

# THE Melbourne Anglican

FEBRUARY 2023, No 621

## Discovering the road less travelled

### Story – P11

Children get involved in mission at the Summer Under the Sun kids program, with Church Missionary Society worker Chris Adams.



**P5**  
New gospel presence in North Clyde



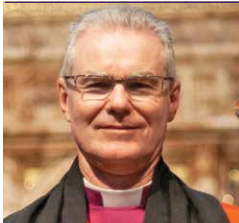
**P23**  
Voice just the first step to healing



**P24**  
Farewell to a true servant leader

Picture: Elspeth Kernebone





# This Lenten season, open your heart to transformation

■ Archbishop Philip Freier

**We will soon begin our Lenten journey with the invitation to receive the mark of ashes during the liturgy of Ash Wednesday.**

Ash from a fire has been understood from ancient times to be a sign of mortality, of the little that is left after all else has been consumed. People from many different cultures around the world have used ash as a sign of mourning at times of loss and bereavement. Disfiguring and dirty, it showed the abandonment of the way things were and marked an essential step along the path to recovery through grief.

The liturgical imposition of ashes is more constrained but is sure to disrupt the sense of "life as normal" as we leave the liturgy and walk the street or catch the tram, bus or train. What might it be, then, that gives us cause to respond to God in this way? Could it be because we have covered ourselves with pride and arrogance that we need to be cleansed and released to the freedom that is ours in Christ?

So often we are content to live lives that are empty and superficial, yet how much do



Picture: Anglican Compass

we yearn for the depths of God's love? Are we trapped in old patterns and struggles, needing our eyes to be lifted to the hope that is ours in Christ?

It is easy to answer any of these questions in the affirmative. Even though we are vessels of clay, easily broken and far short of perfection, we still seek to be conformed to God's purposes, to be vessels of God's loving service in the world. Even if our best efforts have met rejection and discouragement, we are still called to trust and hope through Jesus. So we bring before God all that is in our life, knowing that we can hold nothing back from the fire of love which consumes even those faults which we dearly cherish.

I think the world hungers for people with this kind of humble self-examination to embrace the gift of penitence and reformation of life in Christ. What a gift our observance of Lent is for others! Ash Wednesday is the time for each of us to tune into God's story for the world and listen a little less the world's story about itself.

Let us then share in the reality of this transforming journey, with Jesus and his 40 days in the wilderness as its pattern. He found the proper response to the tempter's words of discouragement in his deep formation in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. We have the additional gift of his words in the gospels and those of the early Christian community and its leaders elsewhere in the New Testament.

This all constitutes the Lenten journey. Embrace the mark of ash and open your hearts to the transforming future that is the gift of God to all who believe in Christ. May our daily reflection on God's revelation nurture and strengthen us in every way. Have a blessed journey from Ash Wednesday through to Easter.

## THE Melbourne Anglican



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## A Trip to Thailand?

*Teaching/Mission opportunity*

Interested in 1-4 weeks of teaching basic bible knowledge/Anglican church life/aspects of Christian living, at a Karen Anglican bible school in NW Thailand between June and October 2023? Qualifications not essential, however you will love sharing your knowledge and experience. You will need to be self-funded.

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*The Reverend Andrea Nagy after her ordination. Picture: Janine Eastgate.*

# ‘Thank God because he led me here’

■ **Maya Pilbrow**

**The first time she set foot in Australia, the Reverend Andrea Nagy was 20 years old. Accompanied by her husband and their toddler daughter, she had just arrived from an Austrian refugee camp.**

Born in the socialist Hungarian People's Republic, Ms Nagy, who was ordained on 26 November with 17 others, grew up in an academic family with a strong faith, forced to hide their beliefs for fear of personal and political ostracisation. She learnt very early never to tell anyone they went to church, or were Christians.

Growing up, Ms Nagy's faith was important to her, thanks to the influence of her father and her maternal grandmother. Her father had a gift for bringing Scripture to life, and imbued Bible studies with an intellectual approach to theology and history. Ms Nagy's grandmother showed her an equally important approach to faith. After the Second World War, as a new widow she took care of two young children and her ageing mother. Her faith sustained her in this extremely difficult time.

Ms Nagy's faith was also a key part in her decision to leave Hungary as a young woman. Aged 17, she took a fateful stand in her high school classroom. After her teacher

began to say something negative about Christianity, Ms Nagy felt compelled to defend her faith.

"After 17 years of not saying anything, I just had to stand up and say something," she said.

The repercussions of her actions that day affected her life in many ways.

After her outburst, her school's principal denied her a recommendation to go to university. In Hungary, this essentially blocked her from accessing higher education. This was devastating to the academically-oriented Ms Nagy, and contributed heavily to her decision to leave Hungary with her husband and young child. The family spent a year in a refugee camp in Austria before arriving in Australia. It was during this time that Ms Nagy said she felt closest to God.

In Australia, Ms Nagy began attending Lutheran churches, leading a Bible study leader and teaching Sunday school while working at a bank. Losing this job prompted her to devote herself more fully to religion.

"I really had to listen to God's voice saying that, yes, it is time for you to start studying theology," she said.

But Ms Nagy was starting this journey in a church that did not allow the ordination of women. She recalls her mother asking

why she was bothering to study theology, given she could not become a priest in the Lutheran Church.

Her first brush with Anglicanism came when she moved to the Mornington Peninsula 10 years ago. Here, Ms Nagy joined a local church rather than travel to the nearest Lutheran parish. St Mark's Anglican Church Balnarring was the first church she visited, it felt like she had come home.

While she felt warmly accepted at St Mark's, Ms Nagy had given up hope of becoming ordained. Instead she was growing her relationship with God through her church community and work at the Salvation Army. But in 2013 when she was invited to an Anglican Cursillo weekend and was asked if she had ever considered becoming a priest. She started to wonder whether God was calling her to a different denomination.

In 2016 she was formally admitted to the Anglican Church of Australia but was still unsure of her path. In 2019 she committed to pursuing ordination.

Ms Nagy said terror at the full weight of her new responsibilities was her first reaction on being ordained, but she felt comforted by God's grace to support her in ministry.

"All I can say is thank God because He led me here. I had to leave Hungary. I had to



# Same-sex marriage harms ministry in the Global South: Egyptian Archbishop

■ Maya Pilbrow

**Same-sex marriage within the church would pose a risk to ministries in the Global South, some church leaders have warned. Opponents to same-sex marriage say the voices of Anglicans in the Global South are being ignored in the debate over sexuality within the church.**

GAFCON representatives said Australian Anglicans, and those in the wider world, needed to listen to communities in the Global South.

These remarks were made in response to a statement from Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches honorary adviser Archbishop Emeritus of Alexandria Mouneer Hanna Anis that actions supporting same-sex marriage within progressive Anglican Provinces seriously affected the mission of other Provinces in the Global South.

He said these actions should thus be considered unfair unilateral decisions that contradicted the Anglican Communion's customary interdependence.

Dr Mouneer said that acceptance of same-sex marriage by Anglican leaders had a detrimental effect on ministries such as his own in majority Islamic countries.

He argued that actions such as the Bishop of Oxford's recent essay suggesting the Church of England should allow same-sex services were pushing the Anglican Communion to its breaking point.

The GSFA is made up of 25 orthodox Anglican Provinces around the world, largely in Africa, South America and South-East Asia. The Diocese of Sydney is Australia's only member.

GAFCON Australia board member Fiona McLean said within the Melbourne diocese many culturally and linguistically diverse Anglicans did not think same-sex relationships could be legitimately endorsed or blessed.

She said there was a need to listen to and respect different cultural contexts within the diocese.

Associate pastor at Emmanuel Iranian Church the Reverend Hoda Ameri said it was important to understand how people's views were shaped by their own cultural backgrounds, noting that migrants who lived in the West still maintained strong connections to the traditions of their homelands.

Mrs Ameri said to deny the existence of people in same-sex relationships or to criminalise homosexuality, as is the approach of the theocratic Islamic government of Iran, was cruel. She said Christians must respect God's creatures and humanity, even if they believed different things.

But Mrs Ameri said that the Iranian convert community emphasised the true and unshakable nature of God's Word, and that according to her understanding, same-sex marriage contradicted the Word of God.

Mrs McLean said acceptance of homosexuality conflicted with the Christian responsibility to take seriously the Bible's warnings on sexual sin.

"We in the West have been held captive to the myth of progress," Mrs McLean said.

Church historian and women's ordination campaigner Dr Muriel Porter dismissed the arguments put forward by Dr Mouneer and GAFCON, that support for LGBTQ+ rights negatively impacted ministries in the Global South.

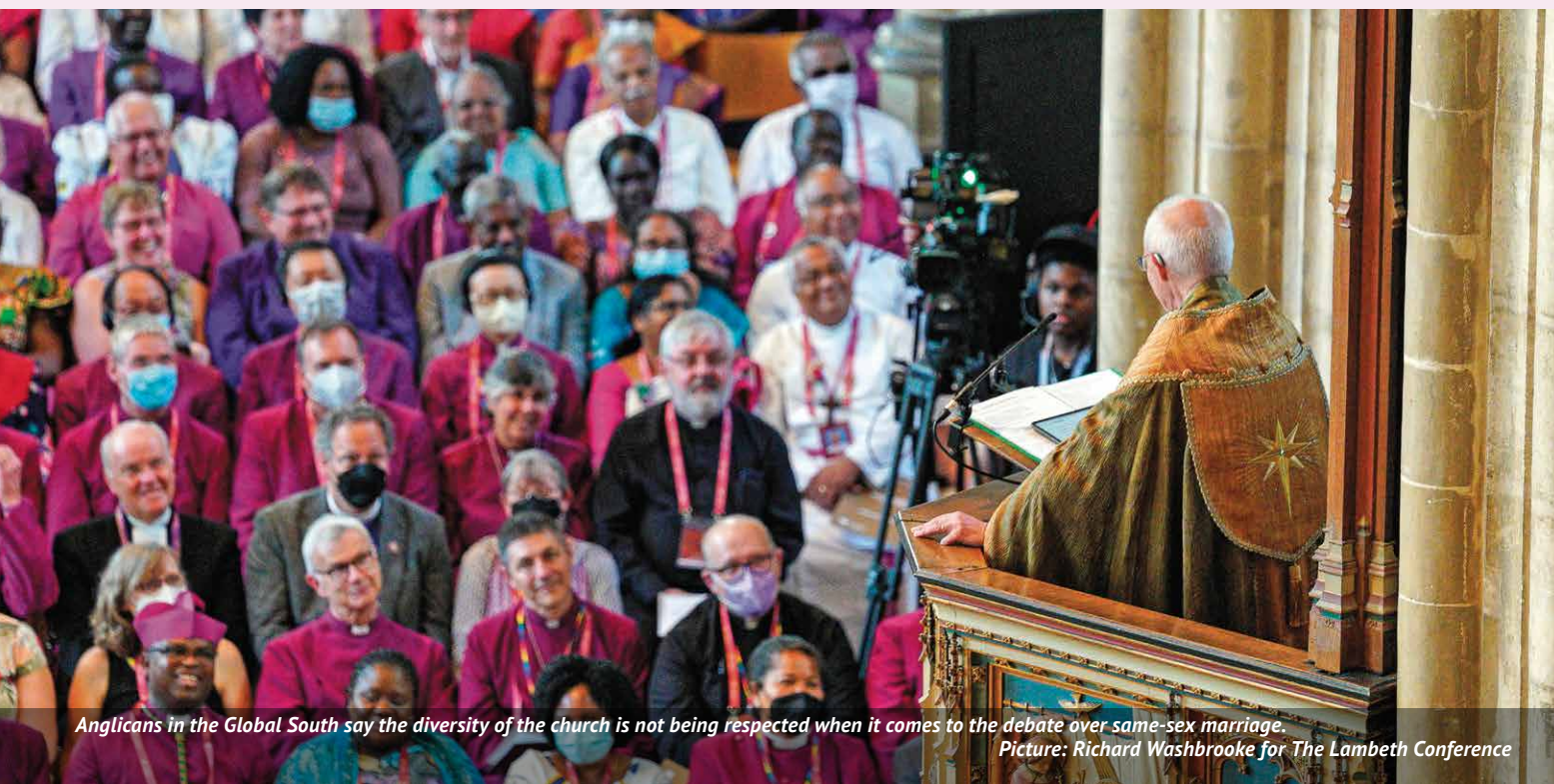
Dr Porter said opposition within the church to same-sex marriage had a marginalising effect on LGBTQ+ Anglicans.

"They're saying it's much harder for them to evangelise. On the other side, it's making it much harder for us to evangelise in our community when we are portrayed as being so narrow and conservative," she said.

Dr Porter said many Biblical scholars would say there was nothing in the Scripture against loving and faithful same-sex relationships.

Dr Porter said the church had always faced internal theological and scriptural debates over social issues, and that to embrace evolving beliefs about gender and sexuality would not pose a threat to Anglicanism, citing the campaign to ordain women as an example.

"The sky didn't fall. They said we would destroy the church. We have not."



Anglicans in the Global South say the diversity of the church is not being respected when it comes to the debate over same-sex marriage.

Picture: Richard Washbrooke for The Lambeth Conference





# New church, old name as gospel presence returns

The Reverend Reece Kelly at the Proclaim Anglican Church soft launch.

Picture: supplied.

## ■ Jenan Taylor

**A country church that was shuttered in 1999 because of the low population is set for a rebirth amid a residential boom and a modernised approach.**

St Paul's Clyde North will return to what was at the start of the century a small farming community with little more than 1000 residents, but is now a major growth suburb with a population of more than 40,000.

Set to be commissioned as priest-in-charge when the church opens on 5 February 2023, the Reverend Reece Kelly said St Paul's would be re-branded as Proclaim Anglican Church and would meet in a community centre every Sunday.

Mr Kelly said the church's launch team had been searching for a space in the Clyde North area for two years before finding Eliston community centre with room to hold 100 people, and an additional room for a Sunday school.

He said they felt blessed to have the space after encountering several challenges, with financing concerns topping the list.

Their prayers were answered when an anonymous donation covering three years of funding resulted in the Diocese of

Melbourne approving the ministry presence of St Paul's in Clyde North, he said.

In addition, a Berwick Anglican parishioner donated musical equipment so that the church would be able to sing songs of praise from its first meeting.

But Mr Kelly said church plants in the suburb experienced considerable operational limitations from several sources, including public schools and the local council.

***"Now, by the grace of God, the Anglican church is coming back."***

The Reverend Reece Kelly

That included having to start family services at 9am in an area where families tended to not be around at that time on a Sunday morning, he said.

He suspected similar pressures led to other denominations moving out of the neighbourhood.

"There's spiritual opposition out here, which to me and the team, shows that this

is an area where there is an even further need to present the gospel, because it being pushed away," Mr Kelly said.

He said that the reason they had settled on St Paul's as the name, was so that any people who remembered the original old country church would find it was now a new church.

"We want to make the point that the visible church may have disappeared, but the gospel has never left. It's coming back. We're rebranding it Proclaim Anglican church which is inspired by Colossians 1:28. And we are desiring to be a big presence," Mr Kelly said.

"Part of the history of Clyde North is that there once was an old Anglican church here. Now, by the grace of God, the Anglican church is coming back."

He said more than 60 people, including the 40-person launch team, attended a soft launch for the church in late November despite it not being advertised.

"It shows that there's interest with people who live in Clyde North to actually want a church here."

There was due to be a second soft launch with a Christmas service on Sunday 11 December.





# Women must be supported to withstand barriers to God's call

Female clergy gathered to mark 30 years of since women were first ordained as priests, with Archbishop of Melbourne Philip Freier and Archbishop of Perth Kay Goldsworthy.

Image: Gavin Hansford.

## ■ Jenan Taylor

**Women will continue to face barriers to priesthood unless the Australian Church strengthens them to be able to attend to God's call, prominent leaders say.**

Perth archbishop Kay Goldsworthy said some young women might feel discouraged about taking up a vocational call to ordained ministry because of the conservative theologies of some parts of the Anglican Church.

Ahead of preaching at a Eucharist service to celebrate the 30th anniversary of women's ordination in Melbourne in December, Archbishop Goldsworthy said she was concerned parts of the church persisted in promoting calls to women for many things, but not ordained ministry.

"It is an indictment on the Anglican church that some young women think it is no place for them as leaders because of that," she said.

The archbishop was among the very first women in Australia to be consecrated a priest at a service in Perth in March 1992.

An estimated 900 women have become priests across Australia since.

But Archbishop Goldsworthy said she had some reservations about what was ahead for the equal inclusion of women.

"We have lots of work to do. That includes reflecting on how it is we embody the welcoming love of Jesus, and how we invite women to take up all that God offers," she said.

Despite her concerns, the archbishop said the inclusion of women priests deepened the

life of the Anglican Church.

Their presence even offered the broader community a window into God.

"The advent of women, as deacons, priests, and bishops in our Church, has meant that the wider community now sees a Church in which women take a place as leaders alongside men," Archbishop Goldsworthy said. "That surely says something outside the Church about the God in whom we believe, and it says something about place, embrace, belonging, and authority."

Also contributing to the service at St Paul's Cathedral, women's ordination campaigner Dr Muriel Porter and Sale Cathedral parish dean the Reverend Keren Terpstra both said there was still much work to be done to encourage women priests.

Dr Porter said women were critical to the health of the church.

She said they had made a difference in making the governing bodies less formal and more similar to the way that society operated. They were also vital in dealing with issues such as domestic violence and sexual abuse.

But the Church was in decline and because of that there was the danger of vocal minority groups battling with each other.

"In this period, we need to ensure that women are encouraged to find the vocation, to do theological study, to be ordained, and to be ensured that they are not left in subsidiary positions, which can happen only too easily. That must not happen now," Dr Porter said.

Reverend Terpstra also said women improved how the Church was run.

She said in the Gippsland diocese more than 50 per cent of clergy were female.

"It makes a huge difference in things like how synods are conducted in terms of the tenor of meetings that are held," Ms Terpstra said.

But she said statistics showed only 21 per cent of clergy around Australia were women, so there was a great deal of work to be done to come to a place of true equality.

There was still an inherent bias against women in ministry and in church leadership. In the Melbourne diocese, this was evidenced by the lack of women on committees, she said.

"They do try for more or less equal balance, but there's still work to be done in several places and it needs to work on a lot of different levels," Ms Terpstra said. "It's not just about tapping someone on the shoulder and saying, 'Hey, do you want to be ordained?' There's got to be a whole infrastructure of the raising up of roles like in lay ministries, like in finance and law."

Archbishop Goldsworthy also said that as someone who in some ways had been at the forefront of ordination, she realised that many women found it hard to say yes to the priesthood.

Reflecting on her own path, she said perhaps one of the strongest lessons she had learned was that women needed to believe that they were worthy of being called by God.

# Famine, oppression loom in Africa as global community looks away

■ Jenan Taylor

**People in the world's most fragile and conflicted regions are in danger of experiencing extreme need in 2023, but few in the international community are paying attention, humanitarian groups say.**

The United Nations World Food Programme said 350 million people across the globe faced a hunger crisis, the largest in modern history, and it anticipated worse was to come.

Anglican Overseas Aid and Micah Australia said widespread hunger was among the most pressing issue identified in 2022, but that media focus tended to be on the Ukraine crisis.

Micah Australia said Horn of Africa countries were among the worst affected by the global hunger disaster, and that Somalia, where famine was about to be declared, was top of the list.

Government relations officer Eliza Palmer said Afghanistan, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Yemen were the countries also experiencing the most distress.

Ms Palmer said people were already dying while hundreds of thousands in those nations faced the highest level of food insecurity.

She said the situation had become so dire that World Food Programme staff had reported having to choose between who was starving more before distributing aid.

But Ms Palmer said she was shocked at how little media coverage was being given to the crisis.

Anglican Overseas Aid said global inflation and COVID-19 pandemic related supply constraints, as well as rising food and fuel costs stemming from Russia's invasion of the Ukraine had led to the unfolding situation.

Disaster response coordinator Tim Hartley said a number of countries had faced four or five years of poor food production because of climate change related weather.

"Kenya and Somalia have been having droughts, while South Sudan has experienced its worst floods in more than 50 years," Mr Hartley said. "That has displaced hundreds of thousands of people and destroyed their food crops."

But border and internal conflicts had also affected farming and further exacerbated the region's problems, he said.

Both organisations said those pressures had also given humanitarian field staff plenty of challenges.

Mr Hartley said spiking inflation, as well as the degraded infrastructure of some places was making it harder for response teams to travel to and operate in the hard hit areas.

***"Kenya and Somalia have been having droughts, while South Sudan has experienced its worst floods in more than 50 years."***

Eliza Palmer

"It has become a lot more expensive for us to do our job, yet it's vital that we get there to conduct the proper needs assessments, and distribution monitoring, and all of those kinds of things. We can't just send food relief without accompaniment," he said.

Mr Hartley said because of the extra costs, the organisation sometimes had to focus on helping fewer communities.

He said the lack of media coverage also made it harder to garner support from Australians, who were also giving financial support to people who were experiencing hardship from local disasters like the recent floods.

Ms Palmer said another urgent humanitarian concern was the growing persecution

of women and girls in Afghanistan.

She said alongside not having enough to eat, women and girls older than primary school age were experiencing heavy education restrictions.

When the Taliban returned to power in 2021, it stopped girls from attending secondary school. In late December 2022, it banned Afghan women from attending universities.

A 2017 Human Rights Watch report also suggested that only half of the country's girls were literate, and that because of gender norms that didn't value girls' education, some were kept out of school altogether.

Ms Palmer said she had heard aid agencies express concern that many impoverished families in particular were likely to not send girls to primary school either, so that they could work to help provide financial support.

She said agencies had also raised fears about the possibility of young girls being forced into marriage to help secure food.

"Because education is being stunted at such a young age, there are many trickle-down effects that are going to be an issue 20 years from now even if the Taliban were to retreat," Ms Palmer said.

Anglicans who wish to donate towards Anglican Overseas Aid's global hunger relief efforts can do so via the Emergency Action Alliance [emergencyaction.org.au/hungerappeals](https://emergencyaction.org.au/hungerappeals) or Micah Australia's efforts to push for more Australian government action at Help Fight Famine [fightfamine.com.au](https://fightfamine.com.au).



Picture: iStock





Picture: iStock

## More still to do for accessibility within the diocese

■ Maya Pilbrow

**Resources and education are needed to make church communities more accessible, experts and disability advocates say.**

Disability advocate and St Stephen's Richmond member Jill Pickering said many parishes were supportive of people with disabilities, but basic issues of access excluded many.

After the International Day of People with Disability in December, Ms Pickering said she was pleased to see positive changes regarding disability access in the diocese, but there was much work to do to become more inclusive.

Ms Pickering said parishioners with disability needed to be able to get into churches to start shaping conversations about accessibility, saying many churches lacked wheelchair access and appropriate seating for people with physical disability.

University of Melbourne School of Population and Global Health Associate Professor Nathan Grills said disability access required intentional and active practices of inclusion to avoid passively excluding people with disabilities. He said raising awareness about accessibility was vital, but it was equally necessary to provide resources to support changes.

"It becomes empty words if there's no resources allocated to it," Dr Grills said.

Ms Pickering said disability access was often thought of in terms of great financial cost, but that the reality was much more affordable.

She said access for wheelchair users like herself would have additional positive effects for non-disabled people, with ramps being useful for those with prams as well as users of mobility devices such as walkers.

"You can do basic things like a portable ramp for \$100," she said. "Don't tell me there isn't money [for that]."

# A place for the faith of those often left out

■ Jenan Taylor

**For more than 15 years, disability carer Janet Kilpatrick has been driving residents of the group houses where she works to a friendship club at All Saints' Greensborough.**

The club is where adults who have an intellectual disability get the chance to gather, make friends and worship God.

Ms Kilpatrick says many of the residents she's cared for don't get to spend much time outside of the homes. Most also no longer have families or the loved ones they grew up with, so the club is a chance for them to be with people with whom they've made heartfelt connections.

"When they see each other, they relax, they laugh, they dance, they sing, they love it so much. And they always come home uplifted," she said.

It started in a parishioner's loungeroom more than 30 years ago, now about 25 people gather in the All Saints' church hall twice a month.

Participants are in their late 20s and older. One member started going shortly after the initiative began, and has just turned 94.

The club's appeal may be that it revolves around some much-loved, steady routines, its organisers say. Coordinator Michele Pilmore said there was always Bible study, a lesson and songs of worship.

Friday gatherings also include supper, the chance for participants to share news about their lives, and more hymns. Sundays involve the group having lunch together after reflecting on the month's lessons and more singing.

"They seem to love the regularity of the program, the fellowship, and the singing so much. After the services there's always someone heading off in the car with their carer, still belting out the hymns," Ms Pilmore said.

She also believes the program works because the lessons and Scripture readings are delivered at a level that the participants can grasp easily, and that encourages them to follow along and ask questions.

The group also attends external events, sometimes in partnership with other denominations and there is an annual camp.

Volunteer Janie Beasley agreed that the pattern had been crucial for building and solidifying relationships with participants

and their carers. Many carers have come over time to sit with the participants, and know the routine.

This has extended the church's opportunity to build connections with the carers too. Making sure communication with carers was strong was also key to the program's success, Ms Beasley said.

Still, the ministry faces plenty of challenges including mobility and logistics issues. The COVID-19 pandemic, also added to the challenges for everyone.

Ms Kilpatrick said the club was one of the things her residents missed the most during lockdowns.

"They kept asking when we were going to get to go to the friendship club, because they have a long history with people there. It was really sad for them," she said.

Ms Beasley said the coordinators put together care packs for the participants to try to bridge the gap between the in-person gatherings and keep some semblance of a routine going.

Since the easing of lockdowns, they also strived to keep the club get-togethers as safe as possible. But the hurdles keep coming, Ms Pilmore said.

Some participants are vulnerable to illnesses and the group is ageing, so the club is at a stage where it needs to recruit more members. This has been particularly difficult.

"The pandemic has meant that the residential houses have been very strict about what the residents can and can't do. So, we've got to find a way to approach new houses and get some younger members. We have tried asking them to bring friends but that hasn't worked. We don't really have answers on how we can do it," Ms Pilmore said.

But Ms Kilpatrick believes the friendship club is invaluable for the residents she cares for because they're often treated differently to everyone, and excluded from so many groups.

"It's one of the few spaces that they're not being criticised for not talking properly, or for just standing there, and it's a social event," she said.

"They get a sense of freedom from it and the chance to feel a part of something, a part of a big family where their talents and skills are worthwhile, even if perhaps they can't talk."



# 10,000 people but no church: Cairnlea

■ **Maya Pilbrow**

**Residents of growing Melbourne suburb Cairnlea deserve a community space designed to accommodate worship services, according to Inner West Church associate pastor Jon Tran.**

The community has roughly 10,000 residents and no church. Built in the late 1990s on the former Commonwealth Department of Defence Albion Explosives site, the suburb is in the early stages of an extensive urban renewal project with Development Victoria.

While public and open community spaces have been the focus of a large part of the planning process, no plans exist for dedicated places of worship according to Brimbank City Council and Development Victoria.

Mr Tran said that his Cairnlea community had grown since the initial estate was built more than 20 years ago.

The community largely comprises immigrants. According to 2021 census data, Cairnlea has more than double the national rate of people with both parents born overseas and more than triple the national rate of households where a non-English language is used.

The current needs of the community are varied, according to Mr Tran, who said the combination of families with young children, university-aged young adults and people approaching retirement age provided both challenges and opportunities for the future of the suburb.

About 40 per cent of Cairnlea residents are Christian according to the most recent census data, but apart from a Buddhist temple the suburb lacks spaces in which religious and community groups can meet.

Cairnlea has a small Anglican population, only 0.81 per cent of residents compared to a national percentage of 9.82 per cent, but Catholicism is 37

per cent more popular in Cairnlea than across the rest of the country. The suburb also has sizeable Buddhist and Muslim communities

Mr Tran said Cairnlea's religious and ethnic diversity made the need for versatile community spaces even more apparent.

In particular, Mr Tran said he supported the building of a multipurpose community hub with spaces for holding worship that could be used by a variety of groups for different occasions.

He said he hoped the diocese would be able to give input regarding the use of commercial and community spaces during the planning process.

In June the Government Land Standing Advisory Committee ran public hearings within the Cairnlea community. It has since created a report for the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Richard Wynne MP.

Construction for the redevelopment project is expected to begin in late 2023.

## Global group to help women church planters launched

■ **Jenan Taylor**

**An international women's collective aimed at growing women church planters and improving their chances for long term success has launched an Australian arm.**

Multi-denominational collective The Company said it sought to tackle the barriers that women church planters tended to face including resourcing and systemic hurdles, as well as sexism, theological and spiritual challenges.

Australian representative and Micro Churches Australia founding director the Reverend Bree Mills said the initiative's approach provided them with resources and pathways, such as training, and that it used the many strengths that women demonstrated in the space.

Launched in October, training includes providing participants with mentorships, giving them the opportunity to interact with each other and share ideas, and equipping them with first-hand experience through placements at church plants.

Ms Mills said the movement hoped to enable women to stay in planting for 10 or 15 years if they wished, and to lead thriving church plants in environments where they would not feel pressured to conform to a different way of planting that would burn them out.

But some of the challenges for the



initiative included working out how to keep church planting a financially sustainable choice for women, so they could work at it fulltime if they wanted, Ms Mills said.

She said that even though there weren't many examples of women in the church planting space, she was encouraged by the numbers that were there, and the desire of those who wanted to become involved in planting in the Australian context.

"It also lets women hear and know that they're not alone if church planting is what God is pushing them towards, and that there

is an array of women who are working in and passionate about this space," Ms Mills said.

She said the initiative was set up because of a perceived gap in the spiritual leadership and planting space that they wanted to fill and be faithful towards, rather than to be in competition with existing movements.

"There are some organisations who do this well, and some women do well in those places. But for others that doesn't work, and they need a space that is more aligned with their values and gifts," Ms Mills said.



Melissa Currie and Bethany Zwag.



Graeme Chiswell and Amy Just.

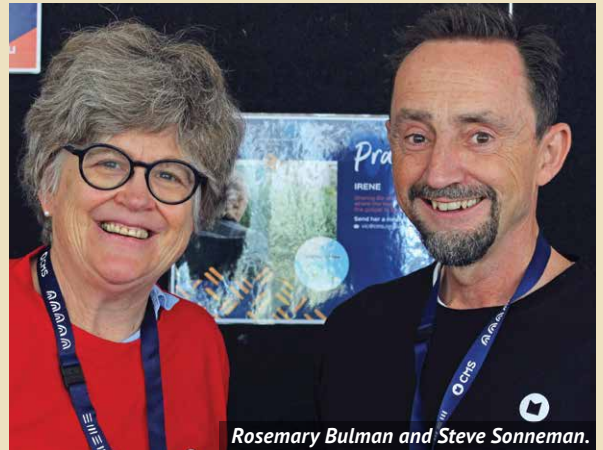


Daniel Gebert and daughter.

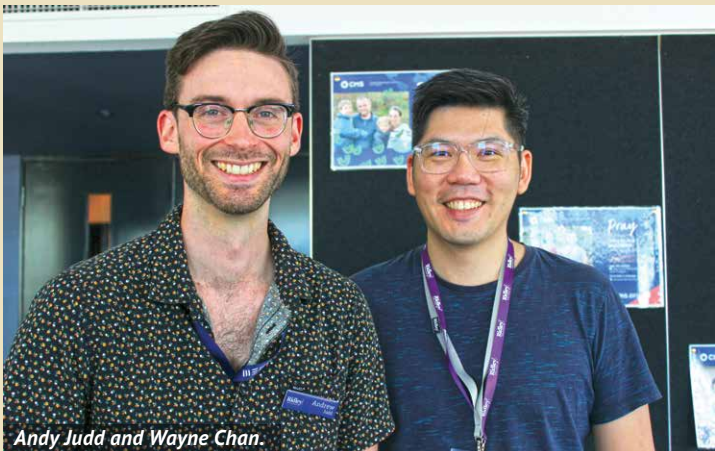
## Discovering new roads

Mission supporters gathered in January to learn about the evolving nature of cross cultural outreach at the Church Missionary Society's Victorian branch annual conference, Summer Under the Son.

Pictures: Elspeth Kernebone



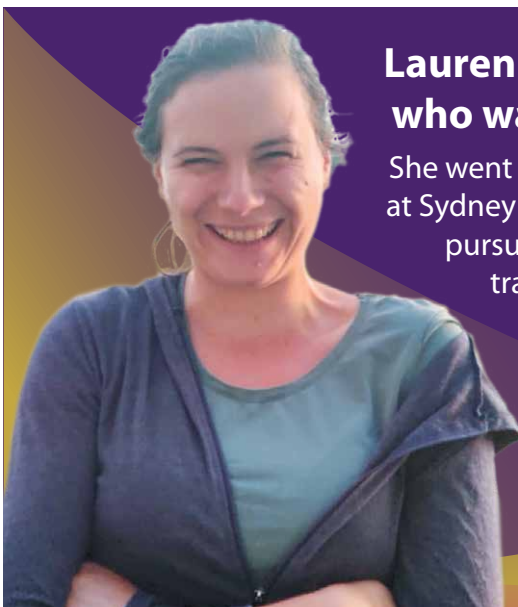
Rosemary Bulman and Steve Sonneman.



Andy Judd and Wayne Chan.



Jack Holloway and Tim Currie.



## Lauren Raiter grew up in a mission-focused family who wanted to see people know God's love.

She went from studying paramedicine, to studying at Sydney Missionary and Bible College, then on to pursuing overseas mission. This year she will be training at the Church Missionary Society's training centre, St Andrew's Hall, hoping to head to western Europe on mission.

For Lauren's story and more, listen to our podcast:



# Everyday Saints.





Speaker Dr Richard Shumack talks with Sam Oldland. Picture: Elspeth Kernebone

# Multicultural contexts key for mission

■ Maya Pilbrow

Christians need to learn how to navigate multicultural contexts to be effective missionaries, according to the Church Mission Society of Victoria's annual conference keynote speaker Dr Richard Shumack.

Dr Shumack gave three talks at the conference, which was titled *The Road Less Travelled*.

Dr Shumack, an expert in the philosophy of religion, said that the nature of mission work had evolved in recent years.

He said many resources for missionaries dealt with monocultural contexts, and that new strategies were needed in order to engage in rapidly shifting cultural environments.

Traditional missions involving people

going to specific cultures and immersing themselves within a single community were no longer the norm, Dr Shumack said.

He said the skillsets needed for traditional mission work were still relevant, but that missionaries today needed to learn to apply their skills to multiple cultures at the same time.

He said his own experiences living and working in majority-Muslim communities in Australia, often in government housing environments with migrants from many different backgrounds, had demonstrated how multicultural contexts could provide additional challenges to missionaries.

"I lost count of how many different nationalities I was living amongst when it got to 100," he said.

Dr Shumack said the increased diversity

in many communities required a correspondingly higher level of cultural awareness.

"In an Arab Muslim context, the way you have meaningful discussions is by being loud and passionate, yelling even. In a Vietnamese Buddhist context, the last thing you'd ever do would be to yell at someone you were conversing with," he said.

He said mainstream Australian churches were beginning to address the current challenges facing mission work.

Dr Shumack said he hoped his talks at SUTS would help attendees gain a better understanding of how to evangelise in an increasingly globalised world.

Summer Under The Son, held every year in January by CMS Victoria, took place 19-21 January at Syndal Baptist Church in Glen Waverley.



ANGLICAN  
DIOCESE OF  
MELBOURNE

## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

If a child is in **immediate danger** at any point **CALL 000**

### What is Child Abuse?

Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to: physical abuse, emotional abuse, family violence, sexual abuse, spiritual abuse, grooming, neglect

### Who can report neglect and abuse of a child under the age of 18?

Children, parents, staff, volunteers, anyone

### What sorts of things must be reported?

All child safety concerns must be reported:

- Disclosure of abuse and harm
- Allegations, suspicions or observations
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct

### All suspicions or reports of child abuse must be reported to the groups below:

- Ministry Supervisor
- Child Safe Officer
- Kooyoora Professional Standards

**IMPORTANT  
CONTACT NUMBERS**

**POLICE  
000**

**CHILD PROTECTION  
1300 360 391**

**KOOYOORA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS  
1800 135 246**



Janice Winter baking treats. Picture: supplied

## Cooking up Christmas cheer for families

■ Jenan Taylor

**Disadvantaged families in the Dandenong Ranges received help with grocery costs this Christmas along with an extra treat from Anglican parishioners.**

Members of St Mark's Emerald gave people in need supermarket vouchers accompanied by a batch of fresh home baked goodies instead of the normal gift hampers.

Senior minister the Reverend Andrew Bowles said the church decided on baking because members found it gave people more flexibility for people to purchase the items that they needed. Mr Bowles said another local church already had a food store for people experiencing hardship, so St Mark's had decided to broaden its offerings.

He said his parishioners had put money towards the vouchers through a Melbourne Anglican Benevolent Society fund, but had also decided that people would find it more meaningful to receive something a bit more Christmassy than a card with a voucher. So they decided to make some treats as a tangible token.

Parishioner Janice Winter was among those baking for Christmas.

She said it was lovely to give people something unexpected and a bit more targeted than a hamper.

"The voucher enables somebody to buy the very things that they need, otherwise they might have things they can't use," Ms Winter said.

## Students' Christmas visit rekindles outreach plans in Geelong

■ Elspeth Kernebone

**A Geelong church has been encouraged in its renewed efforts to reach its community after a successful visit from two primary schools for a creative telling of the Christmas story.**

More than 120 children from Bostock House and Geelong Baptist College participated in the imaginative, and interactive, Christmas story at All Saints' Newtown.

It was a change of pace for the parish, which has few children attending and does not run a children's program.

The event's success has encouraged All Saints' renewed efforts to draw more people into the church.

Vicar Father Stephen Pollard said Experience Christmas had given the church confidence to run a similar program again for Easter. Father Pollard said the children and staff enjoyed the creative telling of the Christmas story, while the parish found it a rewarding and enriching experience. The visit was such a success, he plans to invite a broader range of schools to future events.

The visiting children split into groups after being welcomed to the church, and were then taken through a series of interactive stations telling the Christmas story, guided by a church member.

Father Pollard said the aim was to play on the children's imaginations to bring the story to life and help them visualise it. For instance, at one point the children sat around a pretend fire made up of flickering candles, with a hidden phone playing a flickering fire sound.

"Anything like that the kids just love," Father Pollard said.

Father Pollard said the initiative was also to challenge the parish to try something new, as members went through a series of meetings about growing health churches and reaching out. He said the event allowed the church to dip its toes into what it would be like to work with children again, as it sought to integrate more deeply into the community and make the parish more visible.

"The dream for the church, the vision for the church at the month, is making ourselves more visible, making ourselves known," Father Pollard said.



Children from two Geelong schools visited All Saints' Newtown.

Picture: supplied

## From the editor



**I don't know whether to be happy or sad reading over this edition.**

I was encouraged to read about a gospel presence returning to North Clyde (P5), about hundreds of people excited for a world that knows Jesus (P10-11), and about a life lived well (P24). But there are so many reminders of our broken world. A famine is likely to affect hundreds of millions of people in Africa (P7), there are deep divisions within our own church (P4), and we have so far to go to achieve real justice for Australia's First Nations people (P23). But a story about Epiphany Anglican Church in Hoppers Crossing (P25) ties together these themes. In its vicar's worlds, it's a community of broken, fragile people – and it's a resplendent community of God.

**Elspeth Kernebone, editor**





Current and former leaders of St Alfred's Anglican Church at the celebration. Picture: Supplied.

## Celebrating a ministry milestone

■ Kirralee Nicolle

**An eastern suburbs parish has marked 60 years of raising up ministry workers who have gone on to serve across Australia.**

St Alfred's Anglican Church in Blackburn North held '60s-themed celebrations at their morning and evening services. The services featured reflections from church members, including vicar the Reverend Peter MacPherson and CMS Victoria executive director the Reverend Dr Wei-Han Kuan.

Dr Kuan spoke on the parable of the talents in Luke 19, saying that stewardship was a key feature of the church's longevity.

"Whatever God has given us to steward, steward it well," he said.

Dr Kuan also said that a strength for St Alfred's was a willingness to handle all parts of Scripture.

"We've been a church that's been unafraid

to receive God's word as it actually is," he said.

Dr Kuan and Mr MacPherson listed several former attendees of St Alfred's who had gone on to minister in other parts of the Melbourne diocese and across the nation, including Tasmania and South Australia.

These include the Reverend Mark Juers and the Reverend Karen Winsemius at Oaktree Anglican Church, the Reverend Sam Oldland at St Jude's Anglican Church and the Reverend Andrew Grills at City on a Hill.

Mr MacPherson said a recent ministry venture by youth leaders at the church was a Friday afternoon drop-in centre for students from Blackburn High School. He said on average, the ministry was offering milkshakes and conversations to 100 students each week.

"We want to be good members of the local community," Mr MacPherson said.

## First woman in key support role

■ Sister Carol Tanner

**The sisters of the Community of the Holy Name were thrilled when the Reverend Colleen Clayton accepted the position of warden of the community. It was an historical time in the life of the community as Ms Clayton is the first female warden.**

You may well ask what is a warden for a community? Ms Clayton's role is to support the leadership of the community, to be an avenue between the sisters and the church, to be available for the sisters to discuss any problems and to guide us on our spiritual journey. Ms Clayton is also priest at St Matthew's church in Cheltenham.



The Reverend Colleen Clayton with Archbishop of Melbourne Philip Freier and Sister Carol Tanner. Picture: Supplied.



Dr Alison Asquith with her former parish priest Father Matthew Healy. Picture: Supplied

## Orthodox icons draw Australian Anglicans' gaze

■ Muriel Porter

**Alison Asquith first experienced Orthodox icons while on holiday in Greece several years ago. On entering an Orthodox church, she recalls feeling almost overwhelmed, surrounded by the blaze of colour from the priests' vestments, the icons and frescoes that adorned the walls and ceiling.**

The parish where Dr Asquith worshipped had several icons, so she found herself fascinated by how Anglicans encountered them. She took classes in icon painting, before her interest led to academic research. She has recently been awarded a PhD from Deakin University for her thesis, "Anglican worshippers' experiences with icons in their everyday devotional lives".

At 82, Dr Asquith is one of the oldest recipients of a doctorate from the university. A sociologist by training, she interviewed 15 people from several Melbourne parishes about their experiences with icons. Some had taken up icon painting, while others she interviewed used icons for personal prayer and meditation.

"Icons have been a part of worship in Orthodox churches for more than 1500 years, but until recently, most Western Christians did not think Orthodox icons could play a role in their faith traditions," she said. "They seemed foreign and outside Western Christianity, but in recent years there has been a surge of interest in them in Anglican churches.

"Icons open the door to a spirituality that fulfils a deep, religious need that numbers of people still seek out."

# Churches remain politically diverse

■ Kirralee Nicolle

**Some conservative Christians are anxious regarding the Victorian Labor government's policies on pandemic management, sexuality and gender and religious freedom, an Anglican commentator says.**

But Christians in Australia are not typically aligned with any particular party, theologians say.

The Labor Party won a clear majority of seats in the November Victorian state election, which marked Daniel Andrews' eighth year as Premier.

The most recent National Church Life Survey results show 41 per cent of church attendees voted for the Coalition in the 2016 federal election.

Ridley College dean and writer on religious freedom Dr Michael Bird said that there was a belief among some conservative Christians that the Victorian Labor government overreached during the pandemic.

Dr Bird also said that some Christians were anxious about the party's handling of religious freedom issues and gender and sexuality laws.

But he said Christianity in Australia was still not as politically partisan as in other parts of the world such as the United States.

"I've got relatively conservative evangelical friends who vote Green, some vote Labor, some vote Liberal, some vote for independents," Dr Bird said. "I'm very grateful that being Christian is not identified with any particular party."

Former Greens candidate for Holt and biblical scholar Jim Reiher said differing values among Christians tended to dictate their voting habits.

"Loving your neighbour, issues of justice and environment are high on some Christians lists," he said. "That's why they do vote Green or Labor. But for others, issues of personal morals seem to be the more important issue. They tend to go for more conservative parties, even though I don't think they're any more moral."

But Mr Reiher said he believed faith values affected voting choices less than people may have realised.

"One's politics nearly always makes [voting] decisions for people more than one's faith, no matter what people say," he said. "How else can you have Christians in the same church, absolutely devoted to Labor, Liberal, Green or One Nation all sitting in the same pews?"

According to a 2016 National Church



*Jim Reiher is a Melbourne biblical scholar and former Greens candidate for the Victorian seat of Holt. Picture: supplied.*

***"One's politics nearly always makes [voting] decisions for people more than one's faith ..."***

**Jim Reiher**

Life Survey report, 41 per cent of church attendees voted for the Coalition in federal elections, and seven per cent voted for Family First, Australian Christians or the Christian Democrats. Twenty-four per cent voted Labor, and two per cent voted Greens.

The recent election results in Victoria, however, showed a trend toward Labor even in areas where the percentage of Christians was highest. The state electorate of Niddrie has the highest percentage of Christians, with 66.7 per cent of the voting-age population identifying as Christian, according

to Australian Bureau of Statistics data. It has remained in the hands of Labor candidate Ben Carroll since 2012.

Polwarth MP, Liberal and practicing Catholic Richard Riordan said society today would not be what it was without the fundamental goodness, beliefs and commitment from Christians throughout the ages.

He said he believed the Andrews government quite deliberately turned a blind eye to the suffering of faith groups who were unable to resume their regular meetings and rituals because of COVID-19 lockdowns.

Gippsland East Nationals MP and non-church attending Christian Tim Bull said he saw his role as advocating for his region and the people who lived in it on a broad scale of issues.

"I would have thought all members of Parliament, whether Christian or not, just want to get the best outcomes they can for their people and try and help people where they can," Mr Bull said.

He said COVID-19, bushfires and drought had taken a toll on the community he represented, as well as insufficient housing and a lack of mental health support.

"We've had a lot of people that have been really challenged and a lot of people that have been doing it tough for various reasons," Mr Bull said. "So, I just see my role as trying to help and support those people in my community through what's been a pretty tough time for a lot of individuals."

Bentleigh Labor MP and self-identified mainstream Christian Nick Staikos said Liberal Party values were about hierarchy, getting ahead of others and being rewarded for doing so.

"Christianity is very much about lifting everyone up, and Labor Party values are very much about lifting everyone up in society," Mr Staikos said. "Liberal Party values are the exact opposite. And that is exactly why I'm in the Labor Party. And that is exactly why as a Christian, I'm very, very comfortable to be in the Labor Party."

He said the Premier's focus was on maintaining a safety net for the most vulnerable in society.

"That is a very Christian thing for a leader to do," Mr Staikos said. "If you're a true follower of Christ, you are somebody who is inclusive of others, you are somebody who lift others up with you. That to me, as a Christian, is what it is to be a true follower of Christ."

The office of Premier of Victoria Daniel Andrews has been approached for comment.



# Hopes high for smooth progress on Aboriginal Treaty after election

■ Jenan Taylor

**Victoria's Aboriginal treaty-making processes may have a clearer pathway because of the 2022 Victorian election results, Indigenous leaders say.**

Continuation of support for the development of Victoria's treaty was among promises the Andrews Labor government made in its campaign, ahead of winning a third consecutive term in November.

Trawlolway man and School of Indigenous Studies lecturer at the University of Divinity the Reverend Dr Garry Deverell said the re-election of the Andrews government was good news for anyone who supported the treaty process.

Dr Deverell said there had been considerable concern within Victoria's Aboriginal communities that if the Liberal National Coalition got in, there would be interruptions to the activity.

Dr Deverell said that a great deal had been achieved in the last two years and that the re-election of Victoria's Labor party meant that all the good work that had been done so far, could continue with a degree of certainty.

He pointed to the Yoorrook Justice Commission and its truth-telling efforts, the work of the First Peoples' Assembly and the creation of a range of further mechanisms to help facilitate how treaty negotiations took place.

"My expectation would be that the treaty negotiations would begin in 2023," Dr Deverell said.

In June the Victorian Coalition said it would support the advancement of the treaty process, but more recently former Liberal Bernie Finn opposed the passing of a Treaty Authority Bill, and Liberal MP Bev McArthur abstained from voting.

A conversation in which Narre Warren North Liberal party candidate Timothy Dragan railed against a treaty with First Nations people, was also leaked last week.

The First Peoples' Assembly said the election result wouldn't change anything as the process had already been well underway.

Bangerang and Wiradjuri Elder, and First Peoples' Assembly co-chair Aunty Geraldine Atkinson said treaty was above party politics and that both sides had agreed to embarking on the treaty journey.

But Ms Atkinson said the assembly had struck a deal with the Andrews government in recent months for a framework that would enable different traditional owner groups to enter negotiations about treaties in their areas.

***"The important thing to do is to let the ... authorities know ... that you support Aboriginal people, and you would like to see a greater voice for Aboriginal people in the church."***

Garry Deverell

The assembly was also encouraged by polling data released by Reconciliation Australia in the last week that found that public support for treaty-making had grown across Australia.

Dr Deverell said that while that was good news, it was also worrying that the data showed that increasing numbers of Aboriginal people had experienced racism

in the last six months.

He said that as with the gay marriage referendum held in 2017, a prospective referendum around a Voice to Parliament would give racists and those who were anti-reconciliation a platform to air their views.

But Dr Deverell said that Christians who wanted to support Indigenous treaty-making as well as a Voice to Parliament had to write to local and federal Liberal and National politicians to remind them of that support.

He said for people who went to church, it could go further.

"I think that the important thing to do is to let the diocesan authorities know and let your local church authorities know that you support Aboriginal people, and you would like to see a greater voice for Aboriginal people in the church as well," Dr Deverell said.

"It's all very well for the church to say, we support an Indigenous voice in the public arena and in the civic arena. But if we're not giving that opportunity to Aboriginal people within the church, then it's a little bit hypocritical."

The Victorian government committed to beginning to move towards treaty negotiations in 2016.



The Reverend Dr Garry Deverell.  
Picture: File.



Picture: iStock.

# A Christmas service for all who struggle

■ Jenan Taylor

**People feeling disconnected from Christmas as were offered solace at a special Hamlyn Heights parish service as celebrations peaked.**

St Albans Hamlyn Heights ran a "Service of Hope" in December for those grieving, lonely and in pain as the broader community celebrates.

Vicar the Reverend Jon Taylor said decided to run the service close to Christmas largely because of the intensity of the focus on family at Christmas time.

That could escalate feelings of invisibility and loneliness for those who didn't have that, so the church wanted to help ease those feelings, Mr Taylor said.

He said the service aimed to be a space where people could bring or acknowledge their loss, whether from the recent or long-ago death of a loved one, or from separation because of broken relationships.

The focus was also on those who might be experiencing feelings of insecurity because of unemployment, or who were

***"There's space for them to interact with God, to allow the spirit to work in that space. When people are given that opportunity there can be lots of emotion and feelings which can be helpful."***

Jon Taylor

down because of ill health, or who were anxious about spending Christmas on their own, Mr Taylor said.

A school chaplain in the Diocese of Gippsland before he became vicar at St Albans in 2016, the idea came from a similar initiative Mr Taylor ran for families in Gippsland.

"There were some pretty tragic things that happened in the school community,

and I had heard about a thing called 'Blue Christmas', so I ran that, and it met a need. It really seemed to help them," Mr Taylor said.

The short service included prayers, candle lighting, Scripture readings, reflection, carols, as well as music from a cellist.

"There's space for them to interact with God, to allow the spirit to work in that space. When people are given that opportunity there can be lots of emotion and feelings which can be helpful," Mr Taylor said.

He said a number of church members had shown considerable interest in attending although he wasn't certain how many people would come.

But Mr Taylor said it wouldn't really matter whether just one person came to the service, because it wasn't about numbers.

"I think we need to keep working hard at building those bridges into the community, so we just get to know those people, anyway," he said.

If you need support, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636.



# Gifts show care for those in prison

■ Kirralee Nicolle

**Donated Christmas gifts have brought care to women spending the holiday behind bars.**

Each year Prison Network delivers gift parcels to women in the two Victorian women's prisons, the maximum-security Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and minimum-security Tarrengower Prison. The parcels contain hair products, coffee sachets, stationery and Tim Tams.

Volunteer manager Andrea Steele said the gifts helped the recipients feel seen and it was obvious the parcels had been packed with love.

Ms Steele said about 30 volunteers had packed 500 gift parcels in 2022, with donations of useful items from churches and other groups across the state. She said every woman received a gift, and the surplus was given to children of the women or those leaving prison.

"Many of them don't get anything for Christmas," Ms Steele said. "They lose connection with their families when they're in prison."

She said the night spent packing the gift parcels was always a meaningful one.

"It's my favourite event of the year to be honest," Ms Steele said.

Prison Network is a faith-based ministry which seeks to support incarcerated women in Victoria with initiatives such as craft programs, programs for children with mothers in prison and support for those transitioning out of prison.

Prison Network volunteer and St Mark's



*Prison Network volunteers packing Christmas parcels for female inmates at Victorian prisons. Picture: supplied.*

Anglican Camberwell parishioner Jan Harcourt said she was surprised that not everyone wanted to show care to women facing prison sentences. She said the church had been assisting the agency for about 13 years and provided the Tim Tams for the parcels.

"When you know their background, you can't help but want to let them know that someone cares about them," she said.

Ms Harcourt said Christmas was a challenging time for women in prison as they were separated from their families and children.

"For them to know that someone outside they don't even know thought of them means a huge amount," she said.

To find out more or get involved in Prison Network, visit: [prisonnetwork.org.au/contact-us](https://prisonnetwork.org.au/contact-us).

## Brightening Christmas for Ukraine's young people

■ Jenan Taylor

**Children from a Port Melbourne church may have sparked a little hope and cheer for young people in Ukraine at Christmas.**

Holy Trinity Port Melbourne invited its child parishioners to create artwork and messages of hope and affection for children in the war-torn country.

Locum Bishop Philip Huggins said he encouraged young congregants to draw colourful scenes of the nativity, and older ones to write messages of support as a gesture of affection.

Bishop Huggins said the idea came from a conversation with a Ukrainian friend during his travels for the United

Nations' Climate Change Conference in November.

"With Putin's troops bombing some Ukraine power stations and water facilities, things are bleak for the people and children, so anything that could be done to give them a bit of good cheer would be good," he said.

He also invited young people and families from other Anglican parishes to contribute nativity artwork and support messages to Holy Trinity.

Bishop Huggins said all the material would be put together in a collage and sent by email to his connection in Lviv to share with children in Kyiv and other cities.

Holy Trinity's parishioners participated in a number of prayer days for peace during 2022, including online prayer and meditation for the people of Ukraine, and helped raise money for various appeals to support their humanitarian needs.

It came after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, leading to thousands of casualties and the displacement of millions of Ukrainians, while also impeding the food security and energy resources of countries across the globe.

Several organisations have called for a ceasefire, including the International Peace Bureau which in recent weeks has begun petitioning for a Christmas truce akin to one that took place during World War I.





New priests Kathleen Alleaume Ross, Hoda Ameri, Elsa Carr, David Chiswell, Benjamin Clements, Kristen Dillon, Louis Glazebrook, Gavin Hansford, Bradley Jackson, Ishak Koroh, Andrea Nagy, Hing Sing (Terence) Ng, Saurabh Simon, Anastasia Slater, Xeverie Swee, Lydia Thangadurainadar, Changying (Grace) Wang and Samantha White with other clergy on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral.



The Reverend Kathleen Alleaume Ross.



The Reverend Lydia Thangadurainadar with a supporter.



After the ceremony.



The Reverend Hoda Ameri.



The Reverend Gavin Hansford.



Ordinands at St Paul's.



The Reverends Gavin Hansford and Helen Dwyer with Bishop Kate Prowd and a supporter.





During the ordination ceremony.

**Eighteen new priests were ordained on 26 November at St Paul's Cathedral in front of family, friends, clergy and parishioners. For each one, the ceremony marked the culmination of years of study, training and preparation.**

Pictures: Janine Eastgate



Bishop Kate Prowd.



The Reverends Saurabh Simon and Anastasia Slater.



The Reverend David Chiswell.



Lydia Thangadurainadar and family with St Paul's dean the Very Reverend Dr Andreas Loewe.



The Reverends Benjamin Clements and Kristen Dillon.



The Reverends Ishak Koroh, Andrea Nagy and Hing Sing (Terence) Ng.



# Three decades on, our church is the richer for women's ordination

■ Willy Maddock

**In 1992, 92 women were ordained as priests around Australia. I was among them.**

In the Melbourne Diocese, people are ordained in alphabetical order of surnames. Therefore it was our privilege to see Elizabeth Alfred ordained first, an absolute and wonderful pioneer in the ministry of women for at least 50 years.

She was for a very long time a deaconess. In fact she had understood herself as ordained when she was made a deaconess. It was only when the deaconesses asked to become members of synod that they discovered they were not in Holy Orders, a considerable shock to them all. Elizabeth was a woman of great faith, compassion, grace, and dignity. But more than anything she was someone who had learned to wait; someone who did not lose heart, who looked expectantly to the future. We were also delighted when she was able to preside at the 10th anniversary of the ordination as well.

It is almost impossible to describe just what those times were like: the joys, the struggles, the hilarity, the outrage at some of the treatment we received.

Some women now come to ordination believing that there never was a time when this was not possible, much less that it was impossible just over 30 years ago. How quickly history gets forgotten, with the attendant danger that the lessons learned could easily be forgotten and the church go backwards in dealing with half the human race. We need to remember, because from time-to-time in Melbourne some who want to undo the legislation which allows for the ordination of women.

For the first few years, formal objections to our ordination were made during the service. They were rejected each time, but it was an unpleasant process.

In the years leading up to the change in legislation, we listened to many objections and arguments against our fitness to hold office. Some were couched in reasonably civil terms, often with the rider that the comments were not meant to be personal. However, if someone is referring to a person's gender it cannot be merely academic, or anything other than personal, and potentially hurtful. We should still keep this in mind when referring to a person's

sexuality, race, faith, or skin colour. Such things are not separate from real human beings with names and lives to live. The mishandling of such matters has been lethal for some.

At times, we were subjected to offensive phone calls, curses, hate filled letters and some personal confrontations from opponents. The more highly charged they were, the less possible it was to have a reasonable conversation or debate. Fear seemed to be the common denominator, though some women later were honest enough to say that their anger was really about their own missed calling, or limited lives constrained by society and the church.

***"It is almost impossible to describe just what those times were like: the joys, the struggles, the hilarity, the outrage at some of the treatment we received."***

Willy Maddock

I was much helped on the way by reading an historical review of the objections to women's entry into each level of education, into to various occupations, and into as well as other areas of ministry within the church such as vestries and synods, as well as objections to women's rights in marriage, inheritance, and ongoing debates about women's worth in terms of pay.

In all the historical debates the arguments used were the very same theological and emotional arguments put forward in the debate about women's ordination.

At one point, I remember we women saying that if the church was going to be logical in its arguments, if we were deemed unfit for ordination, we were in fact unfit for baptism too. Before God, there are no second-class citizens, for we are all one in Christ.

A woman was a witness to the resurrection. Women accompanied and supported Christ and were taught by Christ. Women witnessed the crucifixion and have never been denied the gift of the Spirit. When we think of the Syro-Phoenician woman, we see that Jesus the Christ was also challenged

by women, and had his own understanding broadened. In other words, women held all the qualifications for apostleship, a reality lost for a long time in the church's endeavour to make itself acceptable to the broader culture and society.

The times of debate about the ordination of women, were not all doom and gloom. We also received wonderful support from many clergy and laity. We had to rely on other male clergy as of course we could not be part of the House of Clergy or Bishops in Synod. Without their support and positive vote, nothing would have changed.

In the early days, the women also cared for each other. There was a time when I and others knew every woman who was a possible candidate for ordination or was simply involved in public ministry in some way. This network transcended approaches to Scripture, styles of worship, ministry models, places of training. We needed to have each other's backs. This was a wonderful example of collegiality and support and vulnerability. Lifelong friendships were forged. Perhaps the Church in its current divisions could learn from our experience. For the most part we were treated well in the theological colleges by staff. Reactions from other students were more mixed.

When ordination as deacons became possible for women, several were appointed as deacons in charge of parishes: four in Melbourne, but also in other dioceses. Because women were not yet able to be ordained as priests, parishes had to work out different ways of doing the acts of absolution, blessing and consecration. Some parishes had a roster of clergy who graciously assisted. Some received the reserved sacrament compliments of Australia Post. One container, a large Nescafe coffee jar, would be shipped to King Island. Our female colleagues further north informed us that they said all the words ... but just didn't move their hands. In my case, with the archbishop's knowledge, my Uniting Church of Australia colleagues assisted me – in one case a woman.

In other words, the theology of the sacraments and the understanding of ordained ministry was getting sillier and sillier. I often thought God must have been either enjoying a chuckle at our human foolishness, or at times tearing God's hair out so to say.



# see

The journal of the Anglican Church in the Dioceses of Melbourne and Bendigo  
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Things are looking up for these deacons meeting with their bishop



PIC – ANGLICAN MEDIA

# At last! women priests

General Synod has decided, by a narrow margin, that women may be ordained to the priesthood in the Australian Anglican

(99 present:) 69 yes, 30 no; House of Clergy (99 present:) 67 yes, 32 no; House of Bishops (22 present:) 16 yes, 4 no, 2 informal.

joy and relief. Archbishop Keith Rayner told a press conference that the decision of the General Synod to allow individual

majority of the Synod fairly accurately reflects the mind of our church. There will, however, be a substantial minority who will be un-

will. This gives confidence as we face the future. "I believe the overwhelming majority of Anglicans want to see our

members of the church who are opposed to the ordination of women to the priesthood that they still have their full place in the life of

Picture: File.

What difference have we women made?

We have made it possible for half the human race to see as normal new possibilities in what God might ask of us. It's worth noting that in the early days, women were spoken of as "wanting to be ordained" while the men "were responding to God's call".

In some instances, in some matters, such as abuse, we have made sharing the experience of abuse for women easier. I know this has been true in my own ministry. Given just how rife abuse and domestic violence are in the broader community, not just in communities of faith, this can only be a good thing.

Women see the world differently from men, from the lens of our own experience. Women may therefore also approach the interpretation of Scriptures that denigrate or oppress women with much more caution. We are much more aware of the power of language to liberate or bind. Some of us, but not necessarily all, may be willing to be more open about our emotions. Having women and men working together at all

***"Having women and men working together at all levels within the church means we can have a more wholistic approach to the challenges faced by the world and the church."***

Willy Maddock

levels within the church means we can have a more holistic approach to the challenges faced by the world and the church.

Just as all men are different, so are all women. Diversity makes for richer faith communities that offer more challenges to people of faith. Every woman who has taken up God's calling to ordination will testify that this has changed her life in ways she could not even have dreamt about.

Ordination with its consequent life of service has enriched our lives and hopefully the lives of others. We have had opportunities to be part of people's lives when they have been at their most vulnerable; at their times of greatest joy and sorrow. If we have been faithful to God's call, then we will also have learned something of the real cost of discipleship. We will know, like Peter, what it is to be bound and taken to places we otherwise might not have chosen.

Being ordained, a lifelong and life changing vocation, is a great privilege and joy, but also requires utter commitment and endurance. I pray that each one of you, irrespective of gender, may have your eyes, ears and hearts opened to hear your calling from God and to embrace it whole heartedly.

The Reverend Willy Maddock was among the first group of women ordained as priests in the Diocese of Melbourne on 13 December, 1992. This piece is drawn from sermons preached at St George's Red Hill and St Paul's Cathedral Bendigo in 2022.

# Distorted picture of a tragic situation

There were several concerning aspects of Nils von Kalm's article *As we spend time with loved ones this Christmas, many Palestinians are separated from theirs* which appeared at Christmas on *The Melbourne Anglican's* web-site. There was the odious equivalence of the present-day Jewish state with the crucifying Roman "brutal oppressors". The equation of Jews = Romans = crucifying Christ killers is a dark trope that should be given no space in *The Melbourne Anglican*. Another concern with the article is that it conceals the constant incitement by radical Islamist voices on Palestinian media, calling for the eradication of the Jewish state. This genocidal hope is promoted week in week out. For example, the mother of Palestinian militant, Ibrahim Al-Nabulsi, who was killed in an August 2022 firefight, declared on Palestinian TV that her son modeled love of jihad to Palestinian children. She said, "Ibrahim wanted to send a message ... to the children, who will be brought up on jihad." Von Kalm's article also makes no acknowledgement that the West Bank security barrier was erected to help prevent terrorist attacks, which peaked during the Second Intifada. Finally, the article makes no mention of attacks by Muslim Palestinians

on Christians. In Bethlehem, attacks on Christians have been going on for years and are well documented. For example just weeks ago a church near Bethlehem was mobbed by Muslim men who hurled rocks at the building while congregants hid inside. Several of the Christian worshippers were wounded by the mob. Von Kalm's attempt to cast the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a struggle between a brutal imperial power and a peace-loving occupied people offers a highly distorted depiction of a tragic situation. We deserve better than this at Christmas.

Mark Durie  
Batemans Bay NSW

## Peace is our goal

In response to my article in December and the response by the Reverend Mark Durie, my article focused on peacemaking. I was not referring to the Jewish people being "Christ-killers". To infer this misrepresents my point. The parallel was being drawn between today's occupation and that in Jesus' time. The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and its annexation of Gaza leads to daily human rights abuses which I have seen personally. They all breach interna-

tional law. Most Palestinians, like most Israelis, long for peace. But it must be a just peace. Whilst not condoning violence, one can understand that provocation leads to it. There is a difference between condoning and understanding. Palestinian Christian leaders regularly emphasise that both Palestinian Christians and Muslims share common ground in their daily struggles. It is part of the tragedy that there will be extremists who go outside the norm. The attack on the church by Muslim men in October 2022 was one example. In condemning the incident, Archbishop Atallah Hanna of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem called the assault a "unique occurrence". Further, commencement of the Separation Wall began in 2002 at the end of the Second Intifada when Israel had largely contained the violence. Since then, the building has continued, often taking a circuitous route. Even Israeli politicians have admitted it is a means of land confiscation and of separating people from their lands. Ultimately, our goal is not to be pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli, but pro-peace, to follow the Prince of Peace.

Nils von Kalm



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	6.00pm	Ash Wednesday Choral Eucharist Preacher: The Archbishop
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<b>Sun 26 Mar</b>	4.00pm	Mothers' Union Lady Day Choral Eucharist Preacher: Bishop Kate Prowd

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# A Voice is just the first step in healing

■ Glenn Loughrey

**In recent days the discussion about inclusion of a Voice for the First Peoples in the Australian Constitution has captured the imagination of Australia. Polling by those involved suggest some 60 per cent of Australians support the change.**

In November I took part in the 2022 McKinney Lectures with the theme “Voice, Treaty, Truth”. I spoke alongside Father Frank Brennan SJ AO who spoke of the complications involved in constitutional change and what a suitable referendum question that might be received positively by the Australian voting public.

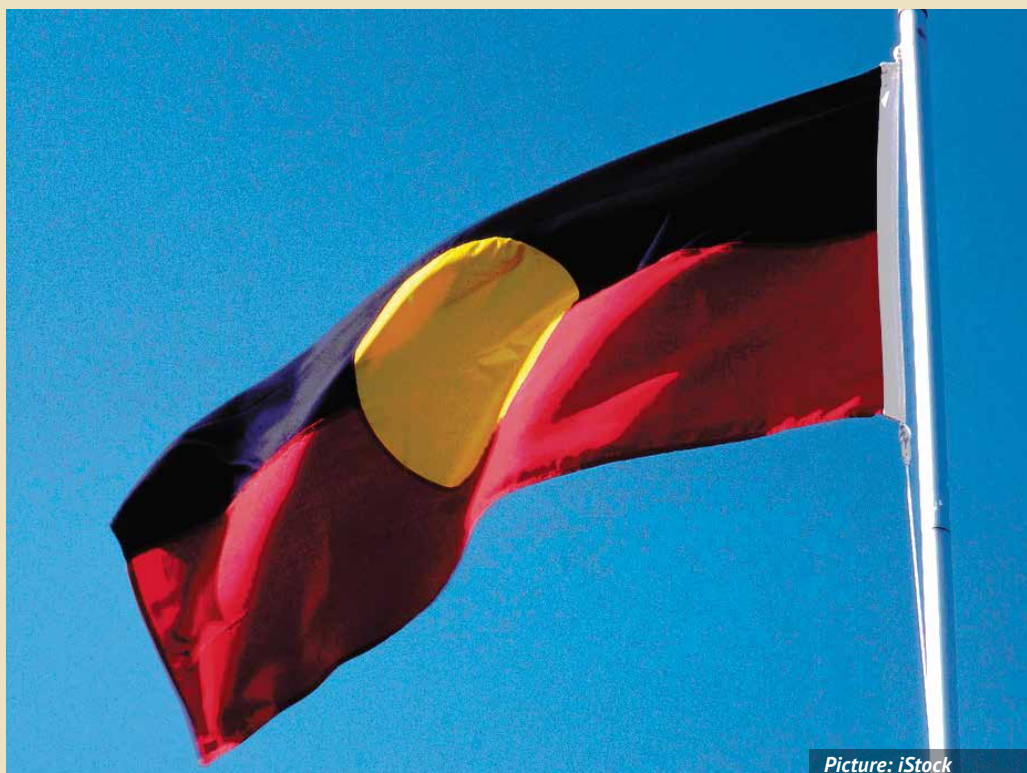
In my paper I spoke to the shape and process embedded in the Statement from the Heart, of which the Voice is but the starting point and not a stand-alone project. The Statement From the Heart is an invitation to join in a restorative justice process that will result in the healing of the heart of this country, and not a legalistic response to the question of inclusion.

While the Voice, as it is known, is necessary to embed First Peoples’ sovereignty over matters relating to them in the constitution, it is only the first step in the implementation of the Statement from the Heart signed at Uluru in 2017. The Statement is an invitation extended to all of Australia to join First Peoples to heal the heart of our country.

It was an invitation 12 months in the making, a truly democratic process which unpacked for Australia the key elements to be completed if we were to achieve restorative justice for past sins. But that is not all it is. It is a creative healing process that lays the foundations for a future Australia, more mature, robust, and whole than ever before – the type of Australia we wish to live in.

The Statement is a spiritual concept as much as the sovereignty it wishes to re-exist within the founding document of Australia. It is spiritual in the sense that it deals with the peoples’ broken spirit, the people who suffered dispossession and the people who stole it from them. Both have a deep need to resolve the trauma experienced or witnessed and the Statement sets up a process which, if followed faithfully will begin the process for all.

The following is a thumbnail of the process I outline more fully in *Unpacking the Statement From the Heart* published by the Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU, Canberra.



Picture: iStock

## Justice

Justice is the goal of the Statement from the Heart, not reconciliation. This involves the process or pathway towards justice – *Makarrata*.

## Voice

If you are not heard, you do not exist. Voice was the most supported element of the four elements in the consultations for the Statement signed at Uluru. If enshrined in the constitution it recognises a process of joint or shared sovereignty with power.

## Treaty

Once recognised, there is an opportunity to agree that as both are here, both are to work together to live respectfully in this place. This is conciliation – a process that has never occurred in Australia. We have leap-frogged Voice and Treaty to go straight to reconciliation.

## Truth

Now together there is room to tell the truth – the truth about what happened, why it happened, how it impacted both parties, and why and how it continues today. We reflect on how we got to where we are and is the foundation to resolve what can be resolved, forgive what can be forgiven and a commitment to work together. This is reconciliation, not relationship or nation building but dealing with the hard stuff.

## Makarrata

A Yolgnu word for “coming together after a dispute” means someone must do reparation and face the consequences of their actions. It may involve a spear in the thigh. The person will walk differently afterwards, reminding them and others sorry is not enough.

If the Statement from the Heart process is followed it will mean that Australia as a country will walk with a limp – it will be a different country, as it should be.

As a child I would often help my father move sheep from paddock to paddock. He would count them through the gate to make sure we had mustered all. Often, he would ask, “Do you have somewhere else to be?”

“No”, I would reply. “I think you do. You moved them too quick. You made dust.”

This is a salutary warning for those of us who want to resolve this matter in the current parliamentary cycle. If we move too quick, we will make dust, and in doing so we may miss the important stuff and the opportunity to get this right.

We have been here some 65,000 years. You have been here some 250 years. Things take time, and we can wait, but we must make a beginning.

If we start the journey and stay the distance, we will arrive. No dust!

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Associate Professor Canon Glenn Loughrey is a Wiradjuri man and vicar of St Oswald's Glen Iris.

# Shining example of servant leadership

■ Peta Sherlock

*The Venerable Marjorie McGregor AM, 1931-2022.*

In our nursing homes and aged care facilities there are hidden saints of the church. Marj McGregor was one. She had lived with dementia in Kyneton for many years but overseen by her two feisty sisters Margaret and Helen who lived in the same facility and made sure Marj was not forgotten. She died on 17 September just short of her 91st birthday. Her funeral was led by the present rector, the previous rector and Bishop Kate Prowd who was deaconed alongside Marj in February 1986. Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy sent a greeting from Perth.

I met Marj through the Movement for the Ordination of Women and celebrated when she became one of the first women in Australia to be made deacon by Archbishop David Penman at St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne. He decided first to ordain deaconesses, although most of them believed they already were deacons. Many of these deacons went on to become priests, bishops, one even became the Archbishop of Perth. But Marj remained a deacon, despite pressure, because she believed that this was the distinctive Christian ministry. She was called to a vocation of servant leadership.

And Marj was a shining example. She was no doormat. She truly led, but by the deep authority of serving others. I most remember her smile, not a papering over the cracks kind of smile, but a genuine peace and joy. She was made an archdeacon in 1988, in a creative move, because she embodied the diaconate: she was the



Marjorie McGregor.  
Picture: supplied

epitome of a deacon, an arch-deacon. In 1990 Archdeacon Marjorie came to the place where I was being licensed as school chaplain to sign my papers and present me to the school. At the very last moment the Diocesan Registry sent a man, because the lawyers said, being a woman, Marj was not quite a real archdeacon! For one moment her smile faded as we both saw yet another injustice played out. She insisted on signing the document beside the man's name and I valued that signature. And neither of us believed the lawyers.

Marj had studied at Ridley College for her Licentiate in Theology in 1959 and earned a rare Th.Schol in 1972, the equivalent of a masters degree. She was made a deaconess in 1961 and served at Bentleigh, London, Ringwood, The Hermitage and South Melbourne with many church agencies that eventually

came under the umbrella of Anglicare, drawing the poor and marginalised into the centre of the church's attention. As a deacon Marj led the parish of Northcote, because there are only a few moments in the week when being a priest actually comes into play. She was appointed Senior Minister for Women and regularly gathered together her female colleagues as we waited over six years for priesting to be possible. She pursued the future of the diaconate both internationally and ecumenically through the organisation Diakonia.

In her last years in the nursing home Marj continued to say the words of the prayerbook as her local rector led Holy communion. She was a jewel. In our nursing homes and aged care facilities there are many hidden jewels of the church. Please search them out and serve them to the end as the beloved children of the living God.

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# The 'broken, resplendent' church embracing diversity

Vicar Glenn Buijs standing outside Epiphany Anglican Church. Picture: Kirralee Nicolle.

■ Kirralee Nicolle

A pair of old buildings sit on a corner lot thick with weeds. A beam with three columns extends from the main building towards the carpark. The columns are painted render in green, red and purple.

Large chunks of render are missing.

Inside the main building is a large mural depicting safari animals. Rows of faded chairs face a simplified sound system and African percussion instruments. Under a wooden cross, an altar with Orthodox symbols.

In front of the second building a discarded mug pokes up from the grass. The door has been bolted shut. Inside, blinds open to reveal arcade games and rolled up Southeast Asian mats.

This is Epiphany Anglican Church in Hoppers Crossing, west of Melbourne's centre. It boasts parishioners from more than 15 different nations including Korea, India, Myanmar, Nigeria and South Sudan.

Vicar the Venerable Glenn Buijs hasn't come from any of these backgrounds himself. He grew up in a white Australian family in Greensborough, Victoria.

He has not only led Epiphany for the past five years, but is also Archdeacon of Williamstown, an Australian Army Archdeacon and runs an overseas aid organisation. Some of the initiatives that have begun in his time at Epiphany include a Foodbank, community house, health and wellbeing magazine and regular overseas mission programs.

The church is currently planning to construct a new building with funds raised by the community. They are regularly seeking

new ways to foster deeper connections with the local areas of Hoppers Crossing and Tarneit.

But a multicultural church like Epiphany also has its quirks.

Mr Buijs says it takes a long time to be accepted in many of the cultures at Epiphany, and to adapt to a new set of cultural norms.

One example of this is a traditional African funeral ceremony. He says a funeral can take 48 hours of eating, sleeping and singing.

***"It's about cultural awareness, sensitivity and engagement."***

Glenn Buijs

"You just need to be there," he says. "The half hour phone call isn't going to work."

Mr Buijs says there are further challenges for diverse people groups in a growth corridor. Language barriers can be partially overcome with hugs and smiles for some cultural groups, but others are typically less physically forward in their greetings. Many in the church are not on permanent visas and have only casual work, making finances tight. Many conceal carry knives, even to Sunday services. Relationships between parishioners can be complicated.

"Everything that you would normally do becomes complex for those reasons," he says. "It's about cultural awareness, sensitivity and engagement."

Crime is a concern at Epiphany. Mr Buijs

tells of seeing teenagers in the church on the evening news and calling their parents to notify them.

"You ring up and you say, 'oh, how's so and so?'" he says. "'Oh, he's fine.' 'May I speak to him?' 'Oh no, he's in the bedroom asleep.' 'Well, no he's not, he's on TV.'"

The former assistant minister at Epiphany the Reverend Trish Hunt is a priest with a long history of military service. She recently re-entered the military in a full-time capacity as an army chaplain.

Mr Buijs says because Ms Hunt is a woman and had just three years to integrate into the parish, her role had been accepted but she had not been welcomed so easily. Despite this, Ms Hunt says she felt prepared for the cross-cultural nature of the work through her Army background.

"I am pretty certain there are people in our church [who] don't like the fact that there's a female priest," she says. "You've just gotta go, 'I'm not going to take offense at this.'"

Mr Buijs also says he recognises that cross-cultural ministry in an evangelical setting can at times be too conversion-focused and not holistic enough.

"You don't want to take off the evangelistic part because we do it and we need to define why we do it, but we can't be so hard-edged at the same time," he says.

As Mr Buijs describes the challenges of the work, he begins to reflect on the significance of Epiphany.

"It's the broken, resplendent community of God," he says. "We're a community of broken, fragile people. But collectively, we're more. And that's the joy."

"You've got to love it."



# We must tune in to our culture's backing

■ Rhys Bezzant

Have you seen that video where a man and a woman walk down a street at night, with a soundtrack of violins playing romantically? The music tells us that they are in love, they have enjoyed an evening of delight in each other's company, and that all is right with the world. Then the same footage is replayed, but the musical backdrop is no longer orchestral harmony, but instead the screeching sound of string instruments performed not to reassure but to warn, as if danger lurks on the darkened street and we are about to witness a villainous attack. The musical soundtrack playing in the background changes our interpretation of the events unfolding before our eyes.

So it is with culture. The intellectual, or economic, or political currents of our age predispose us to see our world in a certain light. As Christians, we need to understand culture in order to grasp how it might be shaping us to misread the Scriptures, or alternatively how it might alert us to themes of the Scriptures which we had previously only half seen. With the help of theology, church history, and the people of God, we learn how to discern the strengths and weaknesses of the cultures of which we are a part.

And the soundtrack to our lives and ministry – and the ministry of much of the 20th century – is known as Modernism, a cultural movement that emerged at the end of the 19th century and gained ground as the 20th century progressed. Note, however, Modernism is not the same as modernity, which more often is known as the Enlightenment. Unlike the Enlightenment, Modernism was not asserting what was universally true, nor was it trying to capture and describe the rules governing the universe. By contrast, Modernism assumed a world in which there were no universally binding rules, no order to acknowledge, no truth to proclaim. It was the job of each individual to create their own order by assertively shaping the fragmented, chaotic, and confusing world around them. The birth of Modernism in the 1880s and 1890s was a function of an age which witnessed the dangers of unbridled capitalism, the growth of mega-cities, mass migration enabled by mass transportation, the power of machines and industry to reshape society, and the categories of gender and race to create new kinds of attachment where there was only dislocation. Modernism was the

***“Modernism still exerts cultural influence in our own day, and Christian ministry must still navigate its strengths and weaknesses.”***

cultural movement which reasserted the power of an individual's self-expression to bring some measure of stability to a world falling apart, one in which there was no self-evident meaning.

But Modernism didn't drop out of the sky. It built on ideas which upturned much of 19th century thinking. Reflecting themes from Darwin's writing, Modernism recognised that cause and effect are not easy to trace in history, and certainly cause and effect do not follow any providential patterns. Highlighting the anthropology of Freud, Modernism believed that there were deep undercurrents of irrationality in each of us, which needed to find some kind of outlet. And admiring the audacity of Nietzsche, Modernism likewise refused to accept the supernatural and asserted the priority of the individual, and especially the individual's will to power. Nietzsche's nihilism came as a bolt from the blue, an explosive challenge to communitarian values and Romantic sensibility. Artists like Picasso or Kandinsky, novelists like Conrad or Proust, and poets like Yeats or Rilke turned their back on a world in which meaning was to be discovered as an objective given. They believed that meaning had to be invented starting with one's own subjective insights. This was a fundamental philosophical and existential rupture. In her essay *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown*, Virginia Woolf captured much of the Modernist spirit when she wrote so provocatively: “On or about December 1910 human nature changed.” Yeats, in *The Second Coming* would later write with a sense of crisis: “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.”

This fundamentally new approach to the world was to have enormous impact on Christian ministry, beginning slowly but accelerating as the 20th century progressed. It became the background music for many initiatives and movements among Christians, which, though temporarily silenced by the noise of the First World War, picked up steam in the 1920s and 1930s,



The Reverend Canon Dr Rhys Bezzant.

and found its way into the mainstream in the 1960s. Modernism gave permission to movements which prized disruption, like early Pentecostalism, and encouraged its vein of self-expression, most distinctly with the speaking of tongues. Modernism nurtured both Fundamentalism, with its ultimately militant aspiration towards separation, and the Social Gospel, with its muting of the transcendence of the Kingdom of God. Modernism explored new ways of binding people together when there was no inherent order in the universe, which was part of the appeal of Muscular Christianity beginning in the late 19th century, which championed manliness as a pathway to finding new alignments, new attachments and new agency in a world of anomie. Starting as a Broad Church movement in the Church of England, and being taken up by the evangelical wing of the church some time later, Muscular Christianity sponsored the foundations of the Salvation Army, the Boys' Brigade, the codification of association football (“soccer”), and the invention of basketball.

Modernism prized bold leadership, on or off the sporting field. It demanded risk-taking, pursuing things that had never been done before. It was perfectly suited to the age of Empire, in which Europeans or North Americans found themselves in difficult locations overseas, harnessing their political or economic or theological motivations to the growth of “civilisation”. It emboldened women to seek suffrage at home, and encouraged missionaries to serve not just on the coast of countries where the gospel had arrived, but in the interior of those countries too, a much greater challenge requiring self-consciously consecrated, perhaps heroic, leadership.



# track: Modernism



Picture: iStock

Both the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 and the Student Volunteer Movement under the leadership of John Mott challenged believers to push more valiantly to evangelise the world “in this generation”. Of course, lauding heroic individuals who could stand up to the ills of the age and provide powerful leadership to bring a sense of stability and order had disastrous consequences later in the 20th century. With philosophical justification and technological innovation, both fascist and communist dictators were to go on to wreak havoc in the Modernist century.

Modernism still exerts cultural influence in our own day, and Christian ministry must still navigate its strengths and weaknesses. Big cities, artifacts of Modernism with all their internationalism alongside fragmentation, spawn a yearning for a sense of connectedness, which the gospel can provide. In the last 30 years, church-planting in big cities all around the world has been a wonderful accommodation to modernist realities. On the other hand, while modernism values self-expression, the gospel teaches the value of self-denial. Finding the meaning of life is not the result of assertively creating order through exercise of the will, but rather we find life, Jesus teaches, when we die to ourselves to pursue his will and ways. Taking up our cross and denying ourselves to follow Christ is our calling under any kind of philosophical conditions, though it might be harder under Modernism. Indeed, leadership

***“Finding the meaning of life is not the result of assertively creating order through exercise of the will, but rather we find life, Jesus teaches, when we die to ourselves to pursue his will and ways.”***

in the church must reflect this very posture: leaders are servants of the servants of the Lord, not those who demand allegiance or lord it over others in an attempt to create unity, which is after all a gift from the Spirit. All Christians, no matter their theological stripe, must negotiate their relationship with the culture around them, rejecting that which is inconsistent with biblical truth, and where it is consistent, using it as a bridge to communicate the gospel. We praise God that his revelation to us in the Scriptures and in his Son gives us points of leverage to discern how we might engage responsibly with the soundtrack of Modernism in order to magnify Christ, a soundtrack which can be identified with a singularly explosive note.

For on 26 August, 1883, a volcano on the Indonesian island of Krakatoa erupted, with worldwide impact. In a church service

in Hamburg, Germany, a parishioner saw the chandeliers swaying from side to side, and wondered what on earth could have caused the movement, not thinking for a moment that it had its origins in faraway south-east Asia. The eruption produced ash clouds that changed climates, and its reporting became a media sensation in ways not seen before through the aid of modern technology. All over the world, volcanoes were the topic of conversation and sites of scientific inquiry. Having seen volcanoes on his travels, even William Guilfoyle, the creative mind behind Melbourne’s Royal Botanic Gardens, created one at the gardens’ highest point to represent the wonders of nature and – more importantly perhaps – to act as a reservoir to water the grounds. Serendipitously, the explosion at Krakatoa and the image of the volcano it popularised serve as a fitting picture to represent the Modernist moment and movement of the end of the 19th century. No longer able to contain the energy within but with no plan to use it constructively, the volcano exemplifies the primordial power of uninhibited expression, with its capacity to reshape the world, for good or for ill. We might be in thrall to Modernism, or merely aware of how to channel its cultural insights, but let’s not be unaware of its theological dangers as well. Ask Nietzsche who wrote: “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.”

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The Reverend Canon Dr Rhys Bezzant is senior lecturer at Ridley College, and dean of the Anglican Institute.



# His bubble burst, but this scientist's faith is stronger for it

In the last of our series on younger Christian scientists, we welcome Caleb McElrea, a science communicator with science education business Mad About Science and an aspiring wildlife filmmaker. Here, Caleb chats to ISCAST's publications director, David Hooker, about his journey through science and faith.

**DAVID:** Thanks, Caleb, for joining us. Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

**CALEB:** I'm 26 and from Queensland, but now living in Victoria where I moved at 21 for my zoology honours year. I love nature, photography, filmmaking, philosophy and ancient history. But I also enjoy music, theatre, performance, comedy – and science communication.

**DAVID:** Many interests! Could you tell us more about this journey from pure science to communicating that science?

**CALEB:** An early love of nature and animals was nurtured, I think, by my parent's bushwalking club at church. But it could also be from Cadbury Yowies! I used to be obsessed with these little chocolates with a native Australian toy animal inside. Bravo to whoever came up with the idea of combining animals with chocolate endorphins!

That love of nature led me to an honours year in zoology at the University of Melbourne. But an extracurricular course in science communication during that year opened up a new path. In that course I saw and loved the idea of the overlap of scientific thinking, creative thinking, and people. And that's what I'm doing now.

**DAVID:** What were one or two challenging chapters in your journey?

**CALEB:** The process of figuring out what to do and getting there has been a long one, at least for me.

My final goal is wildlife filmmaking, but I think it will be a 10-to-15-year pursuit to make something of a living from it. Initially, studying zoology I felt like there wasn't going to be much work available (though the number of ecology positions has grown), and I wasn't sure how to transition across to wildlife filmmaking. A challenge was just having the confidence to keep going and trusting that the right thing would come along.

After the science communication course in 2018 and having identified that field as something I leaned towards, 2019 was a challenging year to go into that field, relying on God's provision. But it was a huge blessing to have a very supportive family. Nevertheless, during that year I didn't know if I had the ability to stay in Melbourne anymore. There were many unsuccessful interviews; sometimes I was just too tired from the challenges of that year to ace the interviews. It was about learning persistence and self-talk: "Keep applying and trying, don't assume that one failure indicates how you normally do, remember that you can do great stuff and aim for that every time."

But towards the year's end something came through! First, leading a team at Melbourne's Science Gallery during a six-week exhibition, then, a position with Mad About Science, a science communication company for children.

**DAVID:** A challenging year of searching, Caleb. Going back further, how did you become a Christian?

**CALEB:** I'm very fortunate to have kingdom life compellingly modelled in my loving Christian family. Our church, too, was a wonderful, big, exciting community. And I went to a Christian school.

This means I grew up in a bubble! That bubble burst at uni where I'd been grappling with faith questions and listening to debates. I always had the baseline, "I'm Christian, that's my life" but I'd wake up some mornings with the thought, "I don't think I believe in God today. I don't feel like that is true inside my head." Then other days, "God's everything".

In relating my doubts to a close friend, he said, "Yeah, it's good to know that stuff but you've gone down the wrong rabbit



Caleb McElrea  
Picture: Zac Mansfield.





Picture: Caleb McElrea.

hole. You're just clicking through YouTube and letting the algorithm guide your literal destiny." Then he guided me through what he'd been listening to. That was a turning point to make me more robust in the "what" and "why" of believing. My experience here showed me that faith ought to be done in community. We're incorporated into a family of an even higher reality than our biological one.

**DAVID: Did science somehow nurture your faith journey?**

**CALEB:** At university I eventually realised I *could* fit science with faith. That symbiotic relationship increased my faith's explanatory power for life and reality. The other integration of faith and science for me is beauty and meaning. The Christian faith frames science's subject, the observable world, with beauty and meaning beyond what science alone can do.

I'm starting to understand the intricacies of creation. Multiple levels of intricacy, on the macro, micro and everything in between, which is completely mind-boggling. For me then, science highlights the need to believe in God.

The question then becomes: "What does science's knowledge about the natural world say about God?" I remember sitting in the Queensland rainforest behind a curtain of falling water and thinking, "This is absolutely stunning, what does this say about the God who transcends space and time and is living within me?" The science of the natural world becomes an informant of God's character. It's very much like reading a book or watching a movie to understand the author or director.

**DAVID: As committed Christians, we know living out our faith in the workplace can be challenging. What workplace conversations have you had about science/faith matters?**

**CALEB:** Science Gallery Melbourne, which is fantastic for educating young people in science, is nevertheless secular. It's an art gallery designed to spur scientific thought. As "mediator" at exhibits I'd ask people, "Do you get it?" If not, then I'd explain it, and, as a Christian, discuss further.

I remember there was one installation having an animatronic head of a sex robot, with its question to the public: "Would you be okay with a future in which we found sexual gratification in robots or silicon-based lifeforms?" Sometimes I facilitated visitor's debates around questions like this one, and offered my Christian views. I've also been able to discuss topics like young and old earth, and theistic evolution. It was a great opportunity to respond to questions gently but with truth.

I also remember ongoing conversations with a close, atheist uni friend who just loved talking religion and faith, who called me "my religious genius friend". The complement was gratifying, but the main point is that it feels great to be a genuine representative of Christ, a witness, to true friends who are strongly agnostic or atheists.

**DAVID: Where would you like to go in your faith-science journey?**

**CALEB:** Eventually to be a wildlife filmmaker! Wildlife filmmaking is where science, art, and my Christian faith can all merge. It's exciting to craft a film with

excellence and make it a testament to God's wonder and presence in the world. Currently I'm working on a very exciting voluntary project with Elspeth Kernebone at *The Melbourne Anglican*, a documentary about quolls in the snowy river region (look out for a late 2024 release, *Quolls and the Hidden Kosciusko!*).



Picture: Caleb McElrea.

**DAVID: As we finish, is there any advice or encouragement you'd like to give to our TMA readers?**

**CALEB:** If you're into the natural sciences, it's encouraging to know there's presently a good number of ecology jobs on offer. More generally, rather than expecting a dream job upon graduation, it's fine to take positions that aren't your dream job, and you'll still learn lots. Setting realistic goals and timelines, having a mixture of judicious compromise and determination is a good recipe.

**DAVID: Thank you so much for your time, Caleb.**



# We could learn from AI on ministry

■ Brian Holden

**I have an interest in technology, and often think about how technology can be used by the church. A past example is a chat bot developed by Youthscape UK which is a simple and fun way to help learn the basics of conversations with teens.**

So I have been super excited with the release of ChatGPT which is a text input that interacts in a conversational way. The dialogue format makes it possible for ChatGPT to answer follow up questions, admit mistakes, adapt its responses based on learning from interactions, challenge incorrect premises, and reject inappropriate requests.

I love playing with new technology, so it never takes long to start asking tricky questions to try and stump the computer, which is rather clever. ChatGPT is capable of passing medical exams, according to an article by ABC technology reporter James Purtill, and is causing challenges for universities as it is also capable of writing essays.

While playing "stump the AI" with my children, one of them asked the bot if my role at the diocese as a youth consultant was important. ChatGPT needed some extra information about what I do, but it started a real conversation about the importance of ministry to, with and through young people, and the shaping effect it has on them and on the church. At the end of the conversation I asked for a conclusion and was blown away. Here is what an Artificial Intelligence came to understand about youth ministry.

"As an AI language model, I am not a member of any church, but I can help you understand the value of youth ministry from a broad perspective.

"Youth ministry plays a crucial role in shaping the next generation of believers and leaders. However, many members of the



Picture: iStock

church may not fully understand its value. They may see it as simply a program for the younger members of the congregation and may not grasp how it can benefit them as church members.

"Youth ministry is not just about teaching kids about the Bible and Christianity, it's about training the next generation of leaders and creating a sense of community within the church. By investing in the youth, the church is investing in its future as well as its present.

"Youth ministry is also about creating opportunities for young people to learn, grow and serve in a way that is meaningful and relevant to them. This can include things like mission trips, service projects, and leadership training. These experiences can be incredibly valuable for the young people involved and can help shape them into leaders who will be able to serve the church in the future.

"Moreover, youth ministry is not just about the youth, it's about the entire church community. By investing in the youth, the church is creating a sense of community and continuity. This can help build stronger relationships between generations, and it

can also help create a sense of purpose and meaning for all members of the church motivating them to make their faith practical.

"In conclusion, youth ministry is not something that should be viewed as separate from the rest of the church. It is an integral part of the church and should be valued and supported as such. If it is separated out, then both the members and the youth miss a chance to grow. It's about both investing in the future of the church and creating a sense of community and purpose within the church right now."

ChatGPT is two-months-old and learning more by the day. It has already formed and reformed its opinion on the value of youth ministry. Our earliest conversations were all about the benefits to young people, but recently it's also started to talk about the benefits of youth ministry to all church members. I wonder if we spent a little more time reflecting and having conversations ourselves we too might see some of these benefits.

Want to try ChatGPT yourself? It's available at: [openai.com/blog/chatgpt](https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt). The Youthscape chatbot is available at: [bit.ly/3klXkQe](https://bit.ly/3klXkQe).

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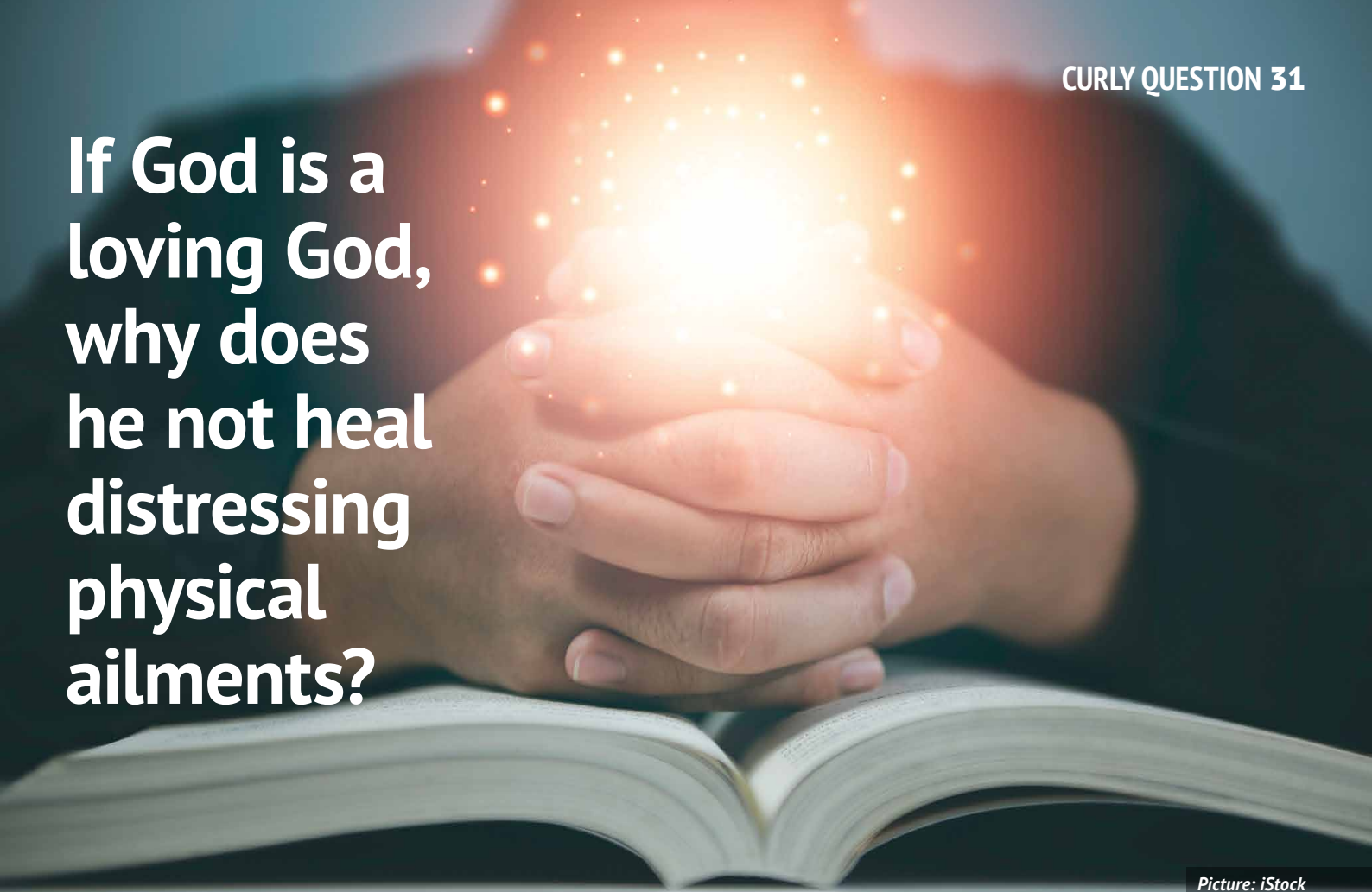
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# If God is a loving God, why does he not heal distressing physical ailments?



Picture: iStock

■ Fergus King

**If God is a loving God, why does he not heal distressing physical ailments? How can he stand by and watch that suffering when he has the power to heal instantly?**

On the morning of 1 November 1755, an earthquake and tsunami hit the city of Lisbon, killing 60,000 people. It also provoked a monumental outpouring of frustration, not least the questions about suffering and evil raised by French philosopher Voltaire, in his *Candide*: why was a supposedly all-loving and all-powerful God seemingly absent in such a catastrophe?

The question was not new. The book of Job addresses it, demolishing most of the trite and pious answers often trotted out, and ending with a frustrating appeal to the mystery of God. Whether the cause of suffering is human sinfulness, or natural phenomena, the question persists. Why does God let this happen?

Perhaps our problem is that we look for the wrong kind of answer with the wrong idea of God. Often it seems that a *deus ex machina* is expected: a God who drops in and sorts everything out. The phrase comes from bad Roman theatre, where imminent tragedy is averted by the sudden appearance of a god who (almost literally) is winched down to the stage. Golding's *Lord of the Flies* does much the same: the unexpected appearance of a frigate rescues

**“Curly Questions” is a monthly column written by experts dealing with tricky conversations that touch on faith, in a compassionate, practical and biblical way.**

his not so *pukka* schoolboys from themselves. Often we seem to expect a God like this.

But God in Christ drops into the world in a different way, one that is diametrically opposed to this *deus ex machina*. His intervention takes on a different set of characteristics. It is seen in God emptying himself to become human, even to the point of a violent death at the hands of his creatures.

But this reshapes the whole problem, and gives a new perspective. God is not absent, as Voltaire imagined, but suffers

together with, alongside, his creatures. The Christian God does not play chess with the cosmos. We can only recognise this by contemplating the Incarnation and Cross – and that may take time.

When we do, we find, as Paul says, that “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39).

Christian faith is brutally realistic. It reminds that we can never expect, in this world, to escape affliction. But it does promise that affliction never need be the end of the story. Healing and new life are guaranteed by Our Lord's Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection.

But it also stops us from passing the buck to God. Bishop James Jones, in his *Why do People Suffer?* tells of passing by a school and hearing a child cry. He realised it was his own daughter, but that he could not jump the wall and rescue her: someone else needed to do that. Confronted with the problem of suffering, maybe we should not ask what God is doing, but what we are doing to enable God to be present there?

**Is there a curly question you'd like us to address?**

**You can let us know by using the QR Code and filling out the form found at:**



The Reverend Dr Fergus King is Farnham Maynard Lecturer in Ministry Education and director of the Ministry Education Centre, Trinity College Theological School.



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## Clergy Moves

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Tributes: [www.tma.melbourneanglican.org.au](http://www.tma.melbourneanglican.org.au)  
Clergy Moves is compiled by the Registry Office and all correspondence should go to [registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au](mailto:registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au)

### Vacant Appointments as of 17 January 2023:

St Eanswythe Altona/St Clement Altona Meadows; Bellarine Gateway; St Martin, Belgrave Heights; Parish of Box Hill; Brimbank; St John Chrysostom, Brunswick West; St Bartholomew, Burnley; St Faith, Burwood; St Mark, Camberwell; St Catharine, Caulfield South; St Luke, Cockatoo; St Philip, Collingwood; St Margaret, Eltham; Christ Church, Geelong; Holy Trinity, Hampton; St Peter & St James, Kilsyth/Montrose; St Augustine, Mentone; St George Monbulk; St Peter's Murrumbidgee with Holy Nativity Hughesdale; St Aidan Noble Park; St Aidan, Parkdale; Pascoe Vale-Oak Park; St Matthew, Pant Hill; St George the Martyr Queenscliff and St James Point Lonsdale; St Mark, Reservoir; St Stephen, Richmond; All Saints' Carlotta Tye Memorial, Selby; St Mary, Sunbury [from May 2023]; Christ Church, South Yarra; Christ Church, St Kilda; St Luke, Sydenham; Parish of Upwey/Belgrave; St Thomas, Upper Ferntree Gully; St John, Wantirna South; St Matthew, Wheelers Hill; Christ Church, Whittlesea with St Peter's, Kinglake; St Thomas, Winchelsea with Holy Trinity, Barrabool and St Paul's, Deans Marsh

### Appointments:

**BELLHOUSE, The Revd Kathryn**, appointed Assistant Priest, St Peter, Eastern Hill Melbourne, effective 17 April 2023.  
**DEVERELL, The Revd Dr Garry Worete**, appointed Canon, St Paul Cathedral Church, Melbourne, effective 15 December 2022  
**DUNCAN, The Revd Ross**, appointed Area Dean, Deanery of The Hills, effective 5 January 2023  
**GARDINER, The Revd Stuart Comrie**, appointed Priest-in-Charge, Parish of Westmeadows, effective 11 January 2023  
**GIFFORD, The Revd Andrew Raymond**, appointed Priest-in-Charge, Holy Trinity, Bacchus Marsh, effective 16 February 2023  
**GORMAN, The Revd Janice Maree**, appointed Incumbent, St Mark, Dromana, effective 15 March 2023  
**JONES, The Revd Keiron Margaret**, appointed Area Dean, Deanery of Mornington Peninsula, effective 22 December 2022  
**JUDD, The Revd Stephanie**, appointed Assistant Priest (from Assistant Curate) Authorised Anglican Congregation, City on a Hill, effective 5 January 2023  
**KELLY, The Revd Reece**, appointed Priest-in-Charge, New Ministry Presence, St Paul, Clyde North, effective 1 February 2023  
**KEMPSTER, The Revd Dr Hugh**, appointed Head of Religious Education and Associate Chaplain, Geelong Grammar School, effective 20 January 2023  
**KICEVSKI, The Revd Michael James**, appointed Assistant Priest, St John, Highton, effective 8 January 2023  
**MACPHERSON, The Revd Peter Aggarwal**, appointed Archdeacon, Archdeaconry of Kew, effective 29 November 2022  
**MONSIEGNEUR, The Revd Stephen Emmanuel**, appointed Priest-in-Charge, St Peter, Bundoora, effective 2 March 2023  
**O'REILLY AM, The Revd Canon Dr Colleen**, appointed acting Archdeacon, Archdeaconry of Stonnington, eff. 29 November 2022  
**RICHARDS, The Revd Peter**, appointed Assistant Priest as Warden to Saint Agnes House, St John, Malvern East and St Agnes, Glen Huntly, effective 12 December 2022  
**SULLIVAN, The Revd Cheryl Susanne**, appointed Assistant Priest, St John, Frankston North with St Luke, Carrum Downs, effective 15 December 2022  
**WATERHOUSE, The Revd Peter**, appointed School Chaplain, Brighton Grammar School, 1 December 2022  
**WILLIAMS, The Revd Brenda**, appointed Hospital Chaplain, Royal Melbourne Hospital, effective 1 December 2022  
**WOOD, The Revd Michael**, appointed Community Chaplain, St Stephen Richmond, effective 10 November 2022.

### Ordained to the Priesthood 26 November 2022:

**ALLEAUME ROSS, The Revd Dr Kathleen Mary Anne**, Assistant Curate, St Mary, Sunbury  
**AMERI, The Revd Bentollhoda (Hoda)**, Assistant Curate, Emmanuel Anglican Iranian Congregation  
**CARR, The Revd Elsa Christien Pereira Dias Gomes**, Assistant Curate, St Stephen, Gardenvale  
**CHISWELL, The Revd David Peter**, Assistant Curate, Authorised Anglican Congregation of City on a Hill  
**CLEMENTS, The Revd Benjamin**, Assistant Curate, St Philip, Deep Creek  
**DILLON, The Revd Kristen Maree**, Assistant Curate St George, East Ivanhoe  
**GLAZE BROOK, The Revd Louis**, Assistant Curate Authorised Anglican Congregation of City on a Hill, Surf Coast  
**HANSFORD, The Revd Gavin**, Curate in Charge St Peter, Fawkner  
**JACKSON, The Revd Bradley John**, Assistant Curate, St Barnabas, Glen Waverley  
**KOROH, The Revd Ishak Imanuel**, Assistant Curate, Mullum Mullum, Ringwood  
**NAGY, The Revd Andrea**, Assistant Curate, St Stephen and St Mary, Mount Waverley  
**NG, The Revd Hing Sing (Terence)**, Assistant Curate, St Thomas, Burwood effective 26 November 2022 and St Timothy, Bulleen effective 1 January 2023  
**SIMON, The Revd Saurabh Joshua**, Assistant Curate, St John, Highton  
**SLATER, The Revd Anastasia Malinda (Stacey)**, Assistant Curate St Paul, Kew East  
**SWEET, The Revd Xeverie (Molly)**, Assistant Curate, St Andrew, Brighton  
**THANGADURAI, The Revd Gnana Seeli Lydia Jebarane (Lydia)**, Assistant Curate, St John, Toorak  
**WANG, The Revd Changying Grace**, Assistant Curate, The Holy Name of Jesus, Vermont South  
**WHITE, The Revd Samantha Ann**, Assistant Curate, All Souls, Sandringham

### Ordained to the Priesthood 27 November 2022:

**RANKIN, The Revd Elizabeth**, Assistant Curate, St Peter, Mornington with St Martin, Mount Martha

### Permission to Officiate:

**ANBALAGAN, The Revd Lawrence**, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 16 January 2023  
**GEBERT, The Revd Daniel**, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 16 January 2023  
**KETTLETON, The Revd Joel**, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 12 January 2023  
**MARTIN, The Revd Peter**, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 24 November 2022

### Retirement:

**WARD, The Revd Gavin**, Incumbent, St Mary, Sunbury, effective 21 May 2023

### Resignations:

**ANBALAGAN, The Revd Lawrence Devarajan**, Priest-in-Charge, St Peter, Murrumbidgee with Holy Trinity, Hughesdale and Tamil Christian Congregation, Victoria, eff. 11 February 2023  
**GEBERT, The Revd Daniel**, Priest-in-Charge, St Aidan, Parkdale, effective 14 March 2023  
**LINDSAY, The Revd Jack**, Assistant Curate, Christ Church, Brunswick, effective 1 January 2023  
**POULTER, The Revd Jennifer Marie**, Assistant Curate, St Paul, Caulfield North, effective 19 February 2023  
**SCUTT, The Revd Alexander**, Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 25 December 2022

### Obituaries:

**ASHTON, The Right Revd Jeremy Claude**, 24 November 2022  
**COLLIE, The Reverend Robert (Bob)**, 13 November 2022  
**OCTIGAN, The Revd Daniel**, 24 November 2022