.



"The Dowry" by Julie Mielke



"A Woman is Worth More than a TV" by Julie Mielke. Heroes Hangout is a café run by survivors of acid violence, located near the Taj Mahal.

Oncoming traffic!

Kidsplus+ news

Playgroup, Sunday schools, children's ministry groups and families are invited to the annual GFS Kidsplus+ sponsored Family Traffic School Afternoon to be held on Sunday 20 November.

The afternoon will be held at the Morwell Traffic School from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. A sausage sizzle is provided along with free entry. Where possible participants are encouraged to bring their own named "wheels" and safety helmet. Some of the Kidsplus+ trailer equipment will also be available for extra entertainment.



Family Traffic School fun in 2014

Kidsplus Camp 2017

We are delighted to announce that plans are underway for the 2017 Kidsplus+ Camp. The Forest Edge Campsite at Neerim South has been booked for March 24th-26th, and we are looking forward to welcoming 6 to 18 year old participants. Cost will again be \$100.00.

Parish children and youth leaders are most welcome to join the team in planning and encouraging participation of children and youth from across the diocese. We again would ask that such leaders ensure that all diocesan safe ministry paperwork, screening and workshop attendance are up to date. Please contact Carol on 51748445 for details of planning meetings if you are able to participate.



Being a Christian school is more than merely praying together in the morning and being kind to one another. These things are great, and they certainly happen at Chairo, but Jesus Christ is at the heart of everything we teach and do.

This approach to education doesn't compromise in any way the determination of Chairo teachers that every student should be given the opportunity to achieve excellence in their learning. The curriculum is academically rigorous and teachers encourage students to strive for their personal best in all endeavours.

Anthony Collier

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SALT Club

Warragul

During term time on Sundays at the Warragul Anglican Church children spend about fifteen minutes in the service with the adults before going out to their SALT club activities.

There are four SALT Club groups, the youngest (Sparkies) are from 2-4 years old, the Fireflies are in Prep to Grade 1, Comets are Grades 2 to 4, and the Illuminators are 5, 6 and Year 7.

Preschools enjoy a program written by Senior Associate Minister, the Rev'd Katie Peken, with The Toddler Bible as the text. The play activity, craft, and song all tie in with the day's story (plus a snack); the three older groups mostly use Light materials from Scripture Union. Each year the older groups also spend a few weeks learning about social justice issues, and focus on people in other parts of the world.

Simon Connelly is in grade 2 and a member of the Comets group. He was recently interviewed by Carol Monson for the Warragul Parish News. Here is an extract:

Why do you think your family comes to church and lets you go to SALT Club?

To praise God.

What have you learned in SALT Club recently that you think is important?

That God made me, and that he is really great.

What activities helped you to learn this?

Making a wall out of marshmallows and pasta. Nehemiah built a wall around the city a long time after it had been destroyed, with God at his side. God helped Nehemiah, and Nehemiah praised him, which is what we should do every day.

How do you think the things you learn at church and SALT Club will help you as you get older?

To love other people, and to be kind and loving like Jesus. I think going to church is great because I get to learn more about God and get to read more. I also like morning tea, because they usually serve delicious stuff. I like playing with all my friends that go to church. I don't like it when people muck around in SALT club, even though I sometimes muck around, but now I know what it feels like. I really like to dance up the front of church, because it gets me more energetic and I like to dance.



Children were taught to find the book of Psalms by opening the Bible in the middle



Building a city wall like Nehemiah

Moe GFS Kids' Rap

A recent theme at GFS was "Jesus, our SuperStar". These words, showing developing understanding, were written by pairs of girls during one program:

1. Jesus Christ,
He died for us
To save our sins that
was a huge loss
Now I don't know how
you feel
But to me this is a huge deal
Don't be sad and don't
be mad
Because Jesus Christ is
still our dad.
So pray to him every night
He hears YOUR PRAYERS
He is not out of sight.
2. We are God's Children
and forever will be
(repeat 3 times)
God made you so be the
person you are truly.
And forever and forever
be yourself.
3. Jesus made us what we are
He shed His blood to
become a superstar
He made us believe him
and his father
We love and care for
each other.

SCAMPS is growing

Drouin

Drouin Anglican Church started its Friday SCAMPS sessions on 22 July, 2016 (See July TGA, "SCAMPS into Drouin").



On 16 September we finished our first term together; growing gradually over the course of the term from seven children to eleven.

It has been a steady start; and one that has allowed the SCAMPS team to get to know the new parents and caregivers well. The parents are also getting to know each other well, which is great to see. The children are really engaging with the program's routines and from what their care-givers are reporting the children are keen to get back to SCAMPS each Friday.

Our new term of SCAMPS commences on Friday 7 October and enrolments are necessary as our maximum capacity for a session is fourteen – beyond which we would look to starting a second session. We welcome enquiries and offer the first week free of charge to those who might like to give SCAMPS a try.

SCAMPS is an innovative pre-schooler's program that fosters musical activities, story-telling, craft and fun for children and their caregivers.

SCAMPS stands for "Story, Craft and Music for Pre-Schoolers" and was developed by Kate Spalding and Pauline Doedens, originally in the setting of a Christian school.

SCAMPS has two real strengths: it aims towards "Prep" readiness in an age-appropriate way for its mainly 3-5 year old participants; and it fosters good quality interaction between children and their caregivers.

Parents, and sometimes grandparents, join in the music, craft, movement and games with their children. Parents also join their children in listening to the story of the day which often sets the theme with which the songs, games and craft integrate. The theme explores an area of creation.

There are some gentle elements of Christian thanksgiving in the course of the program – usually in the lyrics of some of the songs – for instance, the final song each week also serves as "grace" for the little meal that everyone has after the formal hour of the session and takes opportunity to thank God for music, singing and all good things.

Any enquiries about SCAMPS can be directed to Kate Spalding on 56253463.



SCAMPS session in full swing at Drouin

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For young disciples



The Rev'd Daniel Lowe
Photo courtesy St Paul's Grammar

Heroes, villains and the risk of compassion

Daniel Lowe

Our screens are filled with examples of both on a daily basis and while these extreme actions may reveal a lot about the character of the person involved, I suspect that most character defining actions happen in the midst of our mundane daily pursuits and often go unnoticed.

Consider this example. Watching students walk between classes carrying large armfuls of books and other items, it is not unusual to see

one of these armfuls cascading to the ground in a moment of distraction.

There are three common reactions to this sort of incident. Some students will laugh at their peer's misfortune and continue on their merry way. Many students will wince sympathetically as they make their way around the strewn items. One or two students go a step further and will stop and assist in the regathering of the dropped items.

In that brief moment the character of each student is revealed. Those who winced

as they passed reveal an ability to recognise the pain of others; while those who laughed show no such sympathetic inclination. The ones who stop to help go beyond sympathy and demonstrate compassion. Not just the ability to recognise the pain of others but a willingness to take action to relieve that pain.

Compassion has two important components—a feeling of sorrow for the afflictions of others and a strong desire to alleviate that suffering. The feeling costs us very little

but the action can carry a high price.

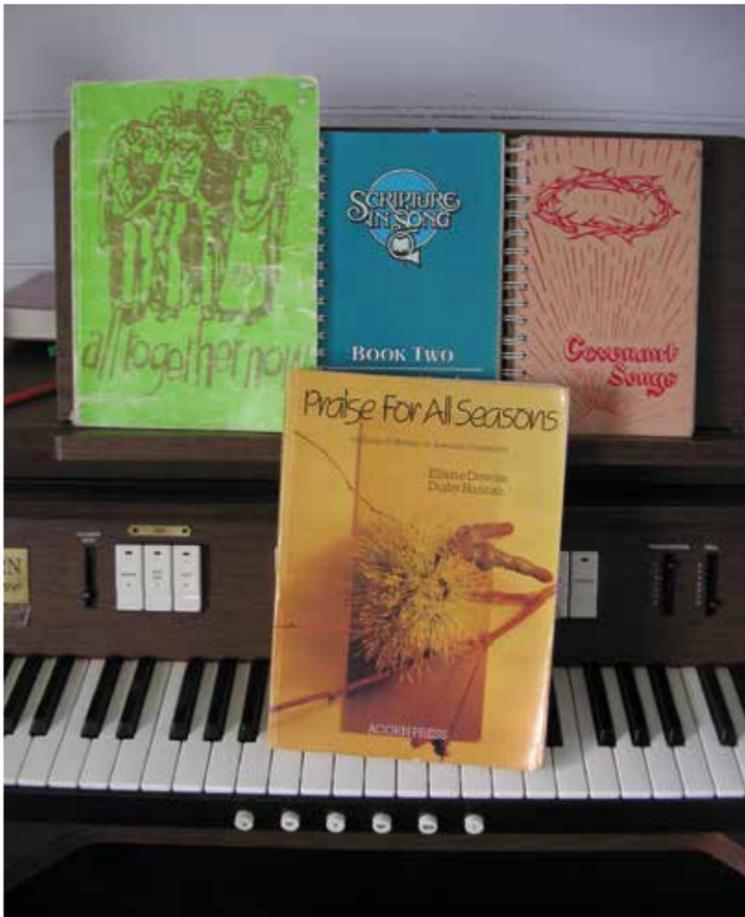
Jesus challenged his followers to show compassion, even to those who persecuted them, and then embodied God's compassion for us by sacrificing his own life. Next time you see someone in distress, what will you do? Will you settle for sympathy and look suitably concerned as you walk by? Or will you take a risk and act?

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

COLOSSIANS 3:12

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

Heroes who risk their lives to save others are usually easy to spot and "villains" who rejoice in the brutal taking of innocent lives are hard to miss.



Threads of congregational song

Fay Magee

time of increasing diversity mixed with increasing speed of communication.

A significant event in the 1970s was the arrival of *Scripture in Song* emanating from New Zealand. There were several songbooks published by David and Dale Garrett, with a range of composers, from across the English-speaking world. These songs spread across denominational boundaries;

Fifty years of singing have seen many changes and I like the image of tracing "threads" or watching how some of them weave together, across not just our lifetimes but across the centuries; the witness of the saints. So while Youth Praise represented one or more threads, many more threads have emerged in a

they were fresh-sounding and mostly short songs and so, easily remembered. Texts were usually scripture verses or portions from the King James Version and mostly just one "verse", hence often referred to as "choruses" or "songs" rather than hymns.

Musically, it should be noted that the style of these songs was not necessarily matching the trends of the popular music of the day but often harked back to music hall or simple folk styles. This music appeared to be more informal, devotional in nature and impact. This was all part of a heady mix of changes and possibilities, the emergence of charismatic renewal, post-Vatican II, and not least, liturgical reforms with the new Anglican prayer book arriving in 1978.

The Australian Hymn Book was first published in 1977 and included some of the new short songs, while an increasing barrage of new collections was appearing on all fronts. Many of these were used as supplements to the more "formal" hymnals and became part of Sunday worship.

In 1980 a bright green-covered collection came from the Lutheran Publishing House in Adelaide, *All Together Now*, with 104 songs, many by local composers, particularly Robin Mann. It was here we discovered one of Mann's great contributions, "Father welcomes all his children".

The advantage of this and subsequent collections in this series was that so many of the songs slipped comfortably into the Anglican liturgy.

Other Australian publications included *Covenant Songs* (1982) with an international representation but also including local composers. *Praise for All Seasons*, published in 1985 comprised 100 songs by Australian songwriters – quite an accomplishment. It was useful to have a topical index referring to specific types of occasions for which these songs were written. *Mission Praise*, first published in 1984 in the UK, has become an extensive collection over

the time since, interestingly arranged in alphabetical order.

Songs from all these sources can be found in the *Together in Song* version of the original *Australian Hymn Book*. As we reflect on these threads, maybe we can trace some of our own experiences and come together to sing not only "our songs" but celebrate and sing the songs of others.

Fay Magee is a musician, music educator and community music catalyst.

She has a strong interest in congregational singing, particularly the music of the past fifty years which she has witnessed first hand.



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Philip Muston

A late mentor of mine saw a strong connection between the Apostle Peter's words "Silver and gold have I none", and his ability to say to the lame man outside the Temple gate: "But such as I have I give: in the name of Jesus Christ, get up and walk" (ACTS 3:6).

He reckoned that because Peter and John were honestly bereft of resources other than the Holy Spirit's promised help, God empowered Peter's healing command.

A radical interpretation, you might say, but one that brings me a flash of hope whenever people say the church is "running out of money".

One of the first results for Peter and John in following Messiah Jesus was to become poor financially. Called to give up a fishing careers in order to "catch people", they quickly found that the latter was not as lucrative in financial terms!

"Look, we've left everything to follow you. What will be in it for us?" Peter asked Jesus. Well, replies the Lord, you'll get a hundredfold of family relationships and land, plus key roles in the new Israel.

Peter, having opted out of the old, corrupt social order that ruled and rewarded – then as now – with money, found that he could give a sign of the new order that was arriving in Christ.

John Howard Yoder says our duty as disciples of Jesus is to face "the social reality of representing in an unwilling world the Order to come". We are in Jacques Ellul's words: "troublemakers,

Silver and gold have we none, BUT...

creators of uncertainty, agents of a dimension incompatible with society".

In us Christians, God is trying to do something "new", to build a new community of people, a prototype for a future order based on the way things operate in heaven.

I cheekily say "trying" because we are not always cooperative with God in this process. Often we are so secure and happy with our lot in the established society that are not really willing to leave the old and follow Jesus into the new. Sadly, the church often blesses and confirms our role in the old order, thus discouraging us from entering the new.

The old society runs on mammon.

"The church is running low on money, and this is surely a wonderful sign..."

What it values can be counted

in commodities and dollars.

The new society runs on love,

not of the sentimental kind but

of the practical "agape" kind.

Do I suggest some romantic

theology of poverty? No, rather

what Shane Claiborne has

called "a gospel of abundance

rooted in a theology of enough".

Jesus calls us to into a church that is community; that shares around God's very generous provision of earthly goods justly and equitably. There is enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed. No trickle-down economics here, but a joyful sharing of God's bounty.

Our Lord was very strong on all this: he spoke more often about money and economics in connection with God's Kingdom than just about anything else. He told stories about it, he gave commands about it: "Do not be afraid, little flock," he says, 'for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the poor, providing for yourselves... treasure in heaven."

And the stern: "No-one can serve two masters, you cannot serve both God and money".

Personal wealth, so treasured by the people of this world, is the most dangerous threat to life under the new order of Jesus.

Perhaps this is worth bearing in mind when we are thinking about the future of the church in this mostly mammon-worshipping land, where politicians believe "the economy's the thing, stupid".

The church is running low on money, and this is surely a wonderful sign. One of these days we may be able to say truthfully "Silver and gold have we none: all we have to give and share is life and health in the name of Jesus Christ".

"But," you say, "the media constantly tells us the church is rich!" Well, in real estate, perhaps. Jesus did say we'd have land! We've had our parish properties since white settlement, though in some cases the buildings on them are falling down. Some rural dioceses have had to sell pretty much all their property apart from parish buildings in order to maintain their viability under the old order.

But if we're so rich, how are so few parishes able to afford a stipendiary priest? And how come so many clergy now must consider part-time parishes, to be supported by their working spouses?

No – with a small percentage of spectacular exceptions, the Anglican Church on the whole is, as the media constantly remind us, "in decline".

"In decline" is a judgment by the world of money and power. In many places the church is simply changing shape and form to better serve the people of the 21st century. In some cases it is going underground to dodge persecution meted out by excessive secular rules and regulations, not to mention the shame of institutional church abuse.

The church in places with shrinking populations will naturally decline. And where the church has rested upon its establishment credentials and slipped into the role of chaplain to the old order, it is bound to decline as the secularised establishment feels less need of chaplaincy.

Decline in terms of money and power could be "Good News", for it would throw us into a new dependence on God and need for faith in God's generous and abundant provision.

As the apostles including Peter found, dependence on and faith in God bring dynamic spiritual life, and spiritual life renews the church.

Archdeacon Philip Muston is Archdeacon of the Western Region and Rector at Warragul.

EDITORIAL

Daring to be

Karl Faase, Christian media presenter and CEO of Olive Tree Media, speaking at the Australasian Religious Press Association (ARPA) conference in Sydney early in September, agreed that the gospel must be both "word and deed", but believed that there has been an over-emphasis on "deed", while "word" has often been reduced to "God is love". He argued for the need to be explicit in explaining the message of Jesus.

Olive Tree Media produces resources for churches including films such as *Jesus the Game Changer* with discussion guides.

Can the church dare to be gracious but unapologetic in proclaiming the gospel in word as well as deed?

Professor Shane Clifton, Dean of Theology at Alphacrucis College (Sydney) and recently appointed Honorary Associate, Centre for Disability Research and Policy, the Faculty of Health Sciences, the University of Sydney, spoke at ARPA on "The Church, Justice and Disability". Shane became a quadriplegic in 2010 (C5 incomplete), after a serious accident. One of his key messages was that "disability is not a minority topic". We are born completely dependent, grow into independence, and as we age, become dependent again. At all times we are vulnerable. So he says "Disability gets to the heart of what it means to be human."

Shane argued that disability is a social rather than a medical issue; there is still so much social exclusion, though often unintended. His theological focus and the topic of his next book due out in 2017, is the intersection of disability and virtue ethics – the exploration of happiness, or "the good life". He said "The good life – the meaningful life – is accomplished by practising virtue".

Since his injury he has had to learn a new set of virtues: patience, humility and gratitude especially. His great sense of humour has also clearly been a huge asset in dealing with some of the effects of his disability.

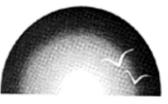
Can we dare to be a church that embraces the ordinariness of disability, with all that that implies about access and inclusion?

September 10 was World Suicide Prevention Day. According to Suicide Prevention Australia, over 2500 people take their own lives in Australia each year, while 65,000 make attempts. An Australian report released on WSP Day found that 89% of people knew someone who had attempted suicide and 85% knew someone who had died by suicide". This caused "high levels of distress, over long periods of time ranging from 1–58 years after the reported suicide death" (suicidepreventionaustralia.org).

Graeme Cole from Wesley Mission also spoke at ARPA, about Wesley Mission's mental health facilities and programs, including LifeForce, their suicide prevention program. The organisation runs workshops all over Australia, training people to identify the signs that someone may be at risk of suicide and what to do. The Mission says that "simple effective interventions can make a real difference and save lives" (wesleymission.org.au).

Can we dare to be a church that learns how to be useful to people who need a reason for daring to be?

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21st century ministry and mission

Vern Hughes, parishioner at St Thomas', Bunyip, and the Rev'd Sue Jacka, Rector at Trafalgar, offer two perspectives on the changes and challenges of ministry today.

Sue Jacka

We live in a world of flux where constant change can overwhelm many people. The church has been greatly affected by social change; many people today have only minimal contact with church and a negative attitude often prevails in schools and the media.

Where once it might have been that regular worshippers might regret that their children had not followed as disciples of Christ, now it may also be that grandchildren or great grand children have entirely lost contact and do not even understand who Jesus is or what the church actually teaches.

I find myself writing columns for three local community papers – people are still hungry for deeper meaning and I want them to know that the Christian message remains relevant and brings hope and encouragement.

Of course, it is not appropriate to use Christian jargon or to make an assumption of faith. I want to plant seeds of faith and to encourage ongoing conversations.

In many ways ministry in the early 21st century continues as it has for eons. As a priest it is my joy to celebrate the sacraments, to prepare worship services that are encouraging and inspiring, and to enable lay people to grow in the faith and understanding.

I believe that societal changes provide many instances where good biblical and theological teaching is needed as we grapple with what is the shape and flavour of the Good News for people whose families are impacted by substance abuse, retrenchment or relationship breakdown.

Broader social issues like how the Bible speaks of refugees and the need for Sabbath-keeping in our work-driven world also provide opportunities. Allowing people to come to their own viewpoints and encouraging them to think critically within a context of understanding the Bible and tradition is more appropriate than expecting dogma to be accepted.

The sacred trust of pastoral care remains an essential part of ministry. The gift of listening and revering the experiences of another on life's journey often leads to praying with and for people who have little contact with church.

In much of my work, I continue as a deacon – a bridge between church and wider community. This may mean leading kids' outreach programs, visiting my local RSL for drinks or working alongside local community groups. If our churches are to renew contact with people who have little church experience, clergy, as well as the laity, need to be the outstretched arms of Jesus.

Vern Hughes

Has the Church lost its way in the contemporary world? In the rush to be relevant to the world's confusion and turmoil, the Church is in great danger of forgetting what it is and what it is for.

There are plenty of psychologists, counsellors and New Age healers around to help individuals find meaning in life. There are lots of personal trainers, motivational speakers and stage-of-life celebrants in private practice who can offer meditation, daily ritual and spiritual retreats.

The ministry of the Church is not to offer services of this kind for people searching for individual fulfilment. As the Scriptures tell us, Jesus was not interested in people who were searching for fulfilment. His message was much more radical: if you want to find your life, lose it.

Ministry today, for ordained and lay members of the Church, consists first and foremost in being the Church in our broken world. We are a community formed by Scripture and Sacrament. We are the body of people formed by word, bread and wine, commissioned to love and serve the world.

Ordained and lay people form this body and share this commission. Ordained ministry should no longer be confused with professionalised roles and structures. The whole Body of Christ is engaged in ministry.

Increasingly in the 21st century, as in previous historical periods, ordained priests and deacons will not be full-time professionals. They will have day jobs like the rest of us. Ordination will remain for administration of the sacraments and for teaching the body of the faithful to pray, but not for careers.



In the 21st century, our commission to love and serve the world will increasingly be done through our parishes and not through professionalised agencies. When Church agencies turned themselves into contractors for government, they lost their connection to the community of people formed by Scripture and Sacrament. They lost their identity. Corporate management-speak replaced the culture of community.

In the 21st century, the care and nurture of the young will be a huge challenge for parents and communities assaulted from all sides by individualism and consumerism. Our parishes have an opportunity to rediscover one of their age-old purposes defined by celebration of the Sacraments – to act as a village in forming and nurturing the young.

Our Church schools have an opportunity to educate young people and families in our counter-cultural faith, not in upward mobility and status-seeking.

We have an opportunity in this century to shed a lot of baggage and rediscover ourselves as Church. We do not need to re-invent ourselves to be relevant to the world. We simply need to remember our identity as members of the One, Catholic and Apostolic Church into which we have been baptised.

“Jesus was not interested in people who were searching for fulfilment.”

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– Tips and inspiration for churches and households



23 Start a garden share scheme

A garden share scheme (or “land share” as they are often called) is where a person who has more garden than they can currently manage – perhaps because of age or disability – is matched with someone who wants to grow food, but has no land. The produce is usually then shared at harvest time. Some Transition Town groups in England and around the world have set up schemes like this – see transitionstratford.com/.

Garden share schemes are one small way to help localise food production as well as building community resilience. This might be something a church could start. It would be a great way of mixing ages and abilities, as well as sharing skills.

Faith at work



John Koch and his poodle

John Koch

Self-employed fencing contractor Nar Nar Goon

Jan Down

“It’s got to be right”, says John Koch, referring to the quality of his fence building. On fences in strategic locations he likes to put up a sign featuring the Christian symbol of a fish, and this motivates him to keep the standard of the work high.

His Christian faith also influences the way he relates to clients. He explains “Scripture says to serve your earthly master as though you’re serving Christ himself” and he keeps this in mind when he is dealing with people.

John began fencing work about twenty years ago, after answering an advertisement in the newspaper asking for labourers. He was doing fence demolition, but one day he pulled down the wrong fence. He realised he would have to replace it, so he bought the materials at cost price from a mate. Then the client said it was all right; that that fence needed to come down anyway!

However, this experience took John in a new direction. He discovered that he could

make money by buying timber wholesale and building fences himself. “I felt God was able to make something good out of my mistake”, John says. So he then started his own business and has been running it ever since.

Working in a growth area with new houses going up constantly, John is extremely busy, with seven real estate agents on his books. He has two young off-siders and often sends them out ahead of him in the morning to get a job started.

John finds “a sense of achievement” in the work, and “a sense of joy when the client sees the outcome”. He likes the rapport that builds up with clients, and being a dog-lover, enjoys getting to know their dogs. He also likes being his own boss: “I enjoy the freedom of being able to go to work at a time that suits me”.

He describes himself and his wife Jenny as night owls; they usually go to bed about midnight as John has to attend to his office work after dinner, and then they finally have some time together to unwind and relax. So an early morning start is not part of the routine.

When asked to describe a typical day’s work, surprisingly, John begins with the office work: answering emails, calculating quotes, invoicing and phone calls. Only after he comes to the end of this list does he add “being on the tools” – actually building the fences.

It seems the hardest part of the job is coming home after a day of physically tiring work and a long drive, feeling completely spent, and then having to “find the mental fortitude to switch on the computer and do office work”. He talks about “in-box shock” – the fearful reluctance to open emails, knowing he will have to respond.

John and Jenny are members of St John’s Anglican Church at Nar Nar Goon, and also attend services at the relatively new Cornerstone Anglican Community Church (which meets in a house at Cardinia Lakes), both of which are under the priestly care of the Rev’d Chris McAleer.

John describes himself as “a bit of a Timothy – an encourager”. If he sees someone doing something good, he will say so, “out of truth, not just for the heck of it”. When he heard that Chris was coming to the parish, he sensed the Holy Spirit was telling him to be there for this new minister, to serve him and support him, and this is what John has been aiming to do ever since.

John’s advice for anyone considering setting up their own business is to “ask questions, count the cost and only borrow the minimum of what you need, so that you can easily pay it back”. He remembers his mother saying “Use someone else’s experience. It’s a lot cheaper”.

Diocesan calendar

First Saturday of the month: walk the labyrinth at end of Back Beach Rd, San Remo, Phillip Island, from 10:30 am.

October

- 2 2:00 pm Blessing of the animals at St John’s, Port Albert
- 2 3:00 pm on the oval at The Abbey: Raymond Island Blessing of the animals and pets
- 8 9:30 am – 3:00 pm Moe Parish Antique and Collectables Fair, Albert Street Primary School. Antique appraisals available – details page 4 Enquiries 5127 1119
- 14 5:00 pm Friday – after lunch on Sunday: A visual introduction to the Camino de Santiago walk, with the Rev’d John Baldock and team – details page 4
- 15 10:00 am – 3:00 pm: Order of St Luke Training Day at Christ Church, Drouin
- 16 9:30 am A service of Thanksgiving for Health and Medical Professions, Christ Church, Drouin
- 16 2:00 – 4:00 pm Music Café at St Mary’s Trafalgar. Funds raised will provide scholarships for local schools.
- 22 9:30 am – 4:00 pm Safe Church Workshop, Warragul Anglican Church
- 27 4:30pm Commissioning of Cathrine Muston, Parish Partnerships/ Community Development Officer, St Paul’s Sale
- 28 7:30 pm Friday, Folk and Acoustic Night, St John’s, Nar Nar Goon
- 29 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Sustainability Festival: displays, demonstrations, stalls, products and food, and activities, – details: 5156 6580
- 29 Annual GFS Kidsplus+ Thanksgiving Eucharist and Luncheon, Morwell. Contact 51748445

November

- 4 Friday evening – Saturday afternoon, Diocesan Retreat led by the Rev’d Ken Parker – details page 4.
- 5 8:30 am Bikers’ Breakfast at St John’s, 6 Main St Nar Nar Goon
- 11 10:00 am – 1:00 pm Anti-violence Active Bystander Workshop, led by Dr Ree Boddé, St Aidan’s, Torres Street, Newborough – details page 6.
- 20 2:00 pm 160th Celebrations at Christ Church, Tarraville: from 2:00 pm: exhibition of memorabilia with afternoon tea in the historic Tarraville School House; 2:30 pm Civic Reception, Christ Church Tarraville; 5:00 pm Evensong with guest preacher Bp Kay Goldsworthy, at Christ Church Tarraville
- 20 3:00 – 5:00 pm Annual Kidsplus+ Family Traffic School Afternoon, Morwell, phone Carol: 51748445
- 25 7:30 pm Friday, Folk and Acoustic Night, St John’s, Nar Nar Goon

December

- 16 7:30 pm Friday, Folk and Acoustic Night, St John’s, Nar Nar Goon
- 18 2:00 pm Sunday Christmas Concert, St John’s Nar Nar Goon



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