

THE Melbourne Anglican

JULY 2023, No 626

On board to heal hurt

As a physiotherapist, Tamara Shepherd's skills lie in helping others. It's a calling which has taken her twice to the African coast, on board a Mercy Ship, a floating hospital designed to help people in developing countries.

For Ms Shepherd, she is just following God's calling – to help those less fortunate than ourselves. In the outcome of these treatments, Ms Shepherd has seen God's work. **Story P19**



P5
Raising
the roof in
Moonee Ponds



P7
Christian
schools face
higher taxes



P16-17
A guide to
'Anglican'
identity



As salt of the earth, we must petition for peace

■ Archbishop Philip Freier

There is little doubt that we are entering a period of increased militarisation in our own country, in our region and generally throughout the world.

The cost of military equipment is staggering, as is the failure in many cases of delivering these projects on budget and on time. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is the trigger for a profound re-evaluation of the military capabilities and posture of most European nations. Some have elevated the commitment to military expenditure by one or two percentage points of GDP, bringing these costs to unprecedented levels. There are many examples in our own Indo-Pacific region too, understandable as countries like North Korea strive to assert their military power and geopolitical competitors India and China increase their offensive capacities. Australia, reliant on maritime transport for many dimensions of our prosperity, recognises our vulnerability to events that could impede the free transport of goods at potential conflict points far distant from our shores.

Planning future military strategic posture seems, at least to my reading of history, an inexact science. Just as battle-ships were replaced by aircraft carriers as the capital ships of navies after the lessons of the Second World War, the effectiveness of some of the incredibly expensive and slow to manufacture commitments of our present day will only be known at a future time when still unforeseen counter measures are faced. Remotely controlled or autonomous aerial or maritime drones have proven to be big disruptors to the conventional military strategic thinking in



Picture: iStock

the Ukraine conflict. But, what about our investments in peace building and peace making?

We know that as tensions increase dialogue reduces unless there are deeply entrenched political, cultural, and personal commitments to go another way. To this list I would like to add “faith”, but I am mindful how often religious sentiments and identity have been co-opted in times of military conflict. It is significant that at the time of the First World War, theologians and church leaders in both Britain and Germany were applying the principles of just war theory to align patriotic duty and Christian faith to their respective conflicting causes.

What are we then to make of Matthew

“The emphasis of ‘peacemaking’ must have action here and now, well ahead of any possible conflicted future, and not be deferred until the eruption of conflict.”

5:9, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”? Certainly, the Beatitudes in general confront conventional thinking with a vision of people who are “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world”. There is no doubt that this witness is hard to maintain when Christian faith is co-opted to serve the cause of a patriotic war. The peacemakers are easily dismissed as naïve idealists in the circumstances of existential uncertainty that war inevitably produces. This suggests that the emphasis of “peacemaking” must have action here and now, well ahead of any possible conflicted future, and not be deferred until the eruption of conflict.

International diplomacy is hopefully well used to the processes of peacemaking, but I don’t think that Christian citizens should just leave the initiative there. We need to be asking our elected leaders about their commitment to peacemaking efforts here and now, especially as they align themselves to the militarised decisions about strategic alliances and investment in war-fighting equipment. This could be our “salt of the earth” or “light of the world” opportunity.

Looking
for the
prayer diary?



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

THE Melbourne Anglican

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PARISH PRIEST Moe-Newborough

The Diocese of Gippsland is seeking
to appoint an Incumbent for the
Parish of Moe-Newborough.

For a Parish Profile or further
information, contact
bishop@gippsanglican.org.au or the
Diocesan Registry 03 5144 2044



Picture: iStock

Crisis forcing people to choose between abusers and homelessness

■ Maya Pilbrow

Rising housing costs may be forcing those experiencing family violence to choose between staying with their abusers or homelessness.

Family violence and housing support services have been overwhelmed by demand over the past few months as interest rates and rents rose dramatically.

Women's Housing Ltd women's services manager Sarah Sheppard said a lack of affordable rental options meant those in short-term and refuge accommodation had been unable to enter the private market, causing a backlog for service providers.

"There's a bottleneck for refuge services," she said.

Melbourne rents underwent the largest annual increase in the 12 months to March since reports began in 2000, according to the March rental report from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

Ms Sheppard said a lack of safe and affordable housing meant her organisation had been forced to turn some people away. She said clients were referred to alternative options if no vacancies were suitable, but overwhelming demand meant more people state-wide were going unassisted.

She said many people who needed housing support also needed family violence support, but the fragmented way support agencies operated meant people often had to deal with multiple agencies and case managers.

"For clients to say, 'I'm experiencing family violence, this may lead to homelessness' and have just one case manager be able to walk them through that process," she said. "That would be really nice."

Salvation Army Victorian public relations secretary Major Warren Elliott said faith-based organisations like his own were able to direct people to a range of support services in a centralised way.

He said the Salvation Army provided 23 per cent more sessions of care to people affected by family violence in the first quarter of 2023 than during the same period the previous year.

"We can give them financial counselling. We can give them food vouchers, we can connect them with a faith-based congregation if they want," he said.

Family violence peak body Safe and Equal chief executive Tania Farha said many people escaping family violence had little to no income. She said violence, economic abuse and rising rental costs meant victims of family violence often had to rely on

waitlisted social housing or limited refuge and crisis accommodation.

Family violence support service Berry Street deputy chief executive Jenny McNaughton said a barrier to escaping family violence was a lack of safe places to go and a fear of homelessness.

"For some in our community, the ebb and flow of the private rental market is simply too brutal," she said.

Anglicare Victoria chief executive Paul McDonald said family violence was forcing mothers and children into homelessness and precarious housing situations.

He said faith-based organisations and individuals of faith in the wider community had the power to agitate and advocate for change to address the housing crisis.

"Fundamentally, we have to fix this social issue, to bring our voice to it," he said.

If you or someone you know needs support, contact a support services:

- Lifeline Australia 13 11 14
- The National Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Counselling Service 1800 RESPECT
- Centres Against Sexual Assault 1800 806 292
- Blue Knot 1300 657 380

If life is in danger, contact 000.

No appeal on Hollingworth decision after ex Archbishop gives up PTO

■ **Elsbeth Kernebone**

An appeal committee has declined to challenge misconduct determination against a former Brisbane archbishop, despite stating that it disagreed with several aspects of the findings.

It comes after former Archbishop of Brisbane Peter Hollingworth gave up his permission to officiate in the Melbourne diocese.

The Melbourne diocese's Professional Standards Committee has announced it will not appeal a determination from the diocese's Professional Standards Board which found former Brisbane archbishop Peter Hollingworth could continue in ministry, despite upholding seven of 10 complaints made against him.

It comes after Dr Hollingworth announced on 12 May he would return his permission to officiate.

The committee said it decided not to appeal the board's decision given Dr Hollingworth's return of his permission to officiate, his confirmation this relinquishment was permanent, and his undertaking that he would not in the future apply for a permission to officiate in any diocese within the Anglican Church of Australia.

It said in this way the result the committee was seeking had been achieved, in that Dr Hollingworth could no longer participate in ministry.

In its statement, the committee said it did not agree with several aspects of the board's April decision. It said it had been minded to appeal to the Review Board, but decided not to given the subsequent events.

The committee named as particular concern the board's finding that Dr Hollingworth was fit to remain in ministry and could retain his permission to officiate, given that serious allegations of misconduct had been established.

In late April, the diocese's Professional Standards Board found Dr Hollingworth had committed misconduct in seven of 10 allegations of misconduct made against him. Despite this it found Dr Hollingworth was fit for ministry in the current roles and positions within the church he held.

The board recommended the Archbishop of Melbourne require

Dr Hollingworth apologise to abuse survivor Beth Heinrich for his decision to retain Donald Shearman in ministry despite his knowledge of Shearman's sexual abuse of Ms Heinrich, 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 result the [Appeal] committee was seeking had been achieved, in that Dr Hollingworth could no longer participate in ministry."

Among the board's findings of misconduct were 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.

It also determined that he had committed misconduct by in about 1995 permitting Donald Shearman, who he knew had sexually assaulted a child, to retain his permission to officiate.

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

In its 25 May statement, the Professional Standards Committee said it had determined not to appeal the decision of the Professional Standards Board in light of Dr Hollingworth's relinquishment of his permission to officiate, and his undertaking never to apply for one in the future.

Kooyoora Office of Professional Standards chief executive Fiona Boyle said the organisation was pleased the process had concluded as it knew such processes were difficult, in response to the committee's statement.

Ms Boyle said Kooyoora's primary concern was for the people affected by decisions, and anyone considering making any report to Kooyoora.

She said Kooyoora would say to those people that the board's determination was not a typical case.

Ms Boyle said last year Kooyoora's average matter resolution time was 83 days, with wellbeing coordinators available to support people through every step of the process.

In its 25 May statement, the committee said it referred three complaints against Dr Hollingworth to the board on 15 June, 2021, which formed the bases of 10 allegations. These allegations were that Dr Hollingworth engaged in conduct that was unbecoming or inappropriate for a cleric in his position, and included allegations that he permitted persons who had sexually assaulted children to remain in ministry.

The committee said it also referred Dr Hollingworth's application for clearance for ministry to the board, as it was not satisfied that Dr Hollingworth was unconditionally fit for ministry.

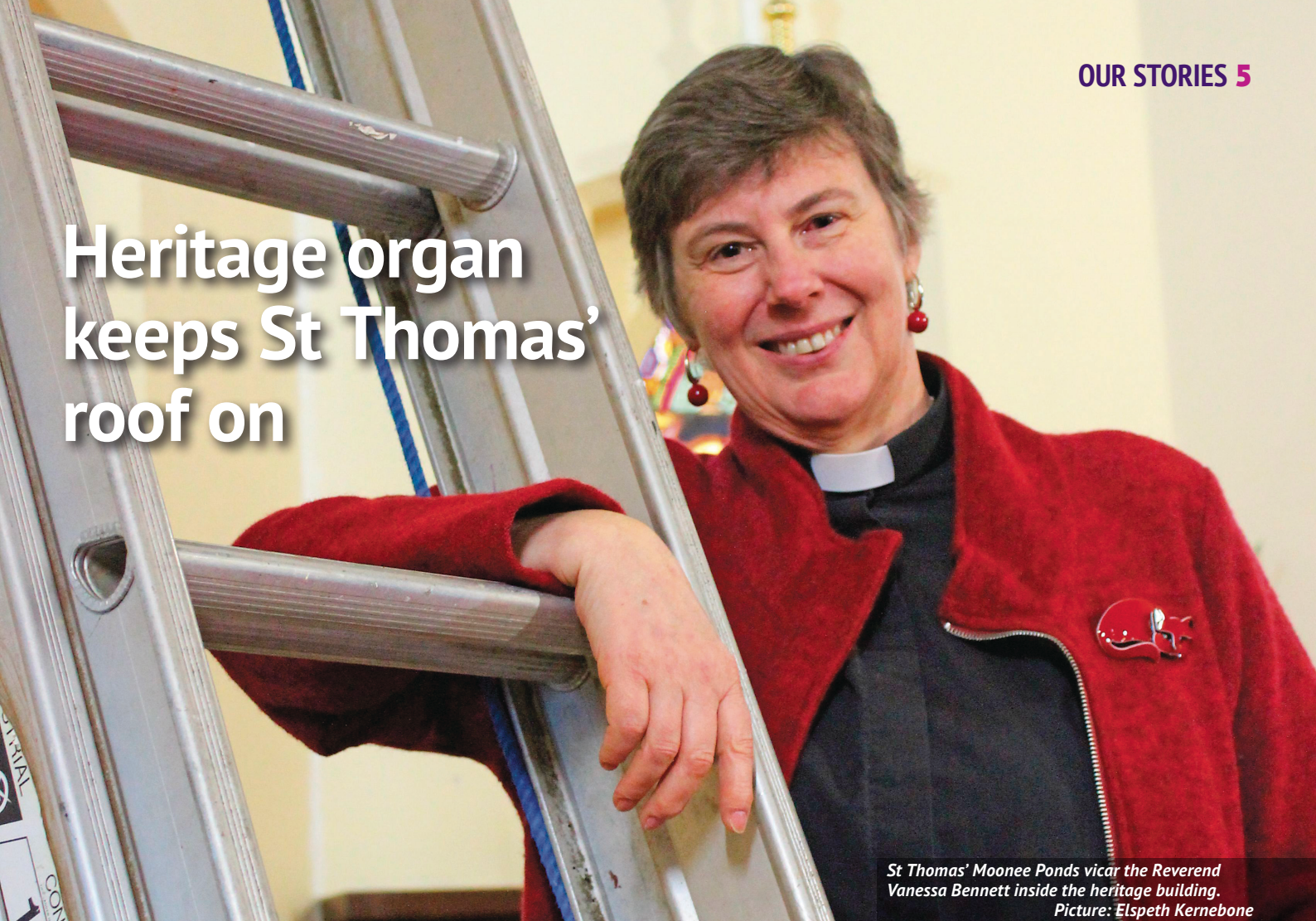
The committee said it urged the board to find each of the allegations of misconduct were proven. It said it urged the board to find in the event some or all of the allegations were proven:

- That Dr Hollingworth was unfit for ministry, or should otherwise be subject to a condition or restriction.
- That Dr Hollingworth's permission to officiate should be removed and that he should not be granted clearance for ministry.
- He ought to be reprimanded.
- A procedure should be established in relation to apologies to certain persons affected by the misconduct.

The committee said it submitted that it was open for the board to recommend removal from holy orders.

Dr Hollingworth's lawyer Bill Doogue issued a statement on his behalf, saying the Professional Standards Committee had failed to notify Dr Hollingworth that it was not appealing the Professional Standards Board's decision. Mr Doogue said the committee instead released a statement that was not sent to Dr Hollingworth.

Heritage organ keeps St Thomas' roof on



*St Thomas' Moonee Ponds vicar the Reverend Vanessa Bennett inside the heritage building.
Picture: Elspeth Kernebone*

■ Maya Pilbrow

An organ recital at St Thomas' Moonee Ponds has helped the parish raise money for costly repairs to preserve the church's historic roof.

Church warden Denny Parisian said the repairs were a large undertaking, but the parish was very conscious of its responsibilities for caretaking of the historic buildings.

Mr Parisian said the 164-year-old church building was protected by a heritage overlay, a state planning provision meaning

that any repairs needed to maintain the site's cultural and historical significance. He said heritage protections required the roof be replaced with slate tiles to match the originals, making the process more costly.

The parish has organised annual fundraisers since 2015 to help achieve a goal of \$325,000, with this year's event coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the organ's installation.

Younger than the church building but still historically significant, the organ was

donated by William Stephen Kimpton in 1923, whose descendants are still regular parishioners at St Thomas'.

Organ Historical Trust of Australia cofounder John Maidment said St Thomas' organ was one of the few intact interwar instruments built by pipe organ builder George Fincham. Mr Maidment said Mr Kimpton's gift was generous, allowing the organ builders to construct a larger and more impressive instrument than most churches had at the time.

Christ Church steps out in faith to reach St Kilda

■ Maya Pilbrow

Christ Church St Kilda is planning for growth, despite its lack of a permanent vicar.

It's already seen the fruit of its focus in several new connections with visitors.

Churchwarden Geoffrey Court said the parish had been working to better understand and serve the local community for more than a year.

Christ Church plans to hire a new mission worker and administrative assistant to maintain parish records, and develop an online presence. The church also hopes to keep the church open on weekdays and to run evening discussion groups with guest

speakers and wine and cheese.

In September the parish faced a challenge when vicar the Reverend Dr Turi Hollis was called to serve overseas.

Locum the Reverend Gail Bryce said she was passionate about growing the church, but being a part-time locum made some of the church growth initiatives more difficult, as she spent most of her time keeping the parish running. But Mrs Bryce said the parish council had been encouraged not to wait for a new vicar before beginning outreach.

Diocese renewal and revitalisation canon John Sanderson said Christ Church was one of the only parishes involved in Leading Your Church into Growth without an incumbent.

Mr Sanderson said the parish had worked hard to understand the St Kilda community, and now needed to figure out how to connect with and serve that community.

Mrs Bryce said she had seen several newcomers attend services over the past few months, which she attributed to prayer.

"Every week, I'm praying for new people to come to church on Sunday," she said.

Not every visitor has returned, but the church has made some connections. Mrs Bryce said one visitor happened to be the great-great-great-grandson of the architect of Christ Church, while a New Zealand visitor's great-grandparents were married in the church.

Cut spending, raise taxes: Experts urge

■ Jenan Taylor

Federal and state governments need to take brave steps to make a major difference to society, experts say.

Cutting expenditure and raising taxes while lowering public expectations could also lift the economy.

Speaking at an *Archbishop's Conversation* about the use of public money Grattan Institute chief executive Danielle Wood said the government was spending more than it was making.

Spending on defence and infrastructure, as well as health had increased, putting pressure on budgets, Ms Wood said.

She said while the Reserve Bank's interest rate hikes aimed to curtail inflation, the federal government ought to also use other ways to manage fiscal challenges, including reviewing its tax base to increase revenue.

That would entail changing public expectations of government spending which had disconnected from fiscal policy over the last decade, Ms Wood said.

Other panelist, Melbourne University Institute for the Future of Business executive director Phil Dolan said putting spending projects through independent rigorous cost benefit analyses before they took place, and using sunset clauses should be essential.

But he said the federal government might consider raising GST. This would result in a trade-off that required politicians to be brave about things, but there was usually timidity among policymakers.

Mr Dolan would consider spending on education if he was treasurer, while Ms Wood said she would focus on increasing job seeker payments and aged care and disability support.

Bus a foothold to help at risk children, families

■ Jenan Taylor

A Christian organisation is lifting the school attendance rates of a group of at-risk students to help them overcome hardship through a unique outreach service.

Open House Christian Involvement Centre has been bussing 20 children to their primary school since February 2022.

Operations manager Peter Choma said the organisation's two community buses collected students at their homes and dropped them at school every morning.

Mr Choma said the children were from households where there was a range of problems, such as family violence.

He said the school was concerned that the students' low attendance rates affected their education outcomes and their ability to access programs such as speech therapy that helped their social development.

The service began when the school and Victoria Police realised the students were not returning to classes after the pandemic restrictions ended, and approached Open House for help.

A 2018 Smith Family report found that school attendance and achievement was closely linked, and that improving those elements raised the likelihood that disadvantaged students would complete school and break the cycle of deprivation.

In 2014 the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found providing transport helped overcome barriers to school attendance.

St George's East Ivanhoe parishioner the late George Farrington began Open House CIC in 1971 to help troubled youth overcome a variety of social challenges.

Mr Choma said the organisation helped people of all ages who were disadvantaged or socially isolated, through programs such as Bible study fellowship, older people's clubs and sports projects. He said the school bus program hooked the students into some of those initiatives, allowing the organisation to reach their families as well.

"Sometimes the kids have a parent in prison, or someone's died and they're being raised by grandparents who can't afford to get them to school," Mr Choma said.

"The bus program is a foothold for us into their families and what they might need, like counselling, big garden clean-ups and food vouchers, things they might be too scared to ask for, because they might feel marginalised."

Youth worker Naomi Kop said initially the students were reluctant to go to school as they felt disconnected from classmates and felt like outsiders because of their sporadic attendance.

Ms Kop said support workers sometimes counselled students while on the bus, and that the children were increasingly motivated and happier about going to school.

She said most of students were taking the initiative to be up and ready at pick up times.

Ms Kop said there were now not enough seats for the number of children joining the bus program and to get around that the staff did at least two bus runs to get the students to school on time.

Mr Choma said there were challenges despite the program's success. He said funding was always an issue, and that the organisation still had to dip into its reserves to keep the project going.

REFORMING the people of God

(Talks from 2 Kings 22-25)

Speaker: Bishop Paul Barker

July 12, 19, 26, August 2, 7.30 – 9pm
Glen Waverley Anglican Church, 800 Waverley Rd, Glen Waverley, 3150

Attend in person or join the livestream (www.gwac.org.au/livestream)



Tax changes to hit Christian schools

■ Maya Pilbrow

Anglican schools in Victoria will pay hundreds of thousands more tax dollars following a budget announcement to remove payroll tax exemptions from high fee non-government schools.

Most Anglican schools in the state will be affected by the May state budget announcement to remove the payroll tax exemption for schools charging more than \$7500 in fees.

It's led to fears schools might be forced to raise fees or cut services.

After criticism from independent school bodies, the state government has agreed to review the policy to keep more schools exempt.

Premier Daniel Andrews said on 2 June the initial budget announcement had overestimated the number of schools that would be affected.

Speaking to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, Mr Andrews said the threshold for determining high versus low fee schools would be raised from \$7500.

A Department of Education spokesperson said the threshold had been set using 2019 data from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority and would need to be updated to reflect changes in school fees.

Independent Schools Victoria chief executive Michelle Green said she was pleased to see the government abandon the \$7500 threshold but was still opposed to the payroll tax exemption being lifted.

She said the decision had been made without consulting independent schools and that the definition of high fee was arbitrary.



Picture: iStock.

A Department of Education spokesperson said the Education Minister and the Treasurer would consult with the independent education sector and review the high fee threshold.

Mr Andrews named Xavier College as an example of a high fee school. With fees ranging from \$24,000 to \$36,000, Xavier is comparable to several Anglican schools including Ivanhoe Grammar School, Geelong Grammar and Melbourne Grammar.

The 4.85 per cent payroll tax would mean hundreds of thousands of dollars in extra tax for each school.

Ms Green said the imposition of the tax on independent schools could have a disruptive effect on students' education, with fears schools would either need to raise fees or cut services.

Independent Schools Victoria said non-government schools had been exempt from the payroll tax for decades in recognition of their contribution to the community as not-for-profit organisations.

Australian Education Union Victorian branch president Meredith Peace said public schools had to pay payroll tax despite being underfunded compared to private schools.

She said removing the payroll tax exemption amounted to asking independent schools to pay their fair share.

"We would expect independent schools, many of which profess a Christian ethos, to be far more concerned about inequality in education funding and the impact this has on students in public schools," she said.

Several Anglican schools were approached for comment.

Action plan set to help churches with child safety laws

Churches are being encouraged to use an action plan developed by the Melbourne diocese to help them meet new statewide child safety standards.

The 11 Child Safe Standards came into force in Victoria in July 2022 replacing the seven previous standards.

Melbourne diocese safe ministry and inclusion officer Anne Fairweather said the diocese's action plan aimed to take workload away from churches in complying with each standard.

Mrs Fairweather said many parishes were already meeting many of the standards, so

the action plan was to make sure this was consistent across the diocese.

She said despite the standards coming into place in 2022, the Commission for Children and Young People had said they understood meeting the new commitments was a process of cultural change.

Mrs Fairweather said many churches would be building on actions they were already taking towards child safety rather than doing something entirely new, and all had already been required to meet the previous seven standards. She said the document's plan was staged over three years, with both

minimum actions and best practice options.

Mrs Fairweather said churches were legally required to abide by safe ministry standards, but as churches they should be doing ministry safely anyway, following the example of Jesus in the gospels.

"We're in a place where we need to be working on things, just like every other organisation, there's no point that this is finished, it's a constantly evolving area," Mrs Fairweather said.

The Melbourne diocese's action plan is available at: bit.ly/ChildSafetyActionPlan

Fear for discourse as media suffers

■ Jenan Taylor

Religious communities might have to rely on polarised reporting as many faith-based publications face closure, a religious media body has warned.

The Australasian Religious Press Association said independent coverage of important stories was at risk as denominations discontinued their publications or switched to digital-only models.

It said several religious press employees had lost their jobs and were moving to external media outlets.

ARPA president Sophia Sinclair said since June 2019 the number of Australian member publications had fallen from 56 to 18, while associate memberships were down from 14 to three.

Publications attributed this to the effects of COVID, changing communications models and tighter budgets, Ms Sinclair said.

She said they were also losing journalists and advertisers, mirroring what was happening with secular media.

Ms Sinclair said this would cost religious communities because readers would have to rely on polarised reporting or opinion from people who did not have journalism training, along with less dialogue and less robust two-way communication.

She said publication teams were also being absorbed into communications roles closely linked with faith organisations, rather than being externally resourced publications with independent editors and journalists.

"Journalists who had been focussing on reporting and editing have had to apply their skills to internal and low-cost external communications methods such as podcasts,

writing email newsletters and other new media," Ms Sinclair said.

She said this was affecting wider media as well, and that society was worse off as a whole because of this.

But Ms Sinclair said the Australasian Catholic Press Association reported that its member publications were bucking the downward trend.

"There's a real work of shining light in the darkness ... That's also a challenge for those of us who are still working as journalists within the religious press."

Sophia Sinclair

The body's website says it has about 140 members, a rise from record lows in the early 1990s.

Eureka Street editor David Halliday said the Jesuit publication transitioned from print to digital in 2006 and had not been too affected by the challenges other publications faced during the last three years.

Mr Halliday said *Eureka Street* had made a few small changes, including daily mail outs and publishing slightly fewer stories, but that was part of the shifting landscape. He said his team was continually focused on how to make the digital publication work, including running some free content, with extra items behind a paywall.

The news team was bigger in 1991 but now it was pared back and the publication

had several columnists and regular contributors, Mr Halliday said. He said that Catholic Church structure and stronger identity may have played a role in *Eureka Street's* resilience, but that loyalty from highly engaged readers helped as well.

"There's always interest for issues that affect the Catholic Church, and worldwide, as well as in Australia. That's always been part of our content offerings since inception," Mr Halliday said.

"We're very conscious to be outward facing and to be partaking in the wider conversation, hopefully inspiring, constructive conversation about important issues."

In 2022 Christian publication *Eternity News* moved away from reporting on news, saying it would focus on delivering content that would "equip, encourage and inspire believers".

Ms Sinclair said she had also noticed an uptick in the numbers of religious citizen journalists or discernment bloggers in the space. She said although some were bringing a necessary focus to issues in the Church, such as abuses, the untrained storytelling wasn't always a positive thing.

"There's a largely negative tone. It's not always very charitable, often, very messy. But at the same time, there's a real work of shining light in the darkness there, so there's something interesting happening," Ms Sinclair said.

"That's also a challenge for those of us who are still working as journalists within the religious press. Where's the light? Where's the enlightening to go? Are we doing it? Or is it these rising discerning bloggers that are doing the important work of holding people in power to account?"

The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne has no tolerance for any form of abuse, harassment or other misconduct. All concerns and reports of abuse and misconduct must be reported.



ANGLICAN
DIOCESE OF
MELBOURNE

Reporting Child Abuse in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

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

2 All suspicions or reports of child abuse must be reported to:

Police
Child Protection
Kooyoora Professional Standards (see below)

What is Child Abuse?

Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to:
Physical Abuse,
Emotional Abuse, Family
Violence, Sexual Abuse,
Grooming and 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 past and present abuse and harm
- Allegations, suspicions or observations
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct

CONTACT
NUMBERS:

POLICE
000

CHILD PROTECTION: 13 12 78 (After Hours)
North 1300 664 977 • South 1300 655 795 • East 1300 369 391
• West (Rural) 1800 075 599 • West (Metro) 1300 664 977

KOYOORA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
1800 135 246



Sally Hibbert and Joanne Burns man an eco stall at St Stephen and St Mary's parish. Picture: supplied.

Sustainability steps win recognition

■ Jenan Taylor

A Mount Waverley parish has become the first Anglican church in Victoria to receive a national award aimed at inspiring good environmental awareness and practice in churches.

St Stephen's and St Mary's environmentally thoughtful project made it the first Victorian Anglican church to earn a Five Leaf Eco-Award in June.

Awards director Jessica Morthorpe said St Stephen's and St Mary's had strengthened the building's energy efficiency, began glass, battery and e-waste recycling programs, conducted community outreach activities about waste and food security and educated

the congregation about the link between ecology and faith during worship services.

The church received an introductory award, which calls for churches to embed green actions across buildings, worship, congregation, outreach and community leadership. Parish environmental program coordinator Sally Hibbert said the church had previously installed solar panels and LED lighting, but members believed the award program would challenge them to work towards a higher model of practice.

She said parishioners worked towards the award with a detailed building energy audit that helped them to think creatively about how to use power efficiently and cheaply.

They also joined community planting projects and held a carbon fast campaign during Lent. Parishioners grew the church kitchen's recycling capacity, and started crafting and selling eco-friendly, sustainable products.

Ms Morthorpe said she began the awards after studying eco-theology and finding there was a biblical basis for looking after and loving the environment.

Before that she believed her love of God and her love for the natural environment were incompatible.

Ms Hibbert said the Mount Waverley parish was keen to continue its environmental program.

Faith activists set to push for fossil fuel bans in Australia

■ Jenan Taylor

An interfaith climate advocacy body plans to push for a ban on coal and gas amid reports the world is closer to intolerable climate change.

The Australian Religious Response to Climate Change said equipping supporters to take practical action to stop the proliferation of fossil fuel industries would be a focus in coming months.

It comes as the World Meteorological Organisation predicts record highs for global temperatures in the next five years, driven by human-caused greenhouse gases, and El Nino weather patterns.

Meteorologists say there is a high chance the five-year period will be the warmest on record, and forecast reduced rainfall in parts of Australia and the Amazon. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change burning fossil fuels, particularly gas and coal, and land use, drove most human related greenhouse gas emissions.

ARRCC president Thea Ormerod said the group planned to train interfaith supporters across the country to meet and talk with elected representatives about stopping new gas and coal projects. Ms Ormerod said the group also hoped to organise religious leaders to meet with federal Environment

Minister Tanya Plibersek to ask for bolder action against coal and gas projects.

It follows the federal government's decision earlier in May to greenlight a new open cut coal mine in central Queensland.

Ms Ormerod said the move frustrated the ARRCC which hoped to encourage the minister to adopt a climate trigger bill in the government's forthcoming revised *Environmental Protection Biodiversity and Conservation Act*.

A spokesperson for Ms Plibersek said the government made its decision about the new mine in line with the facts and national environment laws, and that it would consider projects on a case-by-case basis.



Ministry meeting

Clergy from around the Melbourne diocese gathered in June for the three-yearly Diocesan Ministry Conference, with the theme "Reimagining".

Pictures: Maria Tan.



Parish celebrates milestone

■ **Maya Pilbrow**

St James' Croydon Hills has celebrated its 40th anniversary, a milestone for a church that has had to adapt to stay viable.

St James', which shares a vicar with St Mark's Wonga Park, commemorated its 1983 consecration with a service on Trinity Sunday, officiated by Bishop Paul Barker.

The church began as an offshoot of St John's Croydon. Financial issues meant St James' couldn't afford a full-time priest on their own, so the church merged

with St Mark's 20 years ago.

Vicar the Reverend Leroy Coote said the parish was one community operating out of two church centres.

He said he preached at 9am at Wonga Park each Sunday before driving the ten minutes to Croydon Hills for the 10.30 service.

Mr Coote said people would be received and confirmed during the special service. He said a lunch following the service had been organised by a few parishioners.

"It's about celebrating 40 years of what God has done," he said.



St James' Croydon Hills has seen some changes in its 40 years.
Picture: St James' Croydon Hills



The Christ Church South Yarra choir worked hard to rehearse for the coronation concert.
Picture: Christ Church South Yarra

Choir learns 300 years

■ **Maya Pilbrow**

The choir at Christ Church South Yarra has celebrated the splendour of the Anglican coronation rituals with a performance of music from the coronation of King Charles III.

Music director Michael Fulcher said he'd only been able to access official music scores the day after the coronation, so the choir had less than a month to rehearse three centuries' worth of music.

Mr Fulcher said the song list included music from almost every coronation since King George II's in 1727.

He said some songs were coronation classics, like Handel's *Zadok the Priest* and



Pentecost Sunday with the Anglican Church of the Ascension and the Evangelical Formosan Church of Mount Olivet.

Picture: supplied

A service with the sound of that first Pentecost

■ Peter Wharton

A gathering of congregations from two different denominations marked the Pentecost Sunday service in East Burwood recently.

Parishioners from the Anglican Church of the Ascension were joined by members of the Evangelical Formosan Church of Mount Olivet at the combined morning service.

A packed church celebrated the Eucharist together led by Father Anthony Frost from the Ascension Church and

Senior Pastor Sherman Xing from EFC Mt Olivet.

The order of service was read together and in alternating sections by the combined congregation in both English and Mandarin, the resulting sound was reminiscent of that first Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem.

The sermon was delivered by Father Anthony and the congregations were treated to a sumptuous morning tea in the church hall at the conclusion of the service.

The occasion showed the benefits

of two congregations and two cultures joining together in worship, strengthening relationships, overcoming language barriers, celebrating our unity in diversity as the body of Christ in the world.

The Evangelical Formosan Church Mount Olivet has been conducting services on Sunday afternoons at the Anglican Church of The Ascension since June 2018.

The Ascension Church, which holds services 10am every Wednesday, and 8am and 9:30am each Sunday, will celebrate its 60th anniversary on Ascension Day 2024.

of coronation music in a month

I Was Glad by Hubert Parry, but others were new commissions.

"There's history there, traditional music, but new music is always written," he said.

Mr Fulcher said the concert was a celebration of the music of the Anglican coronation service, rather than a statement of support for the monarchy.

He said there was a wide range of emotional content within the music that he hoped the audience would share in.

Christ Church assistant priest the Reverend Emily Fraser said the concert was a wonderful way for people to experience the church's holy space without necessarily having to come to worship.

She said music concerts and events helped create a sense of community in the parish.

"It reminds people churches have a life beyond Sunday worship," she said.

Ms Fraser, a doctoral candidate who studies hymnody, said the concert would offer something beautiful for people to experience.

"You've got this wonderful spread of history within what is being sung, this showcase of absolutely marvellous music," she said.

Proceeds from the concert will go to the Christ Church Music Foundation. The concert took place on Sunday 4 June.

From the editor



Who are we? Plenty of people are asking variations on that question this edition.

For instance, if technology allowed us to live forever, would we still be human? Chris Mulherin explores the theology behind a Christian position on transhumanism on our faith-science pages, P20-21.

Or, what makes us "Anglican"? Luke Hopkins proposes we look to 19th century America for a framework that could unite us, P16-17.

And, who are we as a nation? We've read an ongoing discussion of the proposed Voice to Parliament on our letters page. As we consider our nation's future, contributor David Sloane urges us to take a stance for justice, P14.

So, as you read, I hope you find these questions – and their exploration – helpful.

Elspeth Kernebone, editor

Australia silent on India faith violence

■ Maya Pilbrow

Critics have called out Prime Minister Anthony Albanese for his failure to publicly raise concerns over India's treatment of religious minorities during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Australia.

Mr Modi's visit coincided with what human rights advocates described as a worrying increase in violence against religious minorities in India.

Human Rights Watch Australia director Daniela Gavshon said she was disappointed Mr Albanese did not publicly raise concerns over these issues during Mr Modi's recent visit.

Ms Gavshon said it was clear that Mr Modi did not feel the need to keep discussions about civil rights private.

"The Australian government will often say they have these conversations quietly, that they're not here to lecture the Indian government," she said.

"Prime Minister Modi has felt completely comfortable talking about what's going on internally in Australia."

A Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade spokesperson said Australia and India engaged regularly on human rights issues, including at a ministerial level.

After meeting with the Indian foreign minister in March, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong was asked if India's human rights record had been discussed.

"You would anticipate in our engagement with all countries that those values form part of how we engage," Ms Wong said.

Mr Modi said Mr Albanese had assured him that strict action would be taken in response to attacks on Hindu temples in Australia, speaking at a 24 May press conference.

Ms Gavshon said systematic discrimination against minority groups in India had increased under the Modi government.

Muslim communities have borne the brunt of the violence, with several instances of Hindu mobs attacking Muslim protesters leading to injuries and even death according to HRW.

Under recent anti-conversion laws, Christian communities have been legally persecuted for allegedly luring Hindus to convert. Christians have been subject to forcible reconversion by Hindu groups.

Ms Gavshon said violence from Hindu majoritarian groups affiliated with Mr Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party had become increasingly normalised.

Ms Gavshon said both India and

Australia had signed up to be rights respecting countries, both having affirmed the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"For a country like Australia to be able to speak up and show people inside India that human rights matter is key," she said

Australian & Asian Missions Association cofounder Helen Turner said she found the Australian government's refusal to speak up hypocritical.

She said Mr Modi's recent visit was a missed opportunity on the Australian government's behalf to call attention to this issue.

She said the Modi government turned a blind eye to and even encouraged attacks on non-Hindu places of worship.

She said a common occurrence was for a mob to drag Christian worshippers out of a church, beat them, break all the furniture and then set the building on fire.

"Nobody is saying anything about ongoing regular violent human rights abuses against Christians in India, in village and cities," she said.

Dr Turner, who has worked in missions in India since 1984, said there was a lack of media coverage in India of the persecution of Christians.

Senator Wong has been approached for comment.

Churches in flames, north-east India faces civil war risk

■ Maya Pilbrow

Tens of thousands of Christians have been displaced due to ongoing conflict in North-East India as aid groups fear the region is on the brink of civil war.

Open Doors Australia has confirmed at least 60 people died and more than 300 churches were burned down during community-wide rioting in Manipur state.

Violent confrontations between the majority-Hindu Meitei people and the majority-Christian Kuki tribe increased throughout May.

This comes after the pro-Hindu state government recommended the Meitei people be considered a Scheduled Tribe, an official designation within the Indian constitution that includes protections for land rights.

Protests by Kuki people worried this decision would allow Meitei people rights over ancestral Kuki land have resulted in riots, beatings and arrests.



Thousands of Christians have been displaced in Manipur state. Picture: Open Doors

Open Doors communications specialist Jordan Scott said people deserved the chance to peacefully protest without risking mob violence and mass arrests.

She said thousands of Christians' homes had been destroyed and tens of thousands of people displaced.

Ms Scott said the scale of the conflict meant Manipur was on the brink of civil war. She said the destruction of property that had

occurred would require long-term recovery.

An Open Doors field partner who requested anonymity for fear of reprisal said food, supplies and shelter would help in the immediate future, but spiritual wounds and scars of the heart would take longer to heal.

Human Rights Watch South Asia director Meenakshi Ganguly said Manipur had a long history of ethno-religious conflicts.

She said violence between Hindu and Christian groups erupted recently after a rise in Hindu majoritarian rhetoric from political leaders including the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

Ms Ganguly said religious minorities in India often had no recourse after being victimised, as authorities often did nothing or even contributed to the violence.

"The primary responsibility is for the state to not be partisan, to ensure the protection of all citizens now, and to not allow political bias," she said. "And we worry that may not be happening in Manipur."



Internal displacement is only one of the issues facing Christians in Burkina Faso.

Picture: Jacques Bouda/NRC

Anti-Christian violence soars in Sahel

■ Maya Pilbrow

The hot, semi-arid Sahel region in Africa may be fast becoming the most dangerous place in the world to be Christian.

Persecution watchdog International Christian Concern said violence against Christians had long been an issue in the region but was increasing dramatically in recent years due to a rise in jihadist terror attacks.

The Sahel lies below the Sahara and includes parts of Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Sudan and Ethiopia.

ICC Africa regional manager Kate Piselli said there were several insurgent terrorist groups operating in the region, including Boko Haram and factions of al-Qaeda and Islamic State.

She said her organisation had been monitoring the situation for Christians in the region for over 20 years, but the international community had only recently begun to acknowledge the severity of the situation in the Sahel.

The region drew attention in May when Australian Kenneth Elliott was released after seven years in captivity in West Africa.

He had been kidnapped by a North African branch of al-Qaeda in 2016 from a town in northern Burkina Faso where he ran a medical clinic.

Ms Piselli said Westerners were at particular risk of abduction.

“If a missionary is found, they’ll be kidnapped.”

Kate Piselli

“If a missionary is found, they’ll be kidnapped,” she said.

She said anyone was susceptible to terrorist violence, but Christians were targeted in attacks.

Ms Piselli said priests were regularly murdered and Christian girls and women often dressed as Muslims to avoid being targeted.

She said terrorist groups capitalised on the political instability in the region leading to devastating consequences.

Open Doors Australia communications specialist Jordan Scott said extreme

violence had become part of the everyday experience for Christians in the Sahel.

“We now hear of more faith-related killings happening in that region than anywhere else in the world,” she said.

In Burkina Faso, political unrest and increasing violence from terrorist groups have contributed to what the Norwegian Refugee Council has called one of the most neglected crises in the world, with two million internally displaced people.

An Open Doors partner working in trauma centres in Burkina Faso said many women whose husbands were killed by Islamic terrorists had been displaced from their communities.

The West African country is majority Muslim, but a fifth of the population is Christian, or about five million people according to the World Christian Database.

Tirham, who wished to be identified by first name only for anonymity, said Christian women in Burkina Faso suffered physical and sexual violence.

“In Burkina Faso, we are just scratching the surface right now. The trauma care need is just huge,” she said.

We must listen to this cry for justice

We all like to have our voice heard. It has been shown that the lives of people improve when they feel they have been heard and appreciated.

This is what I believe is at the crux of the Voice Referendum. The Uluru Statement from the Heart is just that – a cry from the heart of a people who have lived on this continent for at least 65,000 years. That is about 3000 generations!

These people have been crying out for their voice to be heard for over 150 years. It started from the cry of William Barak for justice to be shown to the Aboriginal settlement of Coranderrk near Healsville in the 1870s. This was followed with the 1887 Maloga Partition, William Cooper's 1937 Partition, the 1963 Yirrkala Bark Partition, the 1988 Barunga Statement, the 2001 Reconciliation Declaration, the 2016 Redfern Statement and many more.

Surely we can acknowledge the leadership and courage of Aboriginal people over many generations and at last give them the right to speak to Parliament. That is all. Our parliamentarians then get to decide what to do. For too long the newcomers to this great land have told the First Nations people



Picture: Dreamstime

what to do and what is good for them. Now let them speak to us about how we can all work together to bridge the gap in so many ways. This is not divisive, it is unifying. This is not racist, it is justice. It is how we can all walk together to a more effective action to level the cultural playing field in our country. Then we will all benefit. How can anyone say no to that?

David Sloane
Corowa

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Sharp drop in religious press could spell loss for community

It is very concerning that these papers and the journalism they represent is diminishing.

It is also revealing that *Eureka Street* have weathered the changes so effectively. Without being relevant to the wider community, I wonder whether religious publications have become just a self involved, bulletin board rather than a news bulletin that allows for wide ranging vigorous debate. I also note that it would seem that many of our best scholars are not appearing in print. Is this that they are not interested, invited, or fed up of the lack of positive debate.

Beverley Phillips

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. Email letters to editor@melbourneanglican.org.au.

Letters must be less than 250 words, and include your full name, address and phone number for identity verification. They may be edited for clarity, length and grammar.



Everyday
Saints
The Melbourne
Anglican

Alexandra Amerides

hasn't always felt at home with religion. As a non-binary person, they struggled to fit in with their Orthodox Christian upbringing. But joining an Anglican church changed things. These days, Alexandra has found a voice to express themselves through professional opera singing.



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

Everyday Saints

Vacant Appointments as of 19 June 2023:

St Eanswythe Altona/St Clement Altona Meadows;
St Martin, Belgrave Heights; Parish of Box Hill;
Brimbank; St John Chrysostom, Brunswick West; St Faith, Burwood; St Mark, Camberwell; St Michael, North Carlton; St Catharine, Caulfield South; St Philip, Collingwood; Mount Dandenong; St John the Divine, Croydon; St Barnabas, Glen Waverley; Holy Trinity, Hampton; Christ Church, Melton; St Augustine, Mentone; St George Monbulk; St Peter's Murrumbidgee with Holy Nativity Hughesdale; St Aidan Noble Park; St Peter's, Ocean Grove with All Saints, Barwon Heads; St Aidan, Parkdale; Pascoe Vale-Oak Park; 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:

FLETCHER, The Revd Timothy, appointed Vicar, St James and St Peter, Kilsyth/Montrose, effective 13 July 2023
GOY, The Revd Fiona, appointed Vicar extension, St George, Red Hill, effective 16 June 2023
GRAVOLIN, The Revd Wendy, appointed Intentional Interim Vicar, Bellarine Gateway, effective 1 October 2023
NEWMARCH, The Revd Caroline, appointed Vicar extension, St Philip, Mount Waverley, effective 1 July 2023
POLLARD, The Revd Stephen, appointed Archdeacon, Archdeaconry of Geelong, effective 28 June 2023
SOLEY, The Revd Stuart, appointed Vicar, St Bartholomew, Burnley, effective 4 October 2023
TAYLOR, The Revd Jonathan, appointed Vicar from Priest-in-Charge, St Alban, Hamlyn Heights and extension of Area Dean of the Deanery of Corio, effective 7 June 2023
THABA, The Revd Lankiri, appointed Vicar, Christ Church, Geelong, effective 18 July 2023
VALENTINO, The Revd Sharon, appointed Vicar from Priest-in-Charge, Surfcoast Anglican Parish, effective 19 June 2023

Permission to Officiate:

HANSFORD, The Revd Gavin, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 15 June 2023

Resignations:

HANSFORD, The Revd Gavin, Curate-in-Charge, St Peter, Fawkner, effective 9 April 2023
TRIST, The Revd Canon Dr Richard, Senior Lecturer, Ridley College, Melbourne, effective 20 June 2023



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

Clergy Moves

Playing God?: Sci-fi meets reality at Christian event

Picture: iStock

■ Maya Pilbrow

If you could mutate your DNA, could you get super strength?

If you could change your genes, could you develop a genius intellect?

According to geneticist Phillip Batterham gene editing techniques could revolutionise treatment of some diseases, but there are risks.

In his own research, Dr Batterham's lab has routinely used the CRISPR gene editing technology to introduce DNA mutations in flies in research directed at understanding the impact of insecticides on insects.

Dr Batterham will speak at ISCAST's upcoming Scientific and Spiritual Human conference.

He said people of faith, agnostics and atheists had similar concerns about the ramifications of gene editing, sharing fears that gene editing would interfere with nature or destroy the mystery of life.

"In essence they are asking a question that amounts to 'Are you playing God?'" Dr Batterham said.

ISCAST executive director the Reverend Dr Chris Mulherin said new technology allowed geneticists to uncover amazing possibilities, but those possibilities required careful ethical consideration.

He said scientific discoveries often raised questions around what it meant to be human, and spirituality could offer a valuable perspective.

Dr Mulherin compared developments in gene editing technology to the discovery of nuclear fission.

"We discovered that $E = MC^2$ and we could find enormous energy from fusion and fission," he said. "And then we went on to make bombs."

Dr Batterham said discussions about science and spirituality had the ability to connect those with differing viewpoints.

"People can have different perspectives but come to the same conclusions," he said. "It's about finding the common ground."

The ISCAST Scientific and Spiritual Human conference takes place 22 July.
More information can be found at: <https://bit.ly/ISCAST>.



Church of England Boys Society (CEBS) Closure

CEBS is winding up its operations in Melbourne at the end of 2023. The Diocesan Archives will maintain a central repository of CEBS's historical records and archives. Parishes who had CEBS branches are requested to review their own parish records and archives and notify the Registrar at registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au if they have any materials relating to CEBS. The Registrar will then arrange for the Diocesan Archives' team to work with the parish to relocate those materials into the central Diocesan Archives.



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Who is 'Anglican'? These four principles

■ Luke Hopkins

It has long been said that the Australian Anglican Church has let two different ecclesial cultures live in the same institution, and let both call themselves "Anglican". It might be more apt to say in the present that there are at least three or four different cultures active within the national Church, not least here in the Diocese of Melbourne.

This is not necessarily a problem in itself. As we look around Australia and beyond, the Anglican Communion has become a home for many people with a variety of cultures and ecclesial expressions. However, we are presented with a question: "How do we discern what makes us all Anglican?" Once we pare back the inessentials of these ecclesial structures, what are the core things that all Anglicans could say are true of their identity? What beliefs and practices might be considered necessary to being an "Anglican Christian" and what beliefs and practices are secondary?

We are not the first Anglicans to ask such questions. What is essential to Christian identity has been a perennial question for "Anglicans".

A figure who might help us answer these questions is late 19th century American Episcopalian priest William Reed Huntingdon. Huntingdon had a significant influence on Anglicans globally while also being relatively unknown to most.

In 1870, Huntingdon published a book called *The Church Idea*. This was the result of years of reflection in sermons and addresses he had delivered across the United States. After years of civil war, Huntingdon saw the vocation of American Anglicanism as one that could bring Christian denominations across the United States together into one fold. He envisaged a pan-Protestant national Church.

However, on what core principles would such a church be founded? What were the indispensable traits of being Christian once you whittled it all down?

The Church Idea articulated what Huntingdon believed these core features of Christian identity were and had been since the earliest times of the Church. This he called the "Anglican Principle". It contained four indispensable parts:

- The Holy Scriptures as the Word of God
- The Primitive Creeds as the Rule of Faith (that is, the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian creeds)
- The two Sacraments ordained by Christ

himself (Baptism and the Eucharist)

- The Episcopate as the keystone of governmental unity

Huntingdon argued this "Anglican Principle" was separate from any cultural accidents. He believed it could be held as the common elements for all Christians, everywhere and for all time, no matter who they were or what their opinions were on any number of other matters.

For Huntingdon, this ecumenical vision of a national American church justified the

separation of Anglicanism from ideas of "Englishness". As such, a national American church did not need ivy-covered village churches transplanted from the English countryside with surplices, choristers and prebendaries. Huntingdon's vision of a core "Anglican Principle" meant that Christians could inhabit their nation and culture missionally and give proper cultural expression to their faith, without confusing these cultural traits with what was core to being a Christian.

Huntingdon's vision of a pan-Protestant

"A bishop once described Anglican identity ... as big sheep paddock. Yes, he said, there are boundaries on that paddock but there is a huge amount of space to move around. The problem, he went on to say, was that most Anglicans spend a lot of time looking at the fence."



might help us understand our identity



Picture: iStock

church did not materialise. However, the American Episcopal Church's house of bishops accepted the above four points, this "Quadrilateral", as key to Christian reunion, at an 1886 General Convention meeting in Chicago. Then in 1888, at the third Lambeth Conference, bishops from around the nascent Anglican Communion affirmed a version of the Quadrilateral as key articles of Anglican identity. As such Huntingdon's four points became known as the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral and were upheld as the key features of what it meant to be Anglican.

So, would Anglicans across the Melbourne diocese be able to say the same? Can we look at these four points and recognise them as fundamental to our own Christian life and identity?

Today, each of the four points of the Quadrilateral is expressed in the Fundamental Declarations of the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia. These first three sections of the

constitution are the unchangeable and non-negotiable parts of that document. They are core to what we believe Anglicanism is and how it should be expressed in Australia and for all time. However, I recognise that the Constitution is a relatively unknown document to most Australian Anglicans. Some are probably even surprised to hear that such a document exists.

However, as we move forward into the future as Australian Anglicans, Huntingdon's Quadrilateral could continue to be a key way that we recognise our common Anglican identity in this country. It is both a comprehensive and very simple view of what faithful Christian identity looks like. It allows for a great scope of differences on other matters because it knows what really counts. We can vary in worship styles, in opinions, in interpretations, in governance mechanisms – because we know what matters.

A bishop once described Anglican

identity to me as big sheep paddock. Yes, he said, there are boundaries on that paddock but there is a huge amount of space to move around. The problem, he went on to say, was that most Anglicans spend a lot of time looking at the fence.

For unfortunate reasons, any discussion of Anglican identity continues to be a contested space – much as it has been for the last 500 years. However, Huntingdon's vision of essential Christian identity can help us in the present and give us a way forward for the future.

We might find less heat in our current conversations if we could come to a broader, more comprehensive appreciation of what it means to be Anglican – without letting go of our convictions or consciences. I know that I am not alone in this thought. I pray that we can allow for difference and persevere in the hope that God will not only bless our common ministry but forgive the mistakes we each and all make. We can do so in the knowledge that what makes me Christian are the same things that make you Christian.

The points of Huntingdon's Quadrilateral direct us to what unites us in Christ – Creeds, Scriptures, Sacraments, Ministry. Huntingdon's "Anglican Principle" is the first thing for Christians because it is based on our essential relationship with Jesus Christ. The Creeds articulate the essentials of our faith in Christ. The sacraments given by Christ convey the grace of Christ to us. The Scriptures speak the words of Christ to us today. The ministry of the Church (and its leadership) calls us into the fellowship of Christ and brings us together as His disciples.

Things fall apart when we do not accept that Jesus Christ is our common saviour. Things fall apart, when we stop recognising Christ in each other. When he become "my Jesus" and not yours, there is no common Christian identity for Anglicans. When my actions please Him, but I fundamentally believe that yours do not, there can be no fellowship between us. When in our heart-of-hearts we can no longer recognise each other as Christians, then our unity in Christ falls apart and perhaps more than that. Perhaps, we lose sight of Christ as well. Our fellowship falls apart because love is no more. When Christians stop loving each other as Christ loves us, then ...

The Reverend Luke Hopkins is college chaplain at Trinity College Melbourne.

Sharing God's light with the shunned

■ Jenan Taylor

Natalie Dixon-Monu felt like she'd just gotten her life back when God called her to ordination.

Growing up in a violent Christian home, she despaired at the falseness of the church where her family worshipped.

But the teenager was drawn to the words of the Bible and increasingly glimpsed the God she thought she had lost sight of.

Her conviction that there was a better way to be a Christian left her estranged from some family members and without many of her childhood friends.

Reawakened to faith, Ms Dixon-Monu became a youth worker and joined the Uniting Church, where she was encouraged to act on her appetite for social justice.

She was surprised to find herself being called for discernment, and in her early 20s became a priest.

Her first placements were among people many would have given up on.

But the Reverend Dixon-Monu's faith – and the experiences of her youth – gave her the foothold to minister to them with compassion and joy.

Now Ms Dixon-Monu coordinates Boroondara Community Outreach, a ministry supporting people with a mental health condition, or who are socially isolated, to live with dignity in the community.

The work includes providing them with good food and fellowship, the very things the COVID pandemic restrictions made difficult.

It seemed all the city's hungry and isolated would collect at the ministry's door during those times. Ms Dixon-Monu and her volunteers would cook between 600 and 800 meals a week for them.

Unsure how to support all of them on a lean budget, some critics suggested the ministry should limit who it served, but Ms Dixon-Monu refused.

"It really felt like the feeding of the 5000. I felt it was our responsibility to feed them; these are our people ... And the money for it just rolled in, somehow," she said.

On *The Melbourne Anglican's Everyday Saints* podcast, Ms Dixon-Monu shares how she has helped create a place of hope and care that goes far beyond food.

Part of that means rejecting the idea that some members of the community need fixing, she told host Jenan Taylor.

"People are mysteries to enjoy," Ms Dixon-Monu said. "They are not problems to solve."

Her lens on the world is an inquiry into what matters, and how to live a good life.

To hear Natalie-Dixon-Monu's story on Spotify visit bit.ly/EverydaySaintsSpotify

To listen to more Everyday Saints podcasts, visit bit.ly/EverydaySaints

Everyday Saints is a podcast from *The Melbourne Anglican* which features the faith stories of those from Melbourne and beyond.



Natalie Dixon-Monu has helped create a place of hope and care. Picture: supplied



Physiotherapist Tamara Shepherd works with a child on a Mercy Ship.

Picture: supplied

Faith drives healing in God's name

■ Jenan Taylor

Physiotherapist Tamara Shepherd has been helping people heal for 43 years. But it might be what she does in her spare time that makes the most difference in people's lives.

Outside work the St Hilary's parishioner has helped in the church's op shop, supported natural disaster response efforts in regional Victoria, and participated in medical teams based everywhere from India to Tanzania.

Ms Shepherd has volunteered so much she received an Order of Australia medal on Australia Day for her community service.

She said after struggling through COVID restrictions, she realised that being around people and doing things for them motivated her.

But her faith was her main driver. "I'm just doing what God calls us to do, which is to use our skills and abilities to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves," Ms Shepherd said.

That mission has taken her to volunteer with Mercy Ships, a faith-based healthcare organisation that delivers medical aid for people most in need in developing countries

from aboard a fleet of floating civilian hospitals.

What most attracted Ms Shepherd to Mercy Ships was that there were so many individuals from different places and cultures volunteering to do something for other people.

Ms Shepherd's first stint with the organisation's *Africa Mercy* vessel in 2019 took her to Guinea.

There she drew on skills she learned while working in the burns unit of the Alfred Hospital in the 1980s to manage burns contractures in patients.

Her second three-month assignment recently placed Ms Shepherd just off Senegal and the Gambia, on board the organisation's *Global Mercy* hospital ship, the largest in the world.

Ms Shepherd said the work was particularly focused on orthopaedic surgery for children with conditions like rickets, knock knees or wind-swept legs, caused by dietary deficiencies and other misfortune.

In one memorable case, Khadiatou, a child who had been unable to walk for two years because of severe burns, and was withdrawn, came to be able to exercise and play again two weeks after surgery, she said.

Since returning to Australia, Ms Shepherd has been receiving reports of Khadiatou's progress.

"She was laughing and talking, which she had not done since her burns, and even told herself 'good job' after each exercise, which was a phrase I had initially used with her," she said. "It's a real example of the emotional and physical healing that's being done on the ships in God's name."

Despite the serious nature of the work, the mood aboard the Mercy Ships was always welcoming and compassionate for patients, and staff alike, irrespective of their beliefs.

"It's a bit like going to church camp, basically with 600 mainly other Christian people from 14 different countries. They have worship services on board, there's a chaplain. In many ways it's an easy way to serve," Ms Shepherd said.

But the experience has affirmed her belief that everyone has God-given talents to serve the community with.

"They don't have to be profound; it could be sewing masks in your own house. If people have got time, they've always got some talent or wisdom to offer someone that could help them," Ms Shepherd said.

Some Christians believe technology can

■ Chris Mulherin

Last month, I had dinner on Southbank with an acquaintance — we'll call him James. We shared our common stories of faith, engineering, and our aspirations for our children and the future.

But despite the things we have in common, James and I part ways when it comes to the future of humanity. How so?

James, from Brisbane, is a leader in the US-based Christian Transhumanist Association, and he believes it is our God-given responsibility to use technology to enhance human beings without limit.

In contrast, I am concerned that a Christian transhumanist position misses the mark on where our hope really lies.

For instance, what would you say to Dave, who says he will live indefinitely because medical science will be able to replace his organs and slow the ageing of his brain? It costs a lot, but Dave can afford it. And, he says, we all have a right to do what we like with our bodies.

Or, what would you say to Carol and her husband Roger who plan to have a baby boy called Ocean for Christmas next year? Next month, they are going to create 20 test-tube embryos. Then they will do preimplantation genetic screening on the male embryos to select the one that is likely to be the most intelligent. Perhaps they will also genetically modify Ocean to enhance their capacities. Then, in March next year Ocean will be implanted in Carol.

Such are the dreams of the transhumanist movement, which, in the extreme, offers life everlasting. Given the progress of medicine, according to some gurus of transhumanism, young people today can expect to live forever.

One path to eternal life is the purely medical one, that Dave looks forward to.

However, further into the realms of what sounds like science fiction are transhumanist hopes that one day we will be able to map and download all the information stored in a human brain.

As you age and your limbs get creaky, how would you feel about all your brain content being downloaded to the hard drive of an android? It would be a robot body, with your brain running the show. Proponents argue that if the essence of a human being is the information contained in the brain, and if the body can be separated from that information, then the information that makes you *you* could

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Ray Kurzweil

be downloaded to a hard drive. And then, surely, it could be uploaded to the cloud. So, you would be there, stored somewhere in cyberspace.

These are the dreams of techno-optimists who think that biology has brought us so far, but it is time we hurried the process using the best of science and technology. In a move that takes us from therapy to enhancement, they say that we don't just want to be well, we want to be better than well.

To quote one famous transhumanist proponent, Ray Kurzweil, ex director of engineering at Google, “We’re going to get more neocortex, we’re going to be funnier, we’re going to be better at music. We’re going to be sexier. We’re really going to exemplify all the things that we value in humans to a greater degree.”

So why am I worried?

On the one hand, this blending of humans and machines is not new, and it is not all bad. Committed Christian Graeme Clark from Melbourne created one of the world's first successful bionic devices — the bionic ear, the first recreation of a human sense.

Yes, God has given us the calling and often the means to restore people to what we might loosely call, normal human functioning. But the ideology of transhumanism goes further.

For the transhumanist, normal human functioning is an arbitrary limit. Why not use technology to enhance human physical and mental capacities beyond normal human functioning? Why not prolong and “improve” human life as far as possible?

We already have the basics of the technology necessary to continuously repair



the body. Just last year researchers used the CRISPR technique to remove a gene that caused cells to stop reproducing. Meanwhile 3D printers are already used to build up tissues layer by layer.

Who knows how long it will be before you can order a 3D printed kidney made to your own biological specifications?

But for Christians there are at least four theological challenges to transhumanist visions of a humanly created utopia.

Firstly, our theology of sin. For Christians, sin runs much deeper than the things that an Oxford philosopher might want to weed out of the human genome. Sin, for Christians, is an illness that only God, in his healing work in Jesus Christ, is able to minister to and ultimately heal.

To think that science could purify the human race, is, from a Christian point of view, just absurd.

This leads to the second issue for Christians, our theology of redemption.

For transhumanism, redemption is within this material non-transcendent

'fix' us. Scripture differs



Picture: iStock

world. Christians, however, wait for God to transform all things, to bring in the new heavens and the new earth (Revelation 21).

Christians wait for the redemption of all creation (Romans 8). We do not live under the delusion that we can save ourselves. Our hope is in the saving work of Jesus Christ to deliver us from the consequences of sin and the brokenness in our earthly lives. Our hope is not in genetics to reverse the story of Genesis chapter 3.

Then there is our theology of the body. Christian hope is found in the resurrection of the body. We do not believe that humans are X terabytes of information loaded up to a physical body.

1 Corinthians 15 is very clear, along with the gospel testimony of the resurrection, that human bodies are very much part of who we are. "The Word became flesh and dwelled among us," (John 1) is the ultimate affirmation of our physical, bodily personhood, created in God's image, but created with a body. Christians cannot go along with a view that says our essential self could be

"Christians cannot go along with a view that says our essential self could be saved as data on a hard disk."

Chris Mulherin

saved as data on a hard disk.

Finally, there's our theology of life everlasting. Christians await the new heavens and the new earth, inaugurated by God in his time and not in ours. We embrace the responsibility to be creative, to prevent suffering, to restore normal human functioning, even to prolong life. But we do not prolong life at all costs. And we do not prolong life in the interests of fleeing from death and our ultimate encounter with God face-to-face.

So, where does that leave us? I think

James and I need to meet for dinner again. Together we might agree, along with secular transhumanist idealists, that things could be better and that there are things that could be improved with the world and humanity.

However, we would disagree about the four issues above. The Christian Transhumanist Manifesto makes no mention of sin, salvation, the person and work of Christ, and the hope of everlasting life after death.

The implicit message of the CTA is that all these historic Christian beliefs can be "fixed" or replaced by the advance of science. The explicit message of the Scriptures is that, despite our best and worthwhile efforts at alleviating suffering, it is only the triune God who can ultimately make things right.

Chris Mulherin is an Anglican Minister and the Executive Director of ISCAST—Christianity and Science in Conversation. He is the author of *Christianity and Science: Understanding the Conflict Myth*.

We must nurture churches that look different from the 'traditional'

■ Brad Billings

Driving along the Hume Freeway recently I passed numerous billboards proclaiming "exciting new" house and land developments.

Each was accompanied by the evocative name of the estate and imagery of idealistic suburban scenes. Behind the billboards was excavation machinery carving out new roads, over which rose the frames of new houses being built. There are several whole new suburbs emerging along the Hume growth corridor. The council's advice is that the population here will exceed 200,000 by 2026, and grow beyond that to more than 300,000 in the ensuing years. Most of these localities are within the geographical area of a single Anglican parish. Of course this is just one example of a burgeoning new growth area in greater Melbourne and Geelong!

I have previously written about the importance in Anglican polity and ministry of what I described as "the traditional parish". I certainly stand by that. I would also suggest that sometimes what is described in terms of "church revitalisation", "fresh expressions", and even "church planting", could equally be described as "good parish ministry". Even so, I recognise the critical

need for new and innovative ministry initiatives alongside the parish model, to respond nimbly, and in innovative ways, to the extraordinary growth of Melbourne and Geelong, in all of its wonderful diversity.

This is not a new concept by any means! For decades now we have heard of "fresh expressions" and "green shoots" or similar. These are generally new ministries developing alongside, or within, traditional ministry models such as the parish. Such models of ministry are necessarily diverse and highly flexible. We are at a time in our diocese's life when we need to be bold fostering and nurturing new initiatives. Many of these will look very different to what we have known in the past, whilst at the same time holding on to that which makes us Anglican. Again this is nothing new. We have heard for many years about what a former Archbishop of Canterbury described as the "mixed economy" church. In short, it is a "both-and" rather than an "either-or" model of church and ministry.

The Diocese of Melbourne, through the synod, has prescribed rules and procedures for the formation and establishment of new ministries of this nature. All such new ministry initiatives require the endorsement of the diocesan governing body, the Archbishop in Council, and are subject to

diocesan legislation in the same way as a parish. The clergy and authorised lay ministers who serve in them are all subject to the same regimes of authorisation and safeguarding as all other clergy and authorised lay ministers. All collectively belong to, and together are a part of, the rich tapestry that is the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Melbourne.

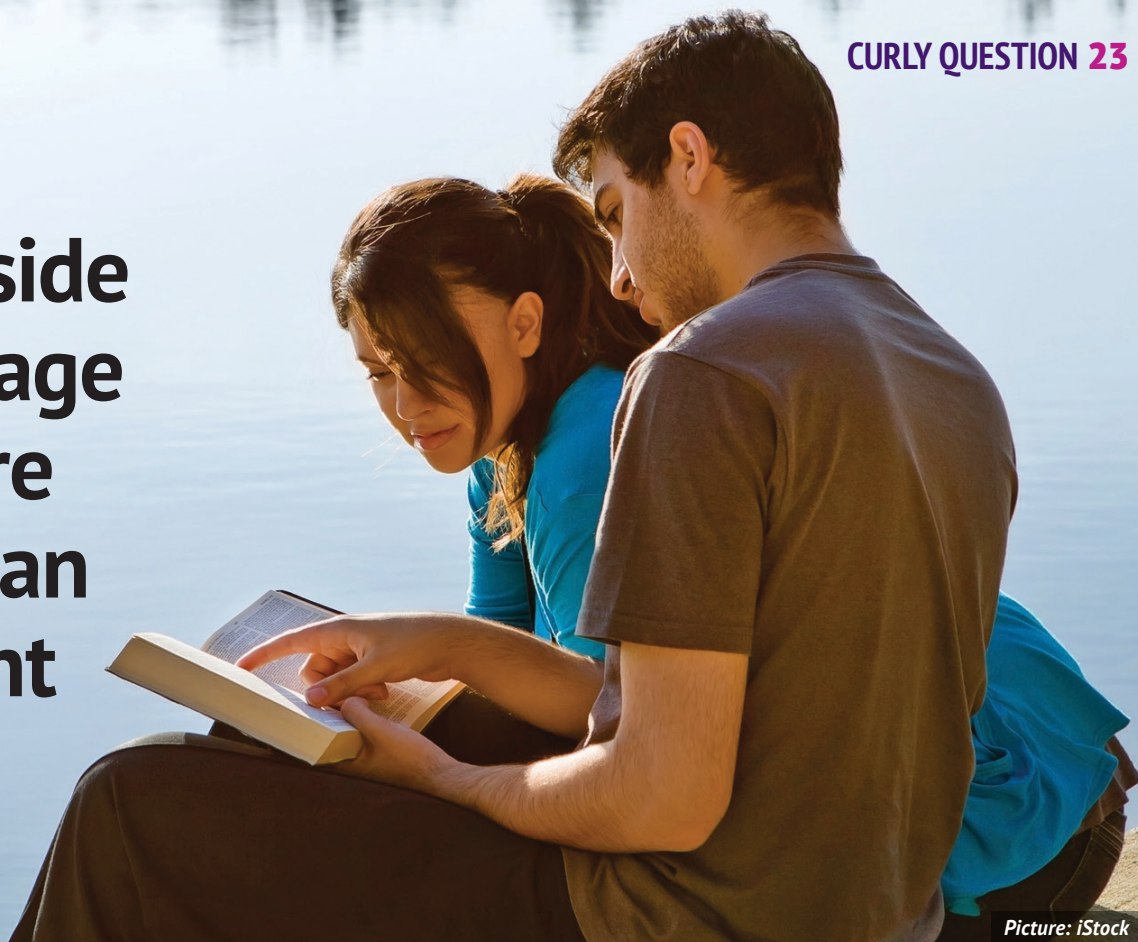
One locality in the area of episcopal care I have recently become responsible for comes to mind as a living example of the "both-and" model of church. In Werribee there is a parish church in the traditional model. Meeting on the same site also is an authorised congregation worshipping in the Karen language. Nearby is a rapidly growing authorised Anglican congregation meeting at the local football club. Each of these communities are engaged in mission and outreach in their own way, and in accordance with their own mission action plan. Each are needed. Each are Anglican in polity and identity. Each are vital components, alongside all of our parishes and authorised congregations, present and merging, in our shared mission in "to make the word of God fully known."

Brad Billings is Assistant Bishop of the Oodthengong area of episcopal care.



Sojourners Church meets at the football club in Werribee. Picture: supplied

Sex outside of marriage – is there a Christian argument for it?



Picture: iStock

■ Georgia Nicholas

Sex outside of marriage – is there a Christian argument for it?

Where does your mind go when you hear this question? Mine automatically frames it as a question about an individual's sexuality – that is a question about our gender identity, sexual desire, or sexual experiences.

But it's worth thinking about this question in terms of a broader concept. Intimacy.

Intimacy is about how you relate to others. Every one of us has been created for intimacy. This intimacy includes physical, emotional, and spiritual intimacy. We are designed for relationship and closeness.

While sexual intimacy is certainly a part of this expression, it is by no means the sum of this expression.

We are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). God is triune – Father, Son, and Spirit. He lives in close intimacy, He defines it. Because of this, we are designed for relationship too. However, this is first with God, and secondly with His image bearers – other people.

Using that framework, let's ask again. Can Christians have sex outside of marriage?

Young people ask me this question a lot through my work with Big Kids' Table. It's often followed by, "But what if we plan to get married?"

In a society that worships sexual

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

pleasure, and prevalent church culture obsessed with rules, I can't blame them. Celibacy is increasingly uncommon inside and outside of the church. So is there an argument from the Bible to support sex outside of marriage?

To answer this question, I'll ask another in return: do you believe that God is good?

Think about it. Do you honestly believe God is good, and kind, and just, and worth following with everything you are?

I'd like to suggest that lots of Christians that think God is a good friend, but fewer that trust God as a good Lord and King with everything they are.

It's easy to find what you want in the

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:



Bible when you read it with an agenda. You can find a shallow argument for sex outside of marriage, sure. However, if we lessen God's influence in our lives to that of a well-meaning friend rather than a good Lord and King, we read Scripture as an advice column instead of a pathway to life at its absolute fullest (John 10:10).

It's when we make God Lord of our lives, our search to understand sexual boundaries and theology becomes less about finding justification for our feelings and a line in the sand. Instead our search is more pursuing closeness to our Creator and Life-source, as well as becoming who he calls us to be. That is, worthy of love and welcome at His table, always.

When we are not clear on such worthiness and welcome, it plays out in the way we express our sexuality. As we think about the purpose of sex and relationships, we need to also think about how we value ourselves and God.

So as you search for an answer to this question, I encourage you to read the Scriptures that teach on this topic through the lens of God's kindness and character. When we seek to understand the Author, that is His heart and vision, the Word gains colour, conviction, and clarity.

Georgia Nicholas is co-director of non-for-profit ministry Big Kids' Table, which exists to create safe, honest conversations about Kingdom identity, sexual experience, and the expression of sexual desire for youth and young adults of faith. Find out more at bigkidstable.org.



Honoured Anglicans Margaret and Tim Kendall (first and third from right) with other workers at the Mornington Community Support Centre.

Picture: supplied

Anglicans honoured on King's Birthday

■ Jenan Taylor

A “mad jam-maker” who’s used her skills to support earthquake survivors – along with years of other community work, a bishop who has served the Anglican church for decades, and a retired solicitor who has used his legal skills in governance.

These were among the Melbourne Anglicans named in this year’s King’s Birthday Honours.

St George’s Red Hill members **Margaret and Tim Kendall** received Medals of the Order of Australia, recognising their exceptional service to the Mornington Peninsula community.

The couple has worshipped at St George’s since the mid-1970s, and usually works as a team.

They’ve volunteered at a range of community organisations, including Vinnies Kitchen and Second Bite for more than 10 years.

Mrs Kendall has also participated multiple times in a local initiative to support people who sleep rough in their cars, while Mr Kendall was the former president of the Red Hill Agriculture Show Society.

But Mr Kendall said the Mornington Community Support Centre was where they’d poured most of their energy for the past eight years. After their Second Bite delivery shift on Thursdays, the pair don aprons at the Mornington Community Support Centre’s cafe.

There Mr Kendall does the dishes and Mrs Kendall helps serve up meals and chats with people in need, who stop by for food and fellowship.

Also receiving honours was Melbourne-



Mr Antony Greenwood AM.

based **Bishop Alison Taylor**, who became a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of her service to the Anglican Church and to conservation.

Chair of the Clergy Bill working group, and director of the Anglican Representative (National Redress Scheme) Ltd, Bishop Taylor has been vicar at St John’s and St Dunstan’s churches in Camberwell, and was assistant bishop in the Diocese of Brisbane from 2013 to 2018.

Bishop Taylor said among the highlights of her working life were her role as chair at Anglican Overseas Aid from 2005 to 2013, and her efforts assisting the Archbishop of Canterbury to extend a network of development agencies in parts of the Anglican Communion.

She was also a board member of the first Renewable Energy Authority for Victoria in the early 1990s, and worked as a senior urban planning lecturer in China.

Retired solicitor and former director of the Anglican Diocesan Schools Commission **Antony Greenwood** was also appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

The honours list detailed Mr Greenwood’s outstanding contributions to the Anglican Church, and to governance and legal advisory organisations.

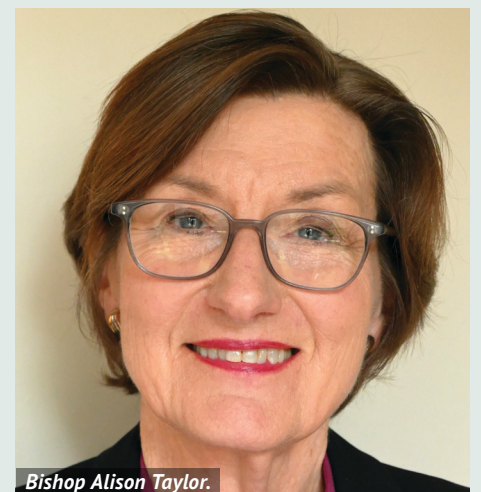
Mr Greenwood is a member of St James’ Old Cathedral, and president of the diocese’s New Cranmer Society.

St Columb’s parish council chair **David Knox** also received an AM for significant services to the financial sector.

The Reverends **Kenneth Parker** and **Stuart Blackler** each received an OAM for service to the Anglican Church.

Stephen Wilmoth was awarded an OAM for services to the law and to the church.

Have we missed any honours? Please let us know at editor@melbourneanglican.org.au.



Bishop Alison Taylor.