

THE Melbourne Anglican

MAY 2023, No 624



Two new lay leaders called to serve

Story P9



P5
Hollingworth allowed to continue ministry



P6
Six new believers baptised



P23
Assisted suicide. What do I say?



The Holy Spirit fills us with confidence in our role

■ Archbishop Philip Freier

I recently came across the Melbourne diocesan magazine for December 1990.

It was the special edition about Archbishop Keith Rayner's enthronement but also included an article about parish vitality, the number of parishes and the changing demography of Melbourne and Geelong. Archdeacon Alan Nichols was quoted as saying, "I believe we are at a critical point in our history and in our place in society, with congregations barely maintaining themselves, but aging, yet with increasing numbers offering for ordination and remarkable opportunities for starting new parishes in the development corridors around Melbourne. We are in the process of experimenting with new forms of church planting appropriate to different subcultures."

These prescient thoughts show the long journey that our church in this diocese has been on over several generations, as it has sought to balance present activity and future aspiration. The "Reimagining the Future" resource that has been available in Melbourne now for the past couple of years is the present focus in this endeavour. Alignment of capital resources and ministry



Picture: iStock

opportunities remains as much our concern as it was then, more than three decades ago.

The 1990 article spoke of the great increase in the number of Melbourne Anglican parishes between 1961 and 1986, from 192 to 240, at the same time as the percentage of Anglicans in the census dropped from 30 per cent to 17.8 per cent for the Greater Melbourne area. The same aspiration at work over this period, starting 60 years ago, continued through the 1990s as it does today.

In March this year, we welcomed two presenters from the Church of England to speak about the "Leading your Church into Growth" initiatives that have been developed there, particularly informed by the work of Archdeacon Bob Jackson. People from 54 of our parishes attended this three-day training event. This was very well received,

and attendees left feeling encouraged to pray and work for growth in the life of their parish or other ministry context. As simple and obvious as it seems, the emphasis on making prayer for growth part of our parish life was received as an encouraging and energising insight. It is also true that, our human nature is readily informed by what is happening around us and needs to be constantly reminded of the divine and eternal truths that challenge our limited human perspective.

In our journey beyond Easter, through to the Ascension and Pentecost, we have ample opportunity to get the right focus of attention to the overriding purpose of God's actions in history revealed in Jesus. The Holy Spirit fills us with confidence in our part in this big purpose of God to gather, restore, heal and release the people of God for mission in the world.

"God of mission, who alone brings growth to your Church, send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions, joy to our worship, and power to our witness. Help our Church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you, and in service to our local community, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

THE Melbourne Anglican



The Melbourne Anglican
ISSN 1324-5724

Chief Communications Officer
– Michelle Harris
mharris@melbourneanglican.org.au

Editor – Elspeth Kernebone
ekernebone@melbourneanglican.org.au

Journalist – Jenan Taylor
jtaylor@melbourneanglican.org.au

Journalist – Maya Pilbrow
mpilbrow@melbourneanglican.org.au

Advertising – 03 9653 4215
or ads@melbourneanglican.org.au

Design & Layout – Ivan Smith
ads@melbourneanglican.org.au

Subscription Enquiries
tma@melbourneanglican.org.au
Annual Subscription \$40

Printing – Intellimail International

Published by:
Anglican Media Melbourne,
209 Flinders Lane Melbourne VIC 3000
ph 9653 4269
tma.melbourneanglican.org.au



@MelbourneAnglican
@MelbAnglican



SHANTI MICHAEL is a musical director for a group named **Chorus Ecclesiae**, which performs **Gregorian chanting and sacred polyphony in Victorian churches**. She spoke with *Everyday Saints* about growing up Malaysian, her faith and its family emphasis and the beauty of acceptance across religious bounds.

For Shanti's story and more, listen to our podcast via tma.melbourneanglican.org.au.

Everyday Saints.

For an Anglican Approach



SELWYN ALLEN FUNERALS
Selwyn & Geoff Allen

Tel: (03) 9888 1672

Email: enquiries@selwynallenfunerals.com.au
www.selwynallenfunerals.com.au

- Selwyn and Geoff Allen, and their caring staff, offer personal, dependable service with over 100 years combined experience
- All areas, any time
- Secure pre-arranged and pre-paid funerals



Geoff Allen

Selwyn Allen



Parishioners Margaret Lemondine and Annette Hill helped organise St Paul's Boronia's centenary celebrations.

Picture: Janine Eastgate

Turning 100, St Paul's looks forward

■ Jenan Taylor

A Boronia church is aiming to build close links between different generations as it celebrates its centenary and looks to the future.

St Paul's Boronia turned 100 on 8 April, marking the occasion with a community festival that included activities for the public and a photo showcase of its rich history.

St Paul's pastor the Reverend Vaughn Spring said the church was working towards intergenerational, discipleship and hospitality ministries and these were the thrust behind the 100-year celebration theme, "To God be the Glory."

Mr Spring said St Paul's intergenerational approach involved spreading awareness of the value of having different people of a different age intermingling and working alongside each other throughout the church, and in its programs and public-facing events.

He said the church had employed an intergenerational pastor to help it achieve those ministry goals and that planned activities might include having morning tea where seniors and younger children were teed up to have conversations with each other and ask questions.

Centenary committee organiser Margaret Lemondine said activities in the months ahead would highlight how St Paul's past and current programs and ministries, had helped people grow in their faith.

Among the church's main achievements were its long-running community meals programs, including Christmas Day lunches for people who were socially isolated, and a grandparent's playgroup for people who looked after their grandchildren.

Another effort was the Ladies' Guild group that formed in 1932 with the express purpose of raising funds.

Long-standing group member Diane Collyer said the Ladies Guild had also

been a great comfort for women members, during the Second World War.

Ms Collyer said the group was renamed the Guild in the last 10 years so as to encourage men to join in. As part of the 100-year celebrations, it recently held a fashion parade featuring parishioners as models.

Reflecting on St Paul's children's initiatives, Ms Lemondine said the church had also run a free children's holiday program that operated until just before the pandemic and had looked after at least 100 children during school holiday times.

"It was open to the wider community and to people with complex needs as well," Ms Lemondine said.

St Paul's centenary committee is also organising a dinner and an afternoon of musical performances for later in the year.

The musical afternoon would feature hymns through the ages alongside music from the 1920s, 30s, 40s and upwards, Ms Lemondine said.

IT STARTS WITH RESPECT

Picture: Dreamstime

- On average, one woman a week in Australia is killed by a partner or former partner.
- 1 in 6 women have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15.
- Australian women are almost four times more likely than men to be hospitalised after being assaulted by their spouse or partner.*

The Melbourne Anglican Foundation and the Collier Charitable Fund along with other Anglican Agencies, have been proud seed funders of the Prevention of Violence Against Women program now in its 5th year of operation.

Help support the essential work of the Prevention of Violence Against Women program as it educates clergy and faith communities in Melbourne to understand the nature and dynamics of family violence.



DONATE NOW

Scan to donate

*Sources: Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) 2017, 2017 National Homicide Monitoring Program report; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2019, Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story; and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2018, Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia 2018.

03 9653 4286

foundation@www.melbourneanglican.org.au

melbourneanglican.org.au/melbourne-anglican-foundation



**Melbourne
Anglican
Foundation**

Seven misconduct allegations upheld

■ **Elsbeth Kernebone**

The Melbourne diocese's Professional Standards Board has determined that former Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane Peter Hollingworth may continue in the positions of ministry he currently holds, despite finding that he had committed multiple misconducts.

The Professional Standards Board found that in about late 1993 and in 1998 Dr Hollingworth without proper justification permitted John Elliot to remain in ministry, when he knew Elliot had sexually assaulted children and that he posed a risk to the safety and wellbeing of children. Media agencies first published the board's findings on 24 April. *The Melbourne Anglican* has received a summary of the board's determination.

Dr Hollingworth was appointed Archbishop of Brisbane in 1989. He was Governor General of Australia from 2001 to 2003.

A 2002 inquiry from the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane determined Dr Hollingworth genuinely believed Elliot's abuse was an isolated occurrence. However it determined that even if the abuse had been an isolated incident, no bishop acting reasonably could have reached the decision to continue a known paedophile in the ministry.

In 2017 the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse found that while Archbishop of Brisbane Dr Hollingworth made a serious error in judgement in allowing Elliot to continue in ministry after Dr Hollingworth became aware that Elliot had sexually abused boys and posed an ongoing risk to children. The commission also found a letter Dr Hollingworth sent to an abuse survivor's brother about the Brisbane diocese's response to John Elliot was "inappropriate and insensitive".

The Melbourne diocese's Professional Standards Board determined that Dr Hollingworth had committed misconduct by in about 1995 permitting Donald Shearman, who he knew had sexually assaulted a child, to retain his permission to officiate.

It also found that in about 2002 he had made a statement about a victim of sexual assault by Donald Shearman that was "unsatisfactory, insensitive and that he should have foreseen was likely to be distressing", and in June 2000 he made a public statement "that was inaccurate and he ought reasonably to have known was likely to be distressing to the victims of sexual assault committed by a school counsellor, Kevin Lynch".

The board found that in 2000 Dr

Hollingworth had made an unreasonable and dangerous appointment to a position of responsibility and authority within the Anglican Church.

The Professional Standards Board recommended that the Archbishop of Melbourne on behalf of the Melbourne Diocese and the Anglican Church of Australia reprimand Dr Hollingworth for his decision to retain John Elliot and Donald Shearman in ministry and his harsh and insensitive communications with and letters about the victims of those abusers.

It recommended that as a condition of being granted permission to officiate in any church service Dr Hollingworth be required by the Archbishop of Melbourne to offer apologies to one person and his family for his two decisions to retain John Elliot in ministry, despite his knowledge of sexual abuse committed by John Elliot.

It recommended that the Archbishop of Melbourne require Dr Hollingworth apologise to Beth Heinrich for Dr Hollingworth's decision to retain Donald Shearman in ministry despite his knowledge of Donald Shearman's sexual abuse of Ms Heinrich, and his failure to understand and give proper weight to the harm suffered by Ms Heinrich as a result of Donald Shearman's abuse, and for his "harsh, dismissive and insensitive words" about Ms Heinrich broadcast on *Australian Story* in 2002.

The board dismissed allegations that:

- Dr Hollingworth had failed to make proper efforts to provide care and support to two young people who disclosed they were sexually assaulted by a teacher at an Anglican school.
- In about February 2002 during the course of an *Australian Story* interview, Dr Hollingworth intentionally or recklessly made an inaccurate public statement that he had never met any of the family of a boy abused by John Elliot.
- Dr Hollingworth had committed alleged misconduct of intentionally or recklessly permitting his lawyers to send a letter to the Brisbane Inquiry which contained a false or misleading statement that the abuse committed by Elliot had been a "single, isolated incident", when in fact there had been multiple abusive incidents.

The board said it had determined that Dr Hollingworth was "fit for ministry subject to the condition that his ministry be confined to the role office or position in the church that he currently holds". It named these as:

- Assisting with services at his local parish, currently St George's Malvern.
- Taking quarterly Eucharist at the Community of the Holy Name.
- Taking monthly lunchtime Eucharist at St Paul's Cathedral.
- Facilitating weddings, funerals and baptisms and other services when invited.
- Taking part in various ceremonies at the Cathedral, such as the Ordination of Priests and Consecration of Bishops.

Archbishop of Melbourne Philip Freier said in a statement that the Professional Standards Board had recommended he reprimand Dr Peter Hollingworth for his decision to retain in ministry two members of clergy in Queensland that Dr Hollingworth knew to be offenders, and for his "harsh and insensitive" communications with and about the victims of those abusers. Dr Freier said the board had also recommended that Dr Hollingworth be required to apologise to these complainants, as a condition of holding permission to officiate in Melbourne.

Dr Freier said he would give effect to the board's recommendations, and would publish a written statement in the coming days.

He said in addition to his obligations as a church authority under the diocese's legislation, he had obligations as Head of Entity under the Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005. He said he had written to the Commission for Children and Young People and would continue to work with them to ensure he fully discharged his obligations under that act.

Dr Hollingworth said in a statement that he accepted the Melbourne diocese's Professional Standards Board's recommendations, and looked forward to these matters finally being put to rest. He said all allegations presented to the Melbourne diocese Professional Standards Board had previously been considered by four separate inquiries, none of which recommended sanctions.

"I made mistakes and I cannot undo them. But I committed no crimes. There is no evidence that there was any abuse because of any decisions I made, or did not make," Dr Hollingworth said.

"Hardly a day has passed in the past 30 years when I have not reflected on these matters and my failings. I had devoted my life to social justice, pastoral care and healing but I had little experience in dealing with the child abuse issues. Like other church leaders, I was unduly influenced by the advice of lawyers and insurance companies."



The whole Liu family was baptised Sunday 26 March at St Andrew's Brighton.

Picture: supplied

Chinese family finds faith in new home

■ Maya Pilbrow

Six new believers have been baptised at St Andrew's Brighton after coming to faith through the church's Mandarin service.

Brighton and Vicky Liu were baptised alongside their children Alice, Nina, Betty and Jack.

St Andrew's curate the Reverend Xeverie Swee De-Leon said the family were new believers who had moved from Jiang Su province in China last year.

The Liu family began attending

St Andrew's several months ago.

Ms Swee De-Leon said the family was drawn to the welcoming environment of St Andrew's.

The parish holds bilingual services on Sunday mornings. Here, the gospel is read aloud in English and Mandarin, with Mandarin translations of English sermons available in the pew sheets. St Andrew's also offers a Thursday worship group for the Chinese members of the congregation featuring Chinese worship music.

Ms Swee De-Leon said the number of

Mandarin speakers attending St Andrew's was growing rapidly.

The Liu family attend Sunday and Thursday services, while Mr and Mrs Liu participate in an English communication group catered to helping new migrants improve their English.

"They've assimilated very quickly into our church culture," Ms Swee De-Leon said.

She said she was happy the family had chosen baptism.

"[Now] they'll be a part of our big Anglican family," she said.

Prayers for growth answered at Lancefield and Romsey

■ Kirralee Nicolle

A British-led church growth model has helped in the rejuvenation of a Macedon Ranges parish.

The Anglican Parish of Romsey and Lancefield in the Oodthenong Episcopate recently adopted the model of a Resource Church, where a smaller parish benefits from the resources of a larger parish to see mission and evangelism develop.

Parish of Romsey and Lancefield locum and St Mary's Sunbury assistant minister the Reverend Matthew Browne said when he began as locum two years ago, about 20

people attended on a Sunday, but this had increased to about 45.

He said in consultation with the episcopate and through his attendance of the Leading Your Church into Growth conference in the UK, the parish began running a community meal once a month. He said he had also increased the length of sermons and begun expository preaching, introduced updated worship music and implemented two Bible studies each week and a weekly prayer meeting.

He said a long-time attendee of the church had also recently approached him to tell him that they believed they had

finally understood what it meant to be a Christian.

"I've seen parishioners from long ago who had disconnected reconnecting," Mr Browne said.

"I've seen people hungry to get into Bible studies and growing immensely."

Mr Browne said the main things he had focused on were praying for growth and preaching the gospel.

"We're just pacing ourselves," he said.

"The people feel like they've gone from the trying to survive mentality to God might be doing something and wanting to get on board with it."

Aid for rough sleepers near Cockatoo

■ Jenan Taylor

People struggling in the Dandenong Ranges will be able to access shower facilities thanks to an Anglican church's food and social justice initiative.

The Food Store at St Luke's Cockatoo has made a bathroom available for anybody in need unable to access shower and toilet facilities.

Volunteer Karen Collins said the amenity which opened in February was previously an unused part of the building but had been overhauled through the support of community and local business donations.

Ms Collins said the Food Store often helped people who were experiencing homelessness or housing stress, and that volunteers wanted to be able to give those who wanted to shower and freshen, up the space to do so.

"It's amazing how many people are sleeping in their cars in the area, or even using

some campsites in the nearby national parks where they just don't have facilities," Ms Collins said.

Run by volunteers since 2019, the store provides free food and groceries to disadvantaged people.

Ms Collins said the initiative which operated throughout the pandemic had grown since it opened, and that between 50 and 60 customers a day sought food assistance.

The food store only opens on Mondays, but Ms Collins said she expected that the showers would also be available after Sunday services if needed, and possibly at other times.

Ms Collins who was also donating unused towels and other bathing items to the facility, said she and her husband helped out at the store whenever they could, and found it very worthwhile.

"We find that we build up good relationships with people from many walks of life," she said.



Volunteer Mark Graham shows off the new showers.

Picture: Janine Eastgate

Service of solidarity for trans community in wake of rallies

■ Maya Pilbrow

A Melbourne church has sent a message of acceptance to trans and gender diverse people, running a service commemorating the International Trans Day of Visibility.

It came in response to anti-trans rallies that took place across the country in March.

Service organiser the Reverend Canon Dr Garry Deverell said he wanted to show affirmation and acceptance to the trans community, as rally attendees questioned the right of trans people to exist.

Dr Deverell said it was important for churches to support vulnerable groups in their communities.

"[We should] accept people who say 'No, we're different to you,'" he said.

Dr Deverell said he had been alarmed by the presence of far-right elements at an anti-trans rally in front of Parliament House in Melbourne on 18 March.

According to a statement by Melbourne Activist Legal Support, the rally included 20 people known to be members of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Network who shouted slurs and performed Nazi hand gestures.

Vigil speaker the Reverend Dr Josephine Inkipin, one of only a few trans ordained Anglican ministers, said many in the trans community was left feeling traumatised by the events.

Dr Inkipin said the service at St Mark's was important for helping the trans community feel supported.

"It's really important that churches and Christians are able to come together in a prayerful manner that enables us to stand in solidarity," she said.

Transgender Victoria treasurer and advocacy subcommittee chairwoman Michelle McNamara said trans and gender diverse people faced much higher rates of suicidality, depression and anxiety than the general

population as a result of the discrimination they faced.

A 2021 report from national advocacy group LGBTIQ+ Health Australia states more than 48 per cent of trans and gender diverse youth had attempted suicide in their lifetime, 15 times the rate for the general population.

Ms McNamara, who uses she/they pronouns, said the distress felt by many trans people could be alleviated by supportive communities.

She said trans people of faith prospered when they received acceptance and affirmation from their faith communities.

Ms McNamara said visibility was important for trans and gender diverse people.

"Seeing transgender people just living their normal everyday lives and going about their business is wonderfully affirming for anybody who's sitting there, worried about being psychologically or even physically abused," they said.

How an anti-pokies push won traction

■ Jenan Taylor

Sydney organisation Wesley Mission had dealt with the damage caused by gambling for more than three decades, but its concerns gained little public traction.

But in 2021 NSW Crime Commission launched inquiry into the link between money laundering and gambling, galvanising Wesley Mission chief executive and superintendent the Reverend Stu Cameron to throw more at the issue.

It led to the formation of a coalition of bodies that helped raise critical public awareness of the need for gambling change in the lead up to the NSW election.

Research consistently shows that Australia ranks highest in the world for the most gambling losses.

In 2018-19 Australians lost \$25 billion on legal gambling products, according to Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimates.

Multiple studies also show that in NSW 900,000 to 1.7 million people are being hurt because of their own or another person's gambling, amounting to a public health crisis.

But Mr Cameron said a historical lack of interest in the social harms that gambling caused had helped entrench the problem.

"Since poker machines were introduced into NSW in 1956, the local industry has had the field to itself and there has been very little debate about it," he said. "That means the gambling industry dominated in pubs and clubs, and in many respects, bullied out of existence any meaningful opposition."

But Wesley's frontline work with people affected by gambling was a major motivator for the organisation's push for change.

Together with his frontline staff, Mr Cameron identified what Wesley's approach should be.

Elevating the testimonies of people with lived experience of gambling damage was one strategy.

Engaging broadly with civic and religious groups, as well as with politicians was another.

Being able to show how communities, particularly marginalised people, had been hurt by gambling won Wesley the support of those politicians.

At a Pokies reform launch at Parliament House in November 2022, NSW Greens MP Cate Faehrmann declared they had her back.

She said the Greens were prepared to do further leg work around the need for reforms



Picture: iStock

including letter-dropping to households.

"Voters care more about just tolls. They also care about what poker machines are doing to people's lives as well," Ms Faehrmann said.

Mr Cameron said the organisation used its strong connections with gambling researchers and academics to examine cashless gambling, and the facial recognition technologies that the betting industry clubs seemed intent on pushing.

"We offered the community strong, evidence-backed policies and analysis of gambling loss data that clearly showed the extent of the problem. I think clearly putting that information in front of the public gave them an appetite for reform," he said.

This included a harm prevention discussion paper that showed how a cashless gambling system could help the state manage the public health crisis and criminal activities.

With the help of Alliance for Gambling chief advocate the Reverend Tim Costello, Mr Cameron elicited support from faith bodies that were initially hesitant to join his push.

In the end, having a diverse collective of faith bodies that included the Arab Council and the NSW Council of Churches became the campaign's strength, Mr Cameron said.

Sydney Dean the Reverend Canon Sandy Grant said he had advocated for change for a while because of the enormous gambling damage he had seen in his pastoral care work.

He said although there had been some lag in a political call for change, largely because of the lobbying power of the NSW pubs and clubs, the Christian impulse was about loving your neighbour, and that meant that Christians had to intervene.

"That Jesus cares for the downtrodden doesn't automatically translate to specific policy programs, but in this case the burdens were terrible and the solutions obvious,"

Canon Grant said.

He said what had also been very encouraging for the push was the former NSW premier Dominic Perrotet's anti-gambling stance.

But Canon Grant said a defining moment in the reform movement was a decision by he and Mr Cameron to issue bipartisan call for reform.

"We weren't interested in politics, and it was not a matter of left or right. It was about saying, 'Join us on a unity ticket for a cashless card,'" he said.

Canon Grant said although there were sometimes differences within the Anglican Communion, he was buoyed that Anglicans from across NSW had appealed for action in their local areas.

That included clergy from the Armidale diocese, who had received local media attention.

Mr Cameron said a call for change from trade unions, as well as some clubs voicing their anti-gambling outlook, also heightened the public appetite for the debate.

Although the NSW election finished with a Labor government in place, the new Premier Chris Minns started his term proposing a 500-machine cashless card trial.

But the momentum for gambling reform has not abated, Mr Cameron said.

A survey commissioned by Wesley Mission found that 76 per cent of adults favoured practical action through the introduction of cashless gambling cards, rather than a trial.

It comes as new research from the Australian Institute of Family Studies showed that most Australians were concerned about the availability of gambling and its impacts on the community.

Mr Cameron believes this gives other jurisdictions reasons for optimism.

"If reform happens in NSW, the state where the problem is greatest, it will snowball to other states," he said.

Canon Grant said the biggest takeaway for faith bodies that wanted to elevate gambling reform in other jurisdictions, was that compassion, perseverance and having a good understanding of the politics of gambling industry was of utmost importance.

"Compassion is what has to drive it, and it's not just enough to pass a motion here or to make a one off lobby there. The cigarette industry reforms didn't happen overnight, so you've got to keep at it," he said.

For assistance with gambling harm please call Gambler's Help on 1800 858 858.



New lay ministers Elham Gharaee Shirazi and Paul Afshar with the Reverend Kaveh Hassanzadeh at Emmanuel Iranian Church.

Picture: Janine Eastgate

Members step up to serve as leaders

■ Maya Pilbrow

Melbourne's Iranian Anglican congregation has two new lay ministers, in what its pastor says is a big step for Iranian Christians in Australia.

The two newest lay ministers at Emmanuel Iranian Church in Dandenong are former refugees who fled Iran and converted to Christianity.

For Elham Gharaee Shirazi and Paul Afshar, the journey to lay ministry has been complicated.

Both were born in Iran and grew up outside the church.

Mrs Gharaee Shirazi fled the theocratic Islamic republic and came to Australia as a refugee in 2012.

A friend invited her to attend a service at Emmanuel Iranian a year after she arrived. She said she hadn't attended church before, but something about the music and the strong sense of community made her keep coming back to the parish.

"One of the worship songs touched my heart, and it began from there," she said.

Mrs Gharaee Shirazi said after a few months she got more involved in church life, helping with youth ministry.

She said she felt a calling to pursue

theological studies five years ago driven by a desire to better serve the people in her community.

Mr Afshar also fled Iran, where his Marxist political beliefs had made life difficult for him and his family.

He was an avid reader, but when a friend gave him a copy of the Bible, he only skimmed it. It wasn't until years later, having fled to Turkey after Iranian authorities threatened to jail his daughter in 2010, that his faith was shaped.

As a refugee in Turkey, Mr Afshar said he attended church services because he felt welcomed and encouraged by the pastors during a difficult time in his life. But he said his Marxist beliefs made him critical of many of the pastor's teachings.

This attitude created a turning point in his relationship with his faith.

Mr Afshar attended a Bible study group where he asked several questions and challenged the pastor who was leading the group.

He said the pastor recognised in him a talent for engaging with the content of the Bible and encouraged him to teach the gospel to others.

At first he refused, but when his pastor compared his situation to the prophet

Jeremiah, Mr Afshar said he felt as if God had strengthened his heart.

Mr Afshar had been a poet and song writer for many years. He said his work had always been secular, but after this he felt called to write songs for God.

Both Mrs Gharaee Shirazi and Mr Afshar received their licences last year.

Emmanuel pastor the Reverend Kaveh Hassanzadeh said he was excited for Mrs Gharaee Shirazi and Mr Afshar.

He said the church needed more leaders and it was important to invest in people by supporting them and training them.

Mr Hassanzadeh said the licensing of two new lay ministers was a big step for Emmanuel Iranian, but that he was hopeful this was just the beginning.

Mrs Gharaee Shirazi said becoming a lay minister meant she had new responsibilities to her community.

"My role at the church as a servant of God has become more official," she said.

Mr Afshar said receiving his licence felt like an affirmation of his faith.

"Getting this licence, it's like a sign that approves my calling to serve," he said.

*Interview translations performed by Kaveh Hassanzadeh.

Violence-prevention program grows

■ Jenan Taylor

Culturally diverse congregations are among 10 new churches that have been invited to participate as the Melbourne diocese gets set to ramp up its anti-violence project.

Prevention of Violence Against Women program manager Kerryn Lewis said the second phase of the project would build on the lessons of the 18-month pilot program and planned to take a deeper dive into addressing the problem.

Ms Lewis said practice communities for culturally and linguistically diverse congregations, and for the whole-of-church approach would form a large part of phase two.

The program has hired a culturally and linguistically diverse project officer to help the program address the needs of associated groups in a culturally respectful manner.

Ms Lewis said the officer was working with Chinese congregations and other diverse parishes and would be bringing leaders of those communities together for regular meetings about the project.

The whole-of-parish approach would

be multi-faceted in order to execute the program at the parish level, she said.

"It's not about a one-off sermon or attending one-off training, it's looking at what the children and youth are being taught, looking at Bible study groups, the money roster, the images around the building, looking at all the areas of the church that can play a role in the prevention of violence," Ms Lewis said.

St Margaret's Eltham is among the churches that have signed up for phase two.

Training organiser Mandy Stevens said St Margaret's had always had a strong women and children's focus but wanted to increase parishioners' knowledge about responding to family violence disclosures, and to grow the base of people who understood the issues. She said the church hoped to upskill parishioners, put in place a family safety champion, and to borrow some of the simple actions taken by pilot project churches.

"We'd heard about a member of the public who was facing family violence and who'd noticed the anti-violence posters in the hall of one of those participating churches when she was there for a social function. That signalled to her that that

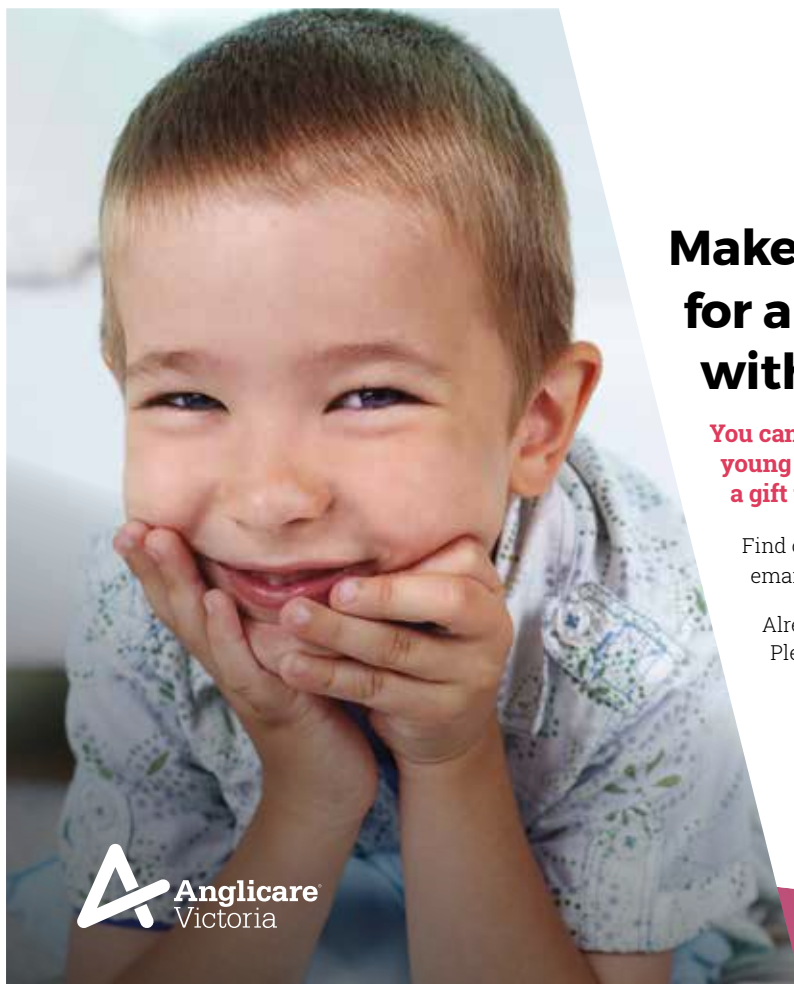
church was a safe place to be and turned to it for help," Ms Stevens said. "So that is one action we will do because we feel our halls are used a lot by the community."

One of the pilot project churches, St Mark's Forest Hill said it planned to embed its awareness and bystander training more into its congregation. Program organiser Frances Pratt said the parish had gained understanding about how to go about addressing violence against women since participating.

Ms Pratt said knowing the congregation, listening to members, then working out the small actions that could be taken to improve the larger situation, had made changed the church's culture. She said one of small but significant change St Mark's was to alter the morning tea roster, after a six-year-old boy assumed that because he only ever saw women in the church kitchen, it was a space where he didn't belong.

Ms Lewis said there was still scope for churches who wanted to do deeper work around anti-violence to get involved.

To find out more contact Kerryn Lewis at klewis@melbourneanglican.org.au.



Make tomorrow better for a vulnerable child with a gift in your Will

You can secure better tomorrows for vulnerable children, young people and families across Victoria by including a gift to Anglicare Victoria in your Will.

Find out more at www.anglicarevic.org.au, email giftsinwills@anglicarevic.org.au or phone (03) 9412 6006.

Already included Anglicare Victoria in your Will? Please let us know – **we'd love to thank you!**

Call for longer terms for young representatives



Anglican Consultative Council youth delegate
Heidin Kunoo. Picture: Janine Eastgate

■ Maya Pilbrow

Term limits for youth delegates to the peak global Anglican representative body need to be revised, a representative at the recent meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council has said.

Oceania youth delegate and St Paul's East Kew assistant priest the Reverend Heidin Kunoo said allowing younger attendees to serve longer terms would help create continuity within the council.

At each plenary session, ACC members put forth resolutions to be voted on and developed into common policy across the global Anglican community.

Ms Kunoo said attending the past two

sessions had helped her gain a mature understanding of the diversity of ways the Anglican communion served God. This year marked the end of Ms Kunoo's term as delegate.

At this year's session in Accra, Ghana, several resolutions relating to youth in the church community were proposed. These included resolutions aimed at safeguarding youth livelihoods and increasing young people's engagement in peace building and involvement in the life of the church.

Ms Kunoo said she felt empowered to share her perspective as a youth delegate, but she wished she could attend future sessions. She said the previous session had been her first time, so she didn't know what

she was doing, but this year she had been more confident sharing ideas.

One of the resolutions at this year's council session requested changes to the delegate appointment system that would allow youth delegates to serve extra terms.

Ms Kunoo said she and her cohort were all appointed at the same time with no opportunity to provide guidance to the incoming crop of youth delegates.

Ms Kunoo said the ACC provided a powerful opportunity to be exposed to other perspectives from the global Anglican community.

"It's been amazing and eye-opening to be able to listen, to understand and respect the priorities of others," she said.

New priest exposed to the root system of Communion

The Reverend Xeverie Swee De-Leon is curate at St Andrew's Brighton. She attended the Canterbury Cathedral New Clergy Seminar in February. Here, Ms Swee De-Leon describes her experience.

It has been a great blessing to attend the Canterbury Cathedral New Clergy Seminar. I went hopeful, but with no expectations, to learn about the Anglican Communion, the instruments of the Communion and how Australia fits into its worldwide tapestry.

What I gained from this seminar was more than I could ever have prayed for. I learnt from – and formed close relationships with – people from 17 nations, as well as engaging in the cathedral's unique worship and in theological exploration.

The seminar exposed a new priest like me to the greater Anglican Communion.

I learned that the communion is like a root system under a tree. These roots not only tap into the waterbed, but are also linked to each other and tapped on each other's roots for nutrients and minerals.

We Anglicans do not have a pope, we are not a global corporation governed by a head office. Instead we are a communion of autonomous and interdependent churches that through prayers, fellowship and mission actively share our Anglican faith and mission. This implies that we do not exist in a fixed state with each other but rather need continually to re-establish what we hold in common out of the differences and diversity that we embody. To be a "communion" implies an ongoing process of finding what is held in common from within our diversity. Human interaction is at the heart of what it means

to belong to the Communion, against the tapestry of difference and diversity.

Being exposed to 17 nations, I learned that the needs of each are different. How we minister is shaped by our context. For example, I realised how much I did not know about other nations. In some countries basic needs are constant struggles. It made me feel that we could do more for other nations who are in dire need of precious resources we in a developed country could provide.

This seminar broadened my horizon. Living in communion with ministers from a diversity of cultures, has stretched out my "Anglican tent pegs" to include churches of different nations. I now understand better, with heart and mind, the nature of the Anglican Church worldwide and as a new priest, how I fit into this tapestry.

Acceptance vital for mental health

■ Kirralee Nicolle

High-impact mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar affective disorder still carry a lot of stigma within the church due to biases or a fear of spiritual forces, a Christian mental illness researcher has warned.

Centre for Theology and Psychology associate director and former deputy chief psychiatrist for the state of Victoria Professor Kuruvilla George said severe mental illnesses including bipolar affective disorder and schizophrenia were caused by a range of genetic, biological, psychosocial and spiritual factors. He said in some church environments, those suffering from these conditions were treated as if they were lacking faith or perhaps even possessed by demons.

"These kinds of wrong teaching that have pervaded the church over the years need to be broken down," Professor George said. While he said prayer and spiritual input were helpful in part, they needed to be paired with psychiatric treatment.

"They need professional help, they need medication, they need psychotherapy," he said.

Professor George said while hearing the



Picture: iStock

voice of God may be a common experience in some church settings, there were key differences between those experiencing a psychotic episode and those having a spiritual experience.

"It will show in their life that [the experience] probably has done things for their life, has improved their life," he said. "Whereas [for] a person with schizophrenia, you'll see that schizophrenia has impacted them to the point where socially, they will be going down the social ladder. [They will be] unable to cope with the normal things in life, unable to cope with their work and education because of what's going on in their mind."

Professor George said if someone was concerned that someone in their church may be a harm to themselves or others, the

first step was to call on professional help. He said the kind of training the Centre for Theology and Psychology sought to offer churches was important for helping to triage a mental health concern. He said by showing acceptance for the person, trust could be built and an offer could then be made to accompany them to an appointment with a specialist.

"There's very little that the public can do [in these instances]," he said. "The thing is to get the confidence of that person and be able to then refer that person on for an assessment."

Professor George said when parishioners were going through a difficult time, rather than offers of a solution, they needed someone who would travel alongside them.

"Unfortunately, many of us want to be the solution providers when somebody comes with a problem," he said. "But we are not solution providers. What we need more in the church is fellow travellers."

If you or anyone you know is needing support, you can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636. If someone's life is in danger, phone Triple Zero (000).

Faith and Justice in a Secular Age

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL), together with Christ Church South Yarra, warmly invite you to join us for the 2023 Tucker Oration, as we celebrate BSL and the legacy of our founder, Father Gerard Tucker, born in the Christ Church vicarage in 1885.

2023 Tucker Oration

**Delivered by
Rev'd Dr. Michelle Trebilcock**



Rev'd Dr. Michelle Trebilcock, is an Anglican Priest and Chaplain at the Brotherhood of St. Laurence. Michelle has over thirty years' experience in facilitating transformation, learning and growth in the context of religious and spiritual care.

Please join us as we examine our commitment to social justice.

**Wednesday 24 May, Christ Church South Yarra
677 Punt Rd, South Yarra**

6.30pm - 7.30pm (Prayers and Oration) 7.30pm - 8.30pm (Supper)

Register by 15 May 2023. Call 9483 1321 or email events@bsl.org.au



Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty



CHRIST CHURCH SOUTH YARRA

Shelter seeks help to aid homeless



Picture: iStock

■ **Maya Pilbrow**

A Melbourne charity is asking local churches to help with its annual winter homeless shelter program.

Stable One provides homelessness services across the Yarra Valley. The organisation coordinates overnight accommodation for people experiencing homelessness for 13 weeks every winter.

Founder and managing director Jenny Willetts said the Winter Shelter program relied on seven churches each taking responsibility for providing accommodation for one night of the week. At the time of writing, it still needed Tuesday nights filled.

Mrs Willetts said the program was at

its most successful when people had a chance to develop a sense of community.

"The Church has more to offer than just putting a roof over people's heads," she said. "It's about sitting down together for a meal, about connecting with people who show up."

St John's Lilydale parish priest the Reverend Matthew Connolly said the pandemic had affected how the program was run.

"The winter night shelter hasn't been happening in the same way, in different churches, for the last three years," he said.

Mr Connolly said St John's was not one of the seven venue churches that would host guests this year, but that the parish had contributed in other ways.

"We've had fundraisers, we're asking for volunteers," he said.

In 2019 the shelter program cost more than \$50,000 to run. According to a project summary Stable One received an estimated \$196,000 worth of volunteer hours, donated food and utilities.

Volunteers and donations for this year were still needed, Mrs Willetts said.

"I'm not panicking yet! We've got individuals fundraising and donating, churches donating," she said. "Money comes from all over the place, which is great."

Stable One's Yarra Valley Winter Shelter runs from 1 June to 31 August. See stableone.org/volunteer/ for more information.

'A whole different set of circumstances': Teens and faith

■ **Maya Pilbrow**

Christian teens in Australia are open-minded, inquisitive and care about injustice according to recently released data from Christian polling firm Barna Group.

Barna Group, partnered with World Vision Australia, asked 1000 Australian teens how they felt about Jesus, the Bible and making an impact.

Head of Community, Faith and Partnerships for World Vision Australia the Reverend Noddy Sharma said Christian leaders looking to engage with young people needed to understand what kids cared about.

Mr Sharma said it was important to be aware of generational differences.

"There's a whole different set of circumstances for this younger generation," he said.

The Barna Group study revealed Australian teens cited mental health, climate change and unemployment as their greatest concerns.

"Climate change is so close to their heart, you go back two or three generations and climate change is not even on the agenda," Mr Sharma said.

Teenager Eden Saunders said he cared deeply about many social issues. He said his faith influenced his worldview.

"There are a lot of social issues I view through the lens of Christianity," he said. "Climate change, gender equality, racism."

Mr Saunders said he valued being part of a youth group.

"It's good to be around people my age who care about the same stuff I do," he said.

Inner North Youth Group leader Tom

French said he had seen a decline in Bible literacy among youth but that teens were curious to learn more.

"In the early 2000s, there were a lot more kids who knew more about the Bible, but there also more who were aggressively anti-Bible," he said. "These days, kids seem to be a bit more curious about it."

Mr French said conversations within the youth group covered a wide variety of topics.

"The Bible speaks to the issues that we're all facing. And kids engage with that," he said.

Mr French said while climate change, sex and gender, and global politics were all regular topics of conversation, the teens also had other interests.

"We get a lot of discussion about Minecraft as well," he said.

Long-term volunteers power success

■ Jenan Taylor

Long term volunteers at a Dandenong Ranges church after-school program are helping make a difference to the lives of the students, its coordinator says.

St Mark's Emerald Powerhouse Kid's program coordinator Anne Benc said volunteers have built solid connections with many students and played positive roles in their lives, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ms Benc said the weekly after-school program for children from prep to grade four had been running since 2015, and during COVID had been conducted online.

She said that most of the helpers were older women who had remained committed to the program, which had contributed to a comfortable, more secure atmosphere.

Ms Benc believed that because the 20 to 25 children who participated saw the same volunteers throughout that time, some had come to view them as surrogate grandparents.

She said particularly for those doing it very hard, it helped build considerable trust.

Ms Benc said one of the successes of the program included a student who had been experiencing difficulties and hadn't been to school since the COVID restrictions were lifted, but who had started going to Powerhouse Kids.

"For the family to see him want to leave the house and participate in the program and engage with others, it's been a blessing," she said.

Ms Benc said she tried to make the volunteers feel valued.

"It's hard to get people, especially men, who are dedicated to helping so I do try to care for them. I always write them a thank you at the end of each term and encourage them on their journey, as well."



Picture: iStock



Jan Dayton (centre) and volunteers from St Andrew's Somerville with the Wheelchairs for Kids award recognising their fundraising efforts. Picture: supplied

Children gain wheelchairs through Somerville fundraising efforts

■ Kirralee Nicolle

Members of a Mornington Peninsula parish have raised enough money to provide seven wheelchairs to children with disabilities across the world.

St Andrew's Somerville recently partnered with Rotary and Wheelchairs for Kids, a not-for-profit organisation which provides the gift of mobility to children in impoverished or underprivileged parts of the world. Church members regularly donate to charitable causes with proceeds from their op shop, with The Fred Hollows Foundation, assistance dog training and veteran needs all having recently received donations from the church.

Church member Jan Dayton said the strategy was to ask op shop customers to donate and the church would match their donations. Between these funds and the

proceeds from a raffle, they managed to raise \$1750.

"Everybody was delighted with that response as you could imagine, but it's really thanks to the community for backing us with this and also having the money from proceeds we were able to match dollar for dollar," Ms Dayton said.

Ms Dayton said the congregation prioritised charitable causes because of their team atmosphere, community focus and emphasis on prayer.

"It's a very unusual church community I feel because you walk in and you're made to feel very welcome," she said. "We have people come in [to the op shop] and chat and sometimes we'll just sit down and have a talk to people who need companionship."

You can find out more about Wheelchairs for Kids by visiting wheelchairsforkids.org.

Food fosters community connections in

■ Maya Pilbrow

Food is key to reaching its community, a former Anglican parish in Bendigo has found.

St Matthew's Church in Long Gully offers frequent social and community events based around growing, eating and sharing food.

Parishioner Anthea Taylor said St Matthew's offered worship and meals, community pizza nights, cooking classes and a community garden. The church also partners with other community groups for events.

Mrs Taylor said the parish's focus on food was due partly to the church's location in a disadvantaged area.

The median weekly income in Long Gully is just 56 per cent of the state median according to 2021 census data.

Mrs Taylor said food insecurity among the community had been a concern for the church, so it began a food bank programme in 2017.

The People's Pantry differs from more traditional food donation programmes. Members sign up, pay \$10 per term and volunteer for a few hours each month.

Mrs Taylor, who coordinates the People's Pantry, said the social interaction was key.

"People come in, have a cuppa and a bikkie and then go through to get food," she said.

"It's very much a social circle thing."



Prison Fellowship Victoria's Easter Biscuit Bake relies on volunteers to bake, package and deliver biscuits to inmates.

Picture: Laura Collins

Tasty Easter treats a gesture of care for those in prison

■ Maya Pilbrow

Prisoners across Victoria received homemade biscuits this Easter thanks to volunteers in schools and churches.

The Victorian Easter Biscuit Bake is a program run by Prison Fellowship Victoria that sends biscuits to incarcerated people.

St John's Diamond Creek contributed more than 1000 biscuits this year.

Parish priest the Venerable Dr Tim Johnson said the program was a practical way of showing love to prisoners.

"Our Christian faith calls us to love all people, particularly those who are marginalised," he said.

Prison Fellowship Victoria state manager Richard Boonstra said 79,000 biscuits were needed for this year's bake.

Mr Boonstra said the number of biscuits was tied to the prison population, as each

prisoner received 10 biscuits. He said extras were collected to avoid shortages.

Mr Boonstra said the program had been running for more than 30 years and had originally begun as a Christmastime event.

He said the response from inmates had been positive, and that the program relied on efforts from volunteers across all denominations.

Mitchell Baptist Church parishioner Cathy Stewart said she had been volunteering for the biscuit bake since 2013.

Mrs Stewart said she coordinated collection of biscuits across the Mitcham area, with people driving to the church office and dropping off their baked goods. She said it was a wonderful way to provide ministry to those in prison.

"I enjoy doing it because I'm celiac, anyway. [The biscuits] are quite safe here with me. I can't eat them anyway," she said.

Partnership brings young people into community

■ Maya Pilbrow

A church in Glenroy has found a new way to reinvigorate its ministry while helping serve the community.

The Anglican Parish of St Matthew's Glenroy with St Linus' Merlynston has had an ongoing relationship with disability support service Onemda for over two years.

Onemda rents space from the parish. As part of the therapeutic and educational programmes they provide to people with disability, the organisation offers participants the chance to work in the St Matthew's and St Linus' foodbank.

Parish priest Reverend Robert Koren said Onemda participants helped in a variety of ways, including packing and distribution of food bank items as well as cutting grass and tidying the church area. Mr Koren said the Onemda partnership brought a younger generation into the parish community.

"We're an ageing parish," Mr Koren said. "[Onemda] gives me another group to work with."

Onemda lead campus coordinator Indy Singh said being able to take part in various programmes within the community was important for those with disability.

"There's still a stigma that people with disability are separated for some reason, not considered as part of the community," he said.

Mr Koren said the church had an obligation to provide opportunities to those in the community.

"As a church, part of our mission is we help those others might reject," he said.



Picture: iStock

Long Gully

Fellow parishioner and St Matthew's community worker Dave Fagg said the parish was initially reluctant to organise a food bank, as there was concern about the relationship between donors and receivers at foodbanks.

"When you're the giver of food, and they need to justify that they need it, that relationship can become quite transactional," he said.

But Mr Fagg said the church approached the programme as a community development project.

Mrs Taylor said the church's outreach had been very successful.

"We've made really good connections with local people," she said.

From the editor



Six new believers baptised! A congregation that has doubled in size! A micro model of church reaching communities in Melbourne that might not otherwise hear the gospel!

It's so exciting to hear these stories about God's kingdom growing in our region. (You can read them on pages 5 and 22).

This edition does reflect plenty of the pain of the world. We hear about homelessness, war, the legacy of trauma, death. But God is clearly at work – bringing people to know him, and in our churches' care for those struggling.

We love sharing stories of God at work in our community. If your church has a story to share, please let us know at tma@melbourneanglican.org.au.

Elspeth Kernebone

'Justice' should be open to everyone

The Reverend Canon Loughrey argues that Australia must respect First Peoples by letting them speak, that they are currently unable to speak on matters which matter to them, and that the Voice to Parliament would remedy this.

All Australians currently have their voices heard equally. Contrary to Canon Loughrey's belief, white Australia is not silencing Aboriginal Australians when there is a record number in the very Parliament such a Voice would advise!

Canon Loughrey further makes a tenuous connection between the Voice and faith. He seems to suggest that it is un-Christian to "resist supporting the simple request for recognition in the constitution, the birth certificate of our nation, and a Voice to Parliament on matters that affect [Aboriginal people]".

God's exaltation of the humble and meek is unlikely to come in the form of recognition in a national birth certificate. Neither do I see it as an "absurdly generous offer" to propose a Voice for Aboriginal

Australians but not for anyone else. Why should our Constitution distinguish between Aboriginal or not, or indeed between Jew or Greek, or Eastern or Western?

If the Voice is intended to be "justice" then it should be open to all. We should all vote for representatives to the Voice, who can then debate matters which matter to us all, and advise the Crown thus. Perhaps we could even call it the Parliament?

Jeffrey Fong
Beaumaris

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Raising up the next generation

I believe there may be at least one elephant in this particular room: the church's reputation as an abuser. This likely prevents many people from seeking Christ within our church. The flow-on effect is that it becomes quite difficult to discern a vocation within our church.

Garry Deverell

Not sure that abuse in the church is as much a blocker in my circles. There are so many young adults who attend church each week, and this isn't the reason they give for hesitation concerning ordination. It is things like they have a mortgage and can't afford college, they lack confidence in their skills, they have never belonged to one denomination and lack institutional allegiance, they have never been mentored into ministry, their parents think it is a bad idea, there is little inspiring senior leadership to harness their aspirations.

Rhys Bezzant

THE Melbourne Anglican

Your say is a forum for respectful dialogue about material published in *The Melbourne Anglican*, or issues affecting the church or society more broadly. Please email letters to editor@melbourneanglican.org.au. They must be less than 250 words, and include your full name, address and phone number for identity verification. Letters may be edited for clarity, length and grammar.

JOIN OUR TEAM
Greensborough

all saints Apply here
www.asgb.org.au/news

**WE ARE
HIRING
OFFICE
ASSISTANT**

**Calling all past clergy,
locums, parishoners and
regular holiday makers**



**50th Anniversary, St Peter's Mallacoota
7-8 October 2023**
To register email: revjudebenton@outlook.com

**Looking for the
prayer diary?**



Use the QR code or find it online
at bit.ly/ADOMprayerdiary.



**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**

**KOYOORA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
1800 135 246**

Respect First Peoples, let us speak out

■ Glenn Loughrey

What is the Voice to Parliament and Recognition about?

Is it about politics? No. Is it about giving one group of people special privileges others do not have? No. Is it about fixing the past? No. Is it about First People issues and problems? No.

The referendum on Recognition and Voice to Parliament is about people and the trauma of voiceless dispossession.

The elements of the Statement from the Heart make a circle. Circles in our tradition are about healing and wholeness. They hold the medicine that heals – respect for self, each other, country and all that live on it. *Yindyamarra* is a Wiradjurri word that means respect, be gentle, polite, honour, do slowly. *Yindyamarra winhanganha* means the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in.

Each element in the Statement is itself a circle. We begin to heal a little more each time we engage in each stage – Voice, Treaty, Truth, and *Makarrata* (coming together after a dispute) before we arrive at the centre, which is ongoing healing and wholeness – justice. None of this happens quickly or immediately. It is a process, and it takes the time it takes to move around the circle and back again.

In terms of the Voice, we are asked to recognise that there are others in this country, the First People, who should be allowed to speak in their own voice on matters affecting them and this country. This is about respect. White Australia allows us to speak when it needs our knowledge and wisdom or voice in song, art and how to deal with fires etcetera, things which affect or are enjoyed by white people. We are not allowed to speak on matters that matter to us – our dispossession and its traumatic impacts of destitution and powerlessness.

This is what the Voice and recognition is about. De-linking from the power of coloniality and re-existing what was here before – autonomy and self-determination – for the people who remain sovereign in this our land.

This is not political or revolutionary. It is justice as demonstrated over and over in the pronouncements of Jesus and the various New and Old Testament writers we read, in the hymns we sing and the prayers for peace, the poor and the homeless we make in our regular worship services. Yet many of the same people who participate in these acts of Christian worship resist supporting



Picture: iStock

“A close reading of the Statement itself will reveal no angry words, no threats of violence and no condemnation, just an invitation to walk together into a better future.”

Glenn Loughrey

the simple request for recognition in the constitution, the birth certificate of our nation, and a Voice to Parliament on matters that affect us.

Many First People cultures speak of seven generational change – it takes seven generations to change what needs to be changed. This recent move for recognition and Voice began in the 1990s so we are almost three generations down this path. Let's not stymie the progress made and together look forward to a new Australia sometime in the next four generations by supporting the hopes and aspirations of the First People of this country in the upcoming referendum.

We First Nations people are not issues. We are people whose lives have been, and continue to be decimated by ongoing racism

in this country. As the late Aunty Rosalie Kunoth-Monks said, “I am, we are not the problem.” Our situation comes because of the invasion of our countries by people who, when they were unable to exterminate us, made our voice obsolete, language, law and spirituality. By designating us *persona nullius* (non-people) they possessed us and our country.

White Australia continues to decide who can speak and what they can speak about, what is right for us and what is not, what we can or can't do, even in the case of the Statement from the Heart and the absurdly generous offer to walk with those who caused and continue to cause our trauma. White Australia has turned this act of transformational forgiveness into a political and ideological football, hoping that it fails.

The Statement From the Heart, from which the elements of Recognition and Voice, Treaty, Truth, and *Makarrata* emanate is about people and trauma. It is about an absurd compassion that does not condemn or threaten but reaches out our hand for you to take and walk with us into healing.

A close reading of the Statement itself will reveal no angry words, no threats of violence and no condemnation, just an invitation to walk together into a better future.

A 'Yes' to the Indigenous Voice, is a 'Yes'

■ Mark R Lindsay

If all politics is local, then all theology is political. By this, I do not mean – as some do – that the gospel is simply social justice dressed up in religious garb. No, what I mean is what I think the Brazilian liberation theologian, Leonardo Boff, meant when he wrote, 45 years ago, that: “theology is *ante et retro oculata*; it has two eyes. One looks back towards the past, where salvation broke in; the other looks towards the present, where salvation becomes reality here and now.”

What Boff was getting at is that the salvation wrought for us by Jesus on the cross, and which we have so recently celebrated through Eastertide, is neither simply a personal redemption from sin and judgment, nor a wholly eschatological event, for which we continue to wait in anticipation. Of course, salvation is personal, redemptive, and eschatological – but it is also much more than this. It is here and now enacted, as we Christians take up – as Jesus did before us – the way of justice. Or again, as Boff rather provocatively puts it, if our Christian faith is not translated “into meditation, prayer, conversion, the following of Christ, and commitment to our fellow human beings,” then it is a faith built on sand, and has become a religion of “the gods of this world.”

So yes, theology – and discipleship – are political. In the words of the British Anglican ethicist Oliver O'Donovan, “Theology must be political if it is to be evangelical. Rule out the political questions and you cut short the proclamation of God's saving power.” Grounded in the saving death and resurrection of Jesus, our faith – and our way of thinking through our faith – should be engaged not just in the transcendent meditation and worship of the God who has saved us, but in the enactment of a justice that transforms our present in the direction of that God's *shalom*. Indeed, as the Blessed Mary sings in her great hymn of praise, worship and justice go hand-in-hand. “My soul magnifies the Lord,” she declares; her spirit, she continues, rejoices in her God, precisely because he has lifted up the lowly, filled the hungry, and overturned the arrogant haughtiness of the powerful elite (Luke 1: 47-55).

So again, yes – while the gospel is much more than social justice, it cannot exclude the seeking of justice within our society. And thus, theology and discipleship are ren-



The Reverend Professor Mark R Lindsay.

“The Scriptures tell us repeatedly that God hears the voices of the marginalised, the oppressed, and the forgotten.”

dered inherently political. Which begs the question: what causes do we, as Christians, champion? With what pleas for rights and freedoms do we, as Christians, stand in solidarity? With what calls for justice do we, *precisely because we are Christians*, lend our voices? As Anglicans we are, of course, used to navigating differences of opinion and practice. Since Thomas Cranmer danced his nifty two-step between a *Book of Common Prayer* in 1549 that retained much Catholic sensibility, and his revised BCP of 1552 that was more stridently Protestant, Anglicanism has always existed within the tensions of a broad and varied tradition. And so it is with our differing political commitments, and our various ways of theologically justifying them. While I have my own scripturally and theologically informed views on a whole range of current socio-political issues, I do not necessarily think that you need to share them.

But – and forgive me if here I become much more sharply partisan than I would normally wish to be – there is, it seems to me, one pressing social concern to which I think there can and ought to be a single Australian Christian response: the proposed Voice to Parliament. And that response,



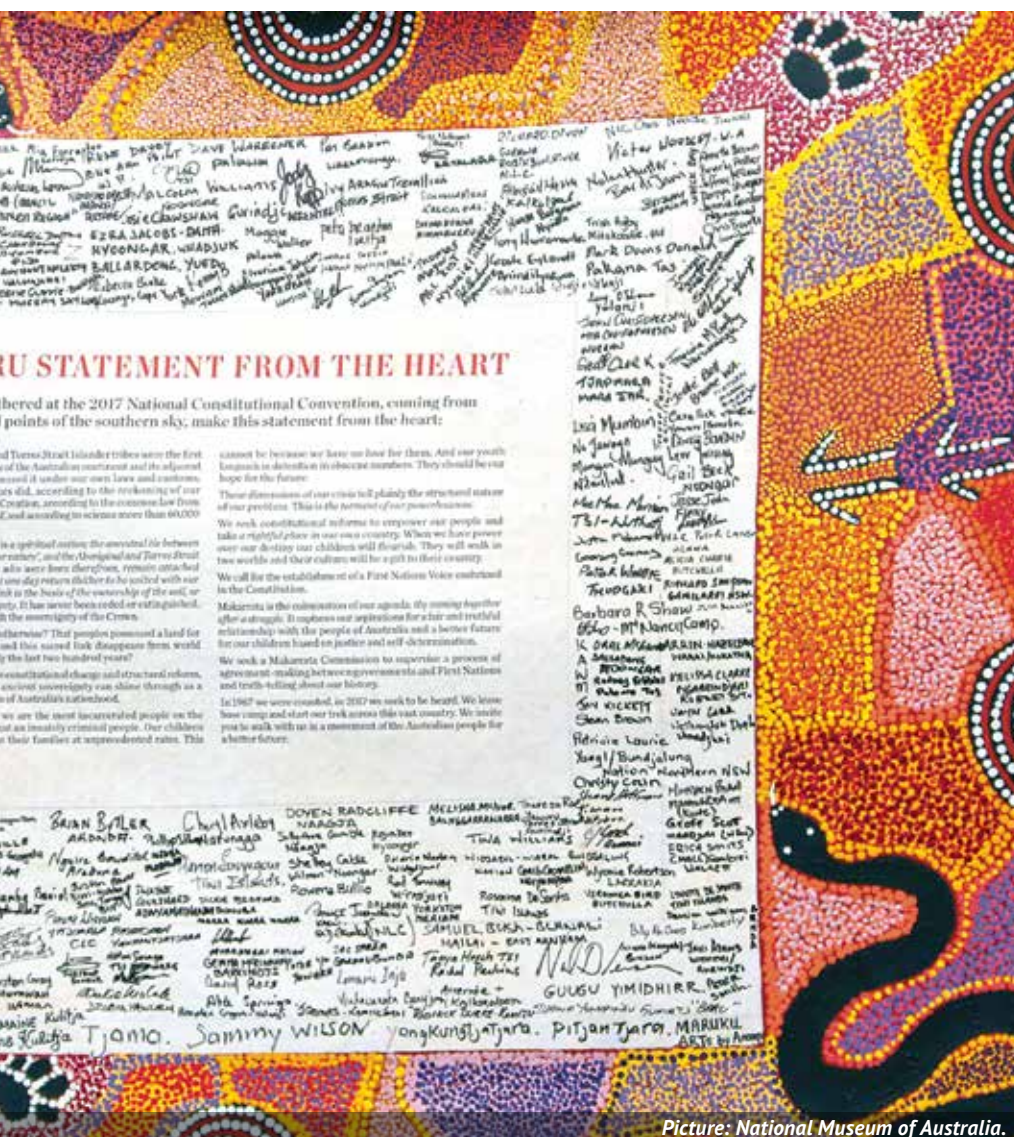
The Uluru Statement from the Heart.

I believe with all my heart, should be a resounding “Yes”.

I will leave it to legal and constitutional experts to show why there are no grounds for fear of what the Voice might lead to, once established. Others far better versed in law than I have already demonstrated that such fears, however sincerely held, are misplaced – I note in particular Katie O'Bryan and Paula Gerber, from Monash University's Faculty of Law. My concern here is to urge readers to believe that voting “Yes” to the Voice in the forthcoming referendum will not only be a theologically responsible action, but even more so will be – of the two courses open to us at the ballot box – the one best aligned with “the enactment of a justice that transforms our present in the direction of God's *shalom*.” There is one overriding theological reason to which I wish to point, that suggests why this is the case.

We are very comfortable with the notion

God's divine act of listening



Picture: National Museum of Australia.

that God is a speaking God. “And God said, ‘Let there be...’” (Genesis 1:3); “The voice of the Lord is powerful [and] majestic, breaking the cedars of Lebanon” (Psalm 29:4-5); “In the beginning was the Word...” (John 1:1). The Son of God, who is the exact likeness of the Father’s being “sustains all things by his powerful word” (Hebrews 1:4). And how, asks St Paul rhetorically in Romans 10:14, can anyone believe the gospel if no one first *speaks* it to them? So centrally important is God’s Word to us that, in some of our worshipping traditions, we have filled every moment with speech – speech to and about God, in the form of lessons, sermons, and prayers. We have become fearful, perhaps, of what might happen if we sit in the silence, simply to ... listen.

But God is not so fearful. For God himself is not only a speaking God – he is also a *listening* God. He is a God who hears. The Scriptures tell us repeatedly that God hears the voices of the marginalised, the

oppressed, and the forgotten – from Hagar’s son (Genesis 21), to the Hebrew peoples in Egypt (Exodus 3), to Abraham’s cry for the righteous of Sodom (Genesis 18), to the cry of the poor and needy (Job 34). And Jesus, in this as in all things, does also what his Father does – for he, too, listens and hears. He hears the reports of the death of Jairus’s daughter (Luke 8:50); he hears of Lazarus’s death (John 11); and he hears of John the Baptist’s execution (Matthew 14:13). In each case, on hearing, Jesus responds with compassion and love. If we believe ourselves to be his disciples, are we not called to do the same? And if we surely are, what might that look like?

In 2017, at the First Nations National Constitutional Convention, from which the Uluru Statement from the Heart emerged, the authors of that text noted that “In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard.” The word of those Indigenous leaders, who came “from all points of the

southern sky”, was that – despite what they described as the “torment of [their] powerlessness” – they had never really been listened to. “We seek,” they said, “to be heard.”

To listen to the cry of the powerless is to imitate the compassionate action of God. To listen – and only then to act. How can we, as Christians, withhold such listening from those among our communities who have been the ones most unheard?

The weight of constitutional legal opinion is that the Voice to Parliament will not lead to parliamentary or judicial chaos, will not enshrine “special rights” for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and will not privilege one group of Australians over any others. What it will do, positively, is facilitate a very proper hearing of those who have been for so long silenced. And insofar as our unlistened-to Indigenous sisters and brothers are also the most marginalised, impoverished and forgotten peoples of this nation, we can be sure that their cries are heard by God. So why would we not also want to listen, and say yes to their voices being heard?

“How can we, as Christians, withhold such listening from those among our communities who have been the ones most unheard?”

Theology and discipleship are political. They call forth from us a response that, to paraphrase Martin Luther King Jr, ‘bends towards justice.’ We have before us this year a momentous political decision, that is also a theological decision. Will we, as God does, listen to, give voice to, those amongst us who have been for so long unheard, for so long silenced? Or will we continue to close our ears?

At this time, in this place, theological existence means – I believe with all my heart – the saying “Yes” to the Voice, because it means saying “Yes” to that act of divine listening.

The Reverend Professor Mark R Lindsay is deputy dean and academic dean at Trinity College Theological School, Parkville.

A life spent improving our care for God's

This month we hear from ISCAST fellow Michael Clarke. Michael is Emeritus Professor of Zoology and was head of Life Sciences at La Trobe University; he's an expert on the effects of bushfire on fauna.

"Integrating science and faith in the workplace" was the theme of a panel discussion at a recent conference run by ISCAST—Christians in Science and Technology. A panel of established scientists, who are also practising Christians, shared their experience. ISCAST fellow Dr Ian Harper, dean of the Melbourne Business School, facilitated the panel and Q&A.

IAN: Michael, how do you, as a practising scientist, integrate your faith into your work?

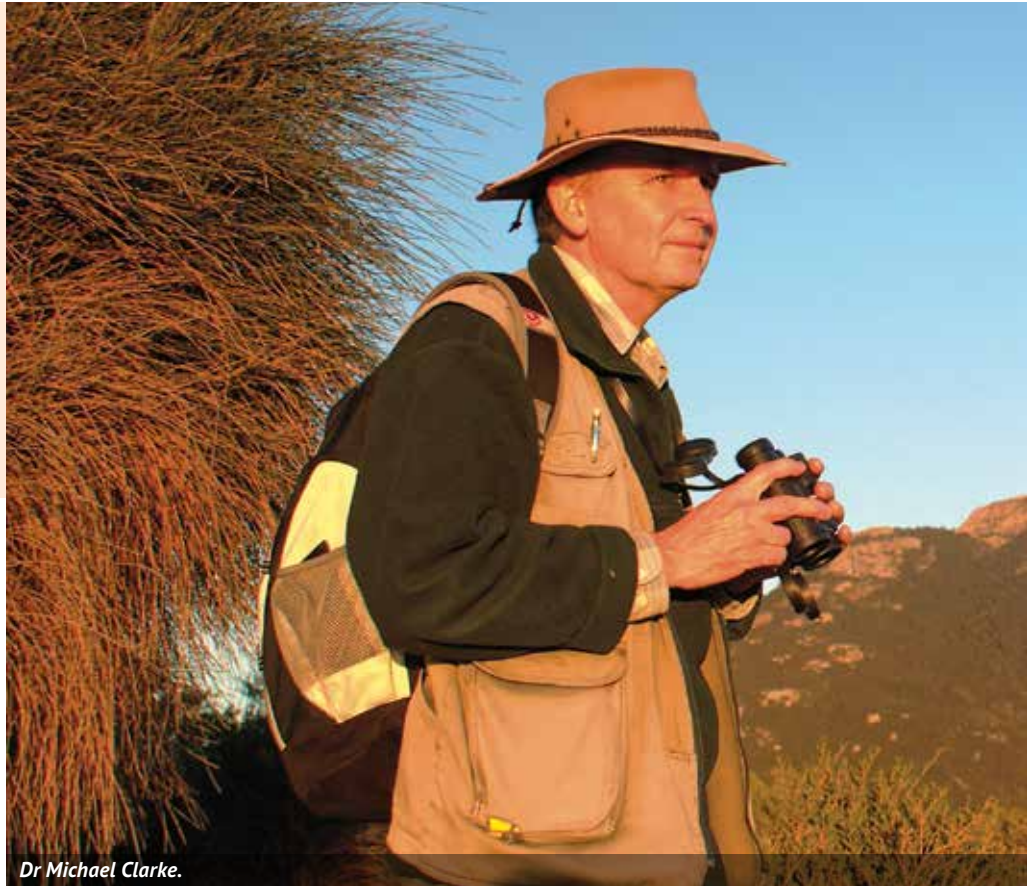
MICHAEL: I've had the privilege of being a scientist and academic for 40 years. In my wife's family, "useless academic" was a common phrase! I've tried to be useful in the last 40 years, and I think my father-in-law, were he still alive, would affirm that now.

To give some background, I'm a fire ecologist and I've studied animals and plants in the wild. My work's involved a lifetime of applying for money, publishing my research findings in international journals, and supervising lots of students.

I've been serving in leadership roles as head of Department in Zoology and then head of the School of Life Science. This means managing up to 200 people, very big budgets, and undergraduate courses. I've also had the privilege of being involved with government agencies on policy in conservation and being a witness in a Royal Commission. I'm currently supposedly retired, but I'm not very good at that! I'm a member of the Parks Victoria Board of Directors.

My faith has always been part of my ecological life, and that faith provides two big motivations for why I do what I do. The first one is I believe all Christians – whatever their role – have a responsibility to care for this incredible planet God's given to us, its landscapes, ecosystems, and wildlife. And so, my aim is to make my science improve how we care for the planet.

My second motivation is from a belief that I have a responsibility to use my God-given gifts. I happen to have inherited a very curious mind. Scientists are curious people; they want to find a truer understanding of how things work. My faith teaches me that God is a God of truth, and as Augustine said, "All truth is God's truth." So, I've never had any fear or apprehension that any discovery I make would



Dr Michael Clarke.

lead me away from God. In fact, if I believe in the God of truth, the closer I attempt to get to the truth, the less worried I should be.

So, I take great delight and pride in doing science. I reckon it's a ripper job to find out how the world works; my hope is that our insights will make us more faithful stewards.

The second side I'd like to talk about is how my faith has infused my professional life as an academic leader. It informs my morals and my values. I've always tried to lead with honesty, integrity, and humility. But I'm really conscious of how fallible and how "on show" I am. Though I try to show the fruits of the Spirit, I don't always show them. None of the biggest challenges I've faced professionally have had anything to do with my science. All of my biggest challenges professionally have been to do with human interactions: conflicts, broken relationships, unjust systems, inequality.

One of the most confronting aspects of my role as Head of School was dealing with underperformance, to the point of terminating employment. Very little in my scientific training had prepared me for that, but my faith was crucial. I was always conscious of trying to balance Christian values of forgiveness, compassion and mercy with obligations to staff who might be carrying an unfair workload because of another's underperformance.

And everyone's watching! "What's he going to do about Fred who's a bludger?"

Because of privacy rules, one appears to be doing nothing. And other's opinions mount: to one person you appear too soft, to another too hard. That part of leadership has been challenging – the thorny issues, hard conversations, even sleepless nights. Lots of prayer for guidance.

One thing I'd say to our younger people: if you have colleagues of faith around you, hang on to them tightly and meet with them. I value my colleagues of faith greatly, they hold me to account, and we share ideas. They will help you through some very rugged times. I got into this field because I was trying to work out animal behaviour. But by far the greatest mystery is understanding why humans behave the way they do! I'm convinced it will be the quality and integrity of my interactions with humans that will ultimately determine my professional legacy.

IAN: Great insights, Michael. Thanks. Now from the audience: In your work environment, have you been able to effectively share the gospel with colleagues?

MICHAEL: I can't think of an occasion where I've verbalised the gospel. I hope I've lived it. One day I helped a drunken colleague to bed, a chap who'd opposed my

'incredible' creation: Michael's story



Picture: supplied

appointment on the grounds that I'd put "lay preacher" in my CV. But now, as I helped him to bed, he was surprised that I was quite a reasonable fellow, and he jokingly said, "Oh, I never knew you cared." I think I was living out the gospel then. Later on, he asked me to work as his advocate in a hearing about an industrial dispute he had with management.

IAN: To another question now: "Should Christians proactively disclose at work what some see as controversial beliefs?"

How open are we about our beliefs on euthanasia, same-sex marriage, etcetera?

MICHAEL: Someone gave me a great analogy once. Communication is like a bridge. Building that bridge depends on the size of the truck you want to send over. Will the bridge carry the weight? So, whether I engage in controversial topics will depend on the strength of the bridge between me and the person. How well I've understood that topic is of secondary importance to the quality of the bridge, and how whatever I say is going to be heard.

IAN: To a final question, Michael. What advice would you give to Christian leaders

facing a situation where all options available are bad or very disappointing at best?

MICHAEL: I had to shut down a research centre and tell eight people they'd lost their jobs. Once that decision had been made and there was no good part about it, I would ask questions like "What's the Christian response for me in care?" and "What does this do to the community that will exist after this decision is made?"

Also, I've learnt the value of Paul's analogy of the "body" in the secular world. As a scientist, areas like human resources, legal, finance, etcetera, were new territory for me and I wasn't good at those aspects. But there was joy in taking advice from professionals around me, who had tremendous depth of experience. That's the analogy of the body: this is a team event; this isn't a one-person show.

IAN: Your reflections will encourage our own work journeys, I'm sure. Thank you, Michael.

This is the third and final in a series with established Christian scientists and science educators. Further conversations, some with younger Christian scientists, can be found at ISCAST: bit.ly/ISCAST-TMA.



St Paul's Cathedral
Together transforming our City and Diocese

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES

Wednesdays	1.00pm	Lunchtime Concert
Sun 7 May	4.00pm	Choral Evensong marking the Coronation of King Charles III
Thurs 18 May	5.10pm	Ascension Day Chorale Evensong
Sun 21 May	4.00pm	Easter Carol Service <i>Preacher: Canon Brian Rosner</i>
Fri 26 May	2.00pm	Seniors Meeting <i>Speaker: Dorothy Coombe, Foodbank Ambassador</i>
Sun 28 May	10.00am	Pentecost Choral Eucharist <i>Preacher: Canon Helen Dwyer</i>
	4.00pm	Reconciliation Day Service <i>Preacher: Canon Glenn Loughrey</i>

REGULAR SERVICES

Sundays	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	10.00am	Choral Eucharist
	4.00pm	Choral Evensong
Weekdays	12.15pm	Holy Eucharist
	5.10pm	Choral Evensong (Tues – Fri) Evening Prayer (Mon)

*The Cathedral & Shop is open
Monday to Friday 10am – 6pm | Saturdays 10am – 4pm*

Cnr Flinders & Swanston Streets • Tel: 9653 4333
www.cathedral.org.au

Vacant Appointments as of 20 April 2023:

St Eanswyth Altona/St Clement Altona Meadows; Bellarine Gateway; St Martin, Belgrave Heights; Parish of Box Hill; Brimbank; St John Chrysostom, Brunswick West; St Faith, Burwood; St Mark, Camberwell; St Catharine, Caulfield South; St Philip, Collingwood; St John the Divine, Croydon; St Margaret, Eltham; Holy Trinity, Hampton; St Peter & St James, Kilsyth/Montrose; Christ Church, Melton; 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, Panton Hill; St Mark, Reservoir; St Mary, Sunbury; Christ Church, South Yarra; Christ Church, St Kilda; St Luke, Sydenham; Parish of Upwey/Belgrave; St Thomas, Werribee; St John, Wantirna South; St Matthew, Wheelers Hill; Christ Church, Whittlesea with St Peter, Kinglake; St Thomas, Winchelsea with Holy Trinity, Barrabool.

Appointments:

CROUCH, The Revd Dr Wendy, appointed Parish Minister, St John the Evangelist, Toorak, effective 28 March 2023
HANSON, The Revd Mark, appointed Extension as Vicar, St Stephen, Warrandyte, effective 16 April 2023
HOPKINS, The Revd Michael Charles, appointed Archdeacon, Archdeaconry of Latrobe, effective 19 April 2023
MILLARD, The Revd Joshua Tyler, appointed Parish Minister (from Assistant Curate) St Mary, Caulfield with St Clement, Elsternwick, effective 22 March 2023
O'GORMAN, The Revd Janice Maree, appointed Vicar, St Mark, Dromana, effective 15 March 2023
SOLOMON, The Revd Sandra Lynne, appointed Vicar, St Luke, Cockatoo, effective 23 March 2023
WHITE, The Revd Joanne Shirley, appointed Vicar, St George, Queenscliff and St James Point Lonsdale, effective 16 June 2023
WHITE, The Venerable Nicholas Kurt, appointed Vicar, St Stephen, Richmond, effective 5 October 2023.

Ordained to the Priesthood 25 March 2023:

CHAINTRIER, The Revd Jonathan Jean Christophe, appointed Assistant Curate, St James, Dandenong, effective 25 March 2023

Permission to Officiate:

ANTHONY, The Revd Samuel Sathia Chandran, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 12 April 2023
COPLEY, The Revd Anthony Walter, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 22 March 2023
POULTER, The Revd Jennifer Marie, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 19 February 2023
WARD, The Revd Gavin David, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 22 March 2023

Resignations:

SOMA, The Revd Chaplain Jackson, Priest-in Charge, Footscray Anglican Parish, effective 30 April 2023

Obituaries:

GLASS, The Revd Geoffrey, 16 March 2023
MILES, The Revd Dr Stephen John, 23 March 2023

Clergy Moves

Clergy Moves is compiled by the Registry Office and all correspondence should go to registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au

Micro model can bring gospel to many

■ Bree Mills

The church is often touted as being resistant to change, but its 2000-year life suggests a different story.

There have been many times throughout history the Anglican Church has needed to adapt to change, and in a post-lockdown world this will be no different. The recent rise of micro churches across Australia has demonstrated the church's ability to adapt once again. But, while micro church is a new term, it is not a new idea.

In the 1700s Anglican priest John Wesley was convicted of the need to preach to English miners who were not engaged in local churches. These gatherings drew the poor and marginalised in every town, seeing many choose to follow Jesus. So, Wesley created different structures of classes, small bands, and societies, to facilitate discipleship and evangelism within these people groups. Wesley's heart was to see this movement of smaller communities renew the Anglican church in his lifetime, and he remained an Anglican until his death.

Similarly, in 1876 Mary Sumner began a gathering to reach mothers from every social class, which would eventually become Mothers' Union. These meetings grew, and saw many women come to faith, spend time in fellowship and worship together, all while seeking to reach other mothers. The meetings multiplied throughout England and took place in nine countries within seven years.

Both are historical examples of what we would now call micro churches, and some of many throughout history.

Micro churches are smaller expressions of church seeking to reach a particular network or neighbourhood with the gospel. They are often lay-led, and very simple in nature, meeting in homes, neighbourhood houses, cafes, and community spaces.

“The nature of micro churches encourages them to dwell among the community, rather than asking the community to come to them.”

Bree Mills

They focus on simple worship, authentic community, and intentional mission. Some are ministries of existing Anglican churches; others are networks of micro churches overseen by an ordained Anglican minister.

Recently Bishop of Islington Ric Thorpe spoke across Australia about the Diocese of London's training for everyday people and lay leaders to pursue the mission of God and plant churches in their context. The diocese's aim is to plant thousands of new lay-led churches across the UK, through their Myriad training. Many of these will be micro churches.

Today, in Melbourne we have micro

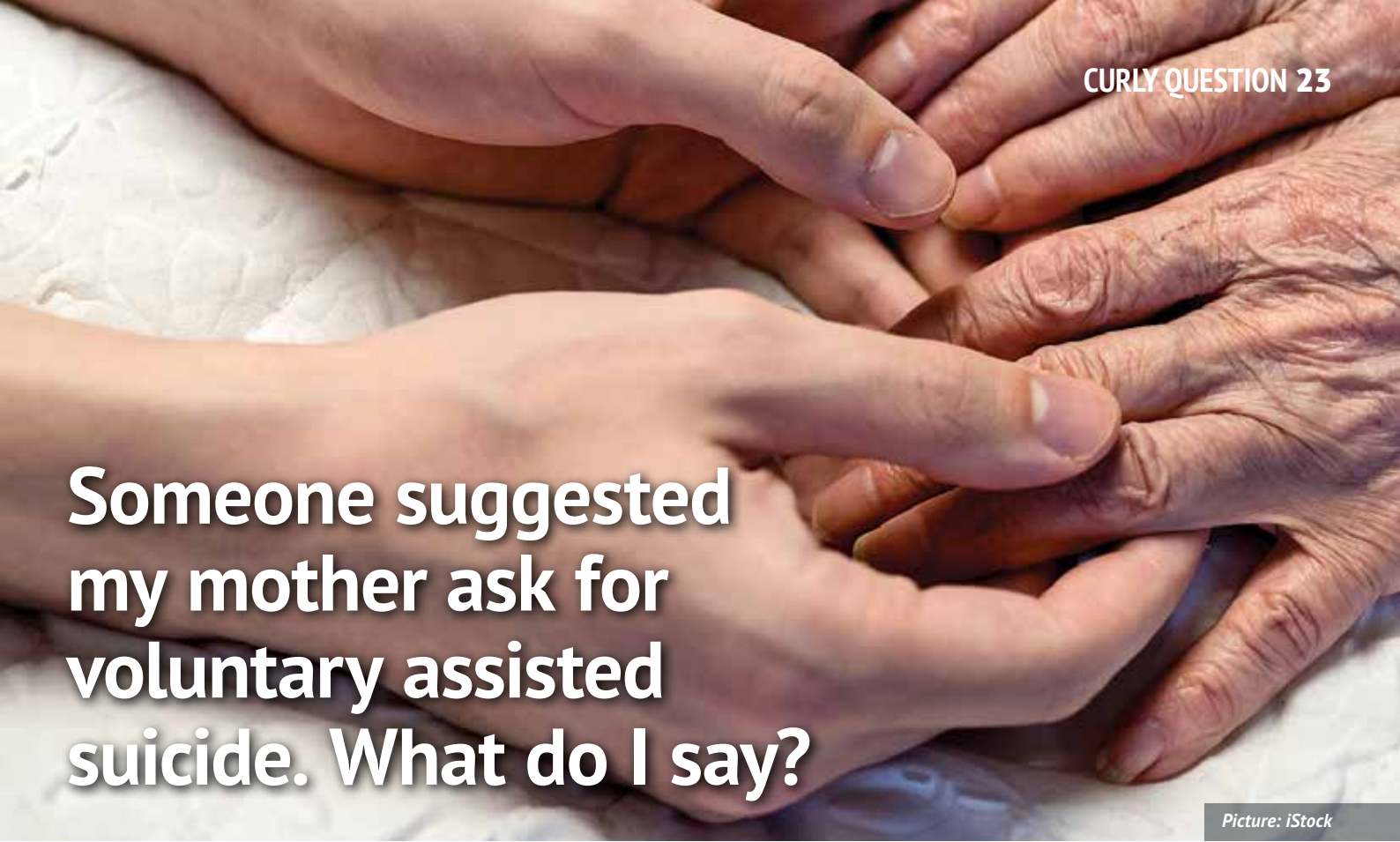
churches reaching into lower socio-economic areas, sporting clubs, country towns and workplaces. Mission isn't just a task for these communities, it is a part of their identity. Their love for a particular network or neighbourhood binds them together as a community and drives a desire to go out and share the gospel, making disciples in a contextually relevant way among those people.

Micro churches tend to reach those who have no previous connection, where many other church plants tend to reach those sympathetic to, or with some historical connection to Christian faith. The nature of micro churches encourages them to dwell among the community, rather than asking the community to come to them. As they engage with and among local community, they share the gospel, make disciples in that place, and see the church formed there. This allows for organic expressions to be formed in contextually relevant ways for a particular people group. This grounds the gospel, connects it deeply to community, and makes it accessible for many in our post-Christendom context.

You can find out more about micro churches at: microchurches.com.au.

The Reverend Bree Mills is an ordained Anglican minister and the founding director of Micro Churches Australia, an interdenominational movement to support multiplying micro churches across Australia. This is the third of a four-part series on different models of church planting.





Picture: iStock

Someone suggested my mother ask for voluntary assisted suicide. What do I say?

■ John Buchanan

Someone has suggested to my mother that she ask for voluntary assisted suicide. What do I say to Mum?

This suggestion of “voluntary assisted dying”, is now more common in public hospitals, after legislation introduced into the Victorian parliament in 2017. Some hospitals have “navigators” to “inform patients of their options”, also called Physician Assisted Suicide.

Firstly, some background. Let us assume a terminal diagnosis. We need to understand the illness experience of people with serious health problems, which may include grief (at the loss of previous functions), a partial understanding of the disorder and complications, anxiety, specific fears – maybe to do with past family deaths – sometimes depression, and effects on the patient of attitudes of family, nurses and doctors.

Unresolved questions contribute to anxiety. All seriously ill patients are vulnerable to influence and misunderstandings. Is a decision to have “voluntary” Physician Assisted Suicide really voluntary if a person is acting on misunderstandings about assumed complications, or a belief that no relief of symptoms is possible, or experienced poor palliative care, or family attitudes that they are a burden?

Many people are especially fearful about pain, although pain management can always be improved with specialist palliative care expertise. One of the difficulties is that GP care may not be expert palliative care.

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

Palliative care is a young discipline, and the number of trained specialist palliative care physicians needs to be increased. Funding the training of more such specialists would have been a better government initiative than the 2017 legislation.

So, the first question in this scenario is: why did someone suggest Physician Assisted Suicide to your mother? Did she disclose a hidden problem, such as inadequately treated pain or depression. There is a need to find out what “the problem” for the patient is. It may be anxiety about some feared consequence, or undisclosed pain. Some even do not take medication for pain, anxiety or depression because they fear becoming addicted.

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 using:



Many seriously ill people feel they are a burden. Not all families or professionals are benign or caring and may have mentioned phrases like “use-by date”, or “good innings” which can give a message they should “shuffle off”. Ill people are vulnerable to feeling unwanted, hence an obligation to assess if a terminally ill person is being “pushed”.

The Physician Assisted Suicide legislation is actually loose, despite the so-called 68 safeguards. Section 9, the consulting process, does not require the patient’s treating doctor to be consulted, or the diagnosis checked. A doctor consulted for Physician Assisted Suicide may just take a “request” at face value and is supposed to check for coercion, but usually they are not the treating doctor. How can they check for coercion with an unknown patient?

So to return to you and your mother. You can refuse a suggestion of Physician Assisted Suicide, but should discuss hidden fears or poorly controlled symptoms, and should ask for a referral to a Specialist Palliative Care physician.

A broader issue is what effect such legislation has on future patients, who may think palliative care involves pushing people into Physician Assisted Suicide. The World Medical Association considers Physician Assisted Suicide unethical.

Dr John Buchanan is a recently retired consultant psychiatrist, who initially trained and practised as a consultant physician. He is a former chair of the Victorian branch Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

Hope dawns for trauma in the church

■ Graham Stanton

Cockayne, Joshua, Scott Harrower, and Preston Hill. Dawn of Sunday: The Trinity and trauma-safe churches. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade, 2022.

***Dawn of Sunday* opens with a quotation that is perhaps as unappealing as it is accurate: “the world is full to overflowing with pain”.**

Neither ignoring the reality nor being overcome by it, this book invites us to become “trauma safe” churches. By connecting the reality of trauma with the fullness of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, *Dawn of Sunday* invites churches to be communities that offer protection and healing for those who have experienced such suffering.

Ridley College Christian Thought lecturer Scott Harrower has co-authored this book along with fellow pastor-scholars, Joshua Cockayne from the UK, and Preston Hill from the USA. Part one provides an understanding of trauma drawing on insights from theology, psychology, and medicine. Part two explores how the work of God the Trinity is a source of trauma recovery. Part three integrates

those two perspectives in clear principles and practices that characterise trauma-safe churches.

I appreciated the frequent use of real-life stories in the book, keeping the lived experience of trauma survivors before us. The book helped me recognise that: “many survivors suffer in silence with overbearing feelings of rage, helplessness, despair, and terror. These survivors are in our midst. They are in our churches” (p154). Some readers may balk at the deep theology in part two, preferring to skip to the “practical bit” at the end. That would be a mistake. If the church does nothing more than just “learn the tricks” of trauma response it can be used to perpetuate harm. The church will only be a source of healing if it is the community that is profoundly shaped by the being and work of God. The church is a place of safety when it invites people into relationship with the “Father of lights”. The church offers life-giving friendship when it mediates the presence of Jesus our friend. The church offers comfort and safety when it shares the

indwelling Spirit of comfort and safety.

In the cold of winter, I love waking while it’s still dark, pulling on my warmest clothes, and walking early enough to witness the first light at the start of a new day. There is something hopeful in the dawn, especially alongside the challenges of the cold and dark. This book invites us to take hold of the challenge and hope of living at the dawn of Easter Sunday. In Christ we get to be that human community that will neither turn away from the horrors of trauma nor be overwhelmed by them. We get to be that human community that is enlivened by hope, and therefore enabled to persevere in faith-filled love.

This work’s authors have given us a rich resource for healing those damaged by trauma. Indeed, this is a rich resource for being the church: witnesses to the resurrection who wait patiently for the kingdom to come.

Graham Stanton is lecturer in Practical Theology at Ridley College.

Much to learn about staying true to the way of Jesus

■ Neville Carr

Keeping Faith: How Christian organisations can stay true to the way of Jesus, Stephen Judd, John Swinton, Kara Martin, Acorn, Sydney, 2023.

A core idea in this book is that “most Christian organisations have less secure Christ-centred foundations than they would like to believe”.

Whether you work in a Christian organisation or the church, you’ll find this book instructive, as I did. It shows how Christian organisations

can drift away from their roots. It underlines what “organisational faithfulness” looks like – its ethos or spirit, its identity and its impact or outcome. It puts theology at the centre in guiding policies on human resources, finance, risk and strategy. The book warns how sin corrupts an organisation and dishonours God. It highlights how Christian stewardship means not fearing losing money or failing financially. It demonstrates how poor performance management policies are often linked to the

tendency to not tell the truth.

While the main focus of this book is on organisational faithfulness, much can be learnt from it by churches – especially those whose leadership is risk-averse or where a rigid form of stewardship thwarts kingdom growth and mission.

Neville Carr is chair of the Eastern College Academic Board and the Christian Research Association Ethics Committee.

**PLEASE REPORT ABUSE
CALL 1800 135 246**

KOORYOORA | OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne does not tolerate abuse, harassment or other misconduct within our communities. If any person has concerns about the behaviour of a church worker, past or present, they can contact Kooyoora Ltd.

We are deeply distressed that there have been occasions when abuse and misconduct have occurred in our communities. **Kooyoora Ltd is independent** of the Diocese and receives and manages complaints about abuse and misconduct by members of the clergy and church workers.

The Diocese of Melbourne is committed to doing all that is possible to ensure that abuse does not occur. All complaints of abuse are taken very seriously and we do all we can to lessen harm. We offer respect, pastoral care and ongoing long-term support to anyone who makes a complaint.

You can contact Kooyoora Ltd by calling 1800 135 246
For further information: www.kooyoora.org.au