

THE Melbourne Anglican

OCTOBER 2022, No 618

How Heidin Kunoo found her mission

Story – P20-21



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Translation
turns a new
leaf

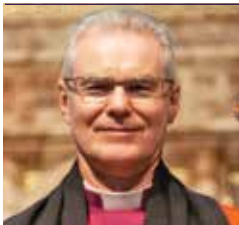


P10-11
Growing
fight against
climate crisis



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Galaxies
speak of God's
providence

Picture: Janine Eastgate



Find your place of service to Christ in his Body

■ Archbishop Philip Freier

It is always a delight to experience the vitality of the body of Christ. Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 are readily recalled texts that show the mutual dependence of the Christian with other Christians as we inhabit the reality of being “in Christ”, corporately and individually. For the work of the church to be carried out in each generation and context, it needs individual Christians to embrace and exercise their Spirit-given gifts in ministry. This is to happen in the shared and communal relationships that we have in the Body of Christ.

For any of us individually, there is a journey of trust as we discern the giftedness that is within us and the giftedness that our context calls out of us. Ministry effectiveness is expressed in different ways according to the places and opportunities that any of us have for ministry. Patient listening in a pastoral conversation, discerning application of biblical and theological reflection in preaching along with participation in the decision-making life of the Church are equally places where the Spirit's gifts to the people of God should be seen at work.

I feel privileged to be at the public and visible step in the journey of discipleship that leads to some becoming part of the



Picture: iStock

ordained ministry of the Church. Much goes before the public services of making deacons and ordaining priests that we gather for each year. It is a wonderful testament to the ongoing presence of the Spirit in the life of the Church that we have a 10-year average of 20 ordinands becoming deacons each year. Effective ministry in parish and congregational life, encouragement of a discernment in the life of enquirers and

rigorous theological formation involve many people exercising their Spirit given giftedness for the service of God's Church as we renew constantly our leadership.

A few weeks ago, it was my pleasure to host an observance of the 60th anniversaries of ordination for my predecessor in office, Archbishop Peter Watson, and Archdeacon Emeritus Alan Nichols. Sixty years of ministry is no small thing, and it was moving to gather with people they had invited from a wide cross section of their life and ministry to thank God for all that the journey of ordained ministry had been for each. As we gathered in the Chapel of St John at Bishops court to break the bread and share the cup of the Lord, there was a strong sense of entering the “eternal present” of our membership of the Body of Christ.

Whether it is in a lay vocation of faithful discipleship, the beginning of an ordained vocation or at the fulfilment of a long and faithful ministry, there is much to celebrate. Much too, of course, to be thankful for. You may have heard Phillips Brooks' words before, but I think that they hold something of the tension between our own preferences and what God calls us to do and be, “O Lord, I do not pray for tasks equal to my strength: I ask for strength equal to my tasks”. May you find your place of joy and service to Christ in his Body, the Church.

Clergy Moves

Vacant Appointments as of 13-09-2022:

Holy Trinity, Bacchus Marsh with Christ Church, Myrmioning and St George's Balliang; Bellarine Gateway; St Stephen, Bayswater; St Martin, Belgrave Heights; Parish of Box Hill; St Edward, Blackburn South; St Peter, Bundoora; St Bartholomew, Burnley; St John Chrysostom, Brunswick West; St Faith, Burwood; St Mark, Camberwell (from December 2022); St Catharine, Caulfield South; St Alban, Coburg West; St Luke, Cockatoo; St Philip, Collingwood; Darebin South; St Mark, Dromana; St Margaret, Eltham; Christ Church, Geelong; St Stephen, Greymouth; Holy Trinity, Hampton; St James, Ivanhoe; St Matthias, Mernda; Pascoe Vale-Oak Park; St Matthew, Panton Hill; St George the Martyr Queenscliff and St James Point Lonsdale; St Mark, Reservoir; St Stephen, Richmond; All Saints' Carlotta Tye Memorial, Selby; Christ Church, South Yarra; Christ Church, St Kilda; St Luke, Sydenham; St Thomas, Upper Ferntree Gully; St Thomas, Winchelsea with Holy Trinity, Barrabool and St Paul's, Deans Marsh; St Paul, Westmeadows; St Matthew, Wheelers Hill (from November 2022); Christ Church, Whittlesea with St Peter's, Kinglake

Appointments:

LYNCH, The Revd Christopher, appointed Priest-in-Charge, St Andrew, Somerville, effective 24 January 2023
MACPHERSON, The Revd Peter, appointed Archdeacon, Archdeaconry of Kew, effective 23 November 2022
PETERS, The Revd Graeme John, appointed Incumbent from Priest-in-Charge, St James Dandenong, effective 9 October 2022
ROSS, The Revd Kirsty Leanne, appointed Area Dean, Deanery of Stonnington, effective 5 July 2022

Permission to Officiate:

MAY, The Revd Stephen, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 10 October 2022

Resignations:

ERSKINE-FOWLER, The Revd Hamish, Priest-in-Charge in St Mark, Reservoir, effective 7 September 2022
HEALY, The Revd Matthew, Incumbent, St Bartholomew, Burnley, effective 20 November 2022
WADE, The Revd Wendy, Assistant Priest, Kew/North Balwyn, effective 8 September 2022, returning to the UK

Obituaries:

GRANOWSKI, The Revd Dr Helen Barbara, 5 September 2022
HEARN, The Right Revd George, 8 September 2022
PEARCE, The Revd Raymond Bernard, 31 August 2022



For Vacant Parishes listing: registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au; Tributes: www.tma.melbourneanglican.org.au
 Clergy Moves is compiled by the Registry Office and all correspondence should go to registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au

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New 'Diocese' safety policies unstated

■ Kirralee Nicolle

It remains unclear what plans exist for institutional child safety practices at a newly formed breakaway group from the Anglican Church, Diocese of the Southern Cross.

The DSC website did not contain any reference to child safety at the time of going to press, and leaders have declined to comment on details of child safe plans and practices. A DSC spokesperson said it was complying with all relevant legislation and would continue to do so. They said the DSC took child protection and professional standards very seriously and any assertion to the contrary was wrong.

GAFCON executive officer and DSC spokesperson Michael Kellahan said that the DSC had measures in place for safe ministry and professional standards which would expand as it grew. He declined to comment on any specific measures. Mr Kellahan said DSC leaders were experienced in issues of safety.

"It is overseen by an Anglican bishop well-versed in safe ministry practices and under whose administration many of these issues were tackled," Mr Kellahan said.

In August GAFCON Australia directors announced the formation of the DSC and its first bishop, former Sydney archbishop the Right Reverend Glenn Davies. They also announced that the first church – Southern Cross Anglican Beenleigh and Logan – had met in Queensland, led by former Anglican Church of Australia priest Reverend Peter Palmer. Another Queensland DSC congregation was announced on 13 September. GAFCON Australia leaders said the DSC existed for those who chose to leave the ACA if dioceses blessed same-sex unions.

Queensland churches are required to operate under its "Blue Card" legislation. A Department of Justice spokesperson



Leaders declined to comment on child safety plans at the GAFCON-linked DSC. Picture: iStock

said organisations providing regulated child-related services were required to meet certain legislative obligations. These include: not starting a person in child-regulated work without a valid Blue Card, maintaining a register of the people engaged in the organisation, and developing and implementing a child and youth risk management strategy to help create a safe, supportive environment for children. The spokesperson said Blue Cards were not required prior to a congregation first meeting unless the service or activity was directed mainly towards children. They said ministers whose role included providing religious instruction or conducting activities directed mainly towards children required a Blue Card.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse found many instances of child sexual abuse within

Australian churches, including the Anglican Church. It found power and authority exercised by people in religious ministry gave them access to children and created opportunities for abuse. It also found many religious leaders demonstrated a preoccupation with protecting the institution's "good name" and reputation.

The DSC is listed as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. An ACNC spokesperson said part of a charity's primary duty of care was safeguarding the welfare and human rights of people connected with it – particularly people that may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, including children and older people.

GAFCON Australia chair Bishop Richard Condie, Bishop Glenn Davies and Reverend Peter Palmer were approached for comment.



Welcome!

The Melbourne Anglican has an exciting new look. We'll continue to bring you faith news from Australia and beyond, as well as stories celebrating the work of churches and their members.

You can also find us online using the QR code above.

Happy reading!



Sorrow for those supporting same-sex marriage

■ Jenan Taylor

Many Anglicans who support same-sex marriage are unmoved at the formation of the new Diocese of the Southern Cross, church leaders say.

Progressive parishioners were focusing on getting on with being the kind of community God wanted, they said.

Parish of the Parks vicar the Reverend Sophie Watkins said her parish's focus was always about working towards inclusivity. She said most members were unswerving in their view that the Anglican Church had not split, and that they were prepared to get on with their mission of embracing inclusivity and valuing everyone.

Ms Watkins said there had been many people who'd felt wounded by the Church's actions over the past few years.

"Whilst there's been mention of sadness about people choosing to leave the Anglican Church and join the Diocese of the Southern Cross, there have been many who have chosen to stay despite also suffering within the life of the Church," Ms Watkins said.

She said she felt sorrow for those who had chosen to leave, as well as for those who were hurting but had chosen to remain and were working to keep an open conversation.

St Bartholomew's Burnley locum Reverend Liam Matthews said the emergence of the new diocese was not an issue that his parish was concerned about.

Mr Matthews said he had read out the Primate Archbishop Geoffrey Smith's statement in church, and people had spoken about it over coffee afterwards. He said St Bartholomew's held a monthly service for gender fluid people, so the members had expressed surprise about the breakaway and didn't understand why it had happened.

But they were unconcerned by the issues that the new denomination had highlighted, because they wanted to be welcoming of everyone, he said.

"We wouldn't want to have a harsh, biblical interpretation that excludes people, because we see the compassion of Christ as one who welcomes and goes out to meet people," Mr Matthews said.



Mayre George hopes to help young people. Picture: supplied

First youth lay minister for Karen community

■ Jenan Taylor

A Werribee youth leader is preparing to become her church's and Victoria's first Karen community licensed youth lay minister.

Mayre George, a member of the St Stephen's Karen authorised congregation has been nominated for lay ministry at the church following more than 10 years of engagement with parish youth.

Ms George, 32, has been delivering trial sermons during some youth services at St Stephen's in the last few months.

She said she has been involved with Karen youth groups since she arrived in Australia in 2007, and initially helped out at St Thomas' Werribee where there were about 200 young Karen people at the time.

In 2009 she became a member of the St Stephen's youth committee, a leadership team which oversees a group of about 80 active participants.

She said she was able to draw on her discipleship training in Thailand, and her experiences at a missionary school.

For Ms George, God's calling is not necessarily about being a lay minister or a leader, but about committing to helping the large number of young Karen people at St Stephen's and in the broader community.

She said many of the youth club members had often attended services with their parents in Burma, and had kept up the tradition when they came to Australia.

At St Stephen's an array of spiritual and physical programs was what held the interest of the youth group participants, she said.

These included tailored services every Saturday and Sunday with music and the sharing of testimonies, as well as the chance to partake in soccer and family volleyball matches once a month.

Ms George said the committee also asked leaders of the mother's union and men's society to address the youths regularly.

"We also invite our priests to come and give encouragement. We don't say 'sermon', we say 'encouragement,'" she said.

She said the youth leaders were proud of their association with the church and often referred to themselves as the Karen faith-keeping youth committee.

Vicar the Reverend Moe Win Tun Kin said in Karen culture young people were viewed as vital to the stability of the church.

Along with the mother's union, the men's society and the Sunday school, the youth group formed one of the four pillars of the St Stephen's community, Mr Tun Kin said.

He also said Ms George had a lot of experience with people and was good particularly at initiating drama games that encouraged participation from youths in group activities. He anticipated that Ms George would become a licensed lay minister in the next few months.

Clergy shortage, marriage on agenda

■ Jenan Taylor

Upholding biblical marriage and parish vacancies will be key issues on the agenda at the 53rd Melbourne Synod in October, according to agenda documents.

Gender balance and the *Archbishop Election Act* are also listed as priorities for debate, as are Anglican childcare facilities and kindergartens.

The large number of vacant parishes will be discussed, and synod will be asked to consider a proposal to review the existing professional development program, and the career span and training of ministers.

Discussions are expected to highlight the challenges the gap in clergy numbers presents. These include a heavy non-pastoral workload and the potential for burnout among clergy. The proposed motion also underscores the identification and development of future clergy.

The synod will be asked to revisit the issue of the same-sex marriage blessing, which drew strong debate at General Synod in May.

At the time two motions about it were raised, one seeking to define marriage in the

“The synod will be asked to revisit the issue of the same-sex marriage blessing.”

Anglican Church as “the exclusive union of one man and one woman”, and the other to affirm same-sex marriage within the Church.

Arguments supporting same-sex unions included that marriage should not be an issue of salvation. Those against, said they held with biblical teaching on sexual relationships. The motion against same-sex marriage failed to pass.

Difference of opinion on the issue has led to GAFCON-linked Diocese of the Southern Cross establishing two breakaway churches.

The synod will also be asked to consider two proposals in support of gender equity.

The first will be that the gender equity targets of 50 per cent women nominated for election, and 40 per cent women elected in all synod elections be adopted for all diocesan committee appointments and be included in diocesan strategy.

The second is the adoption of a diversity and inclusion taskforce. Among this group’s obligations would be the provision of an annual audit of the performance of all diocesan bodies with respect to gender equity commitments, and the implementation and monitoring of targets. A new bill relating to the processes to elect an archbishop will also be discussed.

It will seek to repeal and re-enact the *Archbishop Election Act 1988* to clarify legislation for synod members, and enable the modernisation of the rules governing the election of a Melbourne archbishop.

Some proposals include a new process for the nomination of candidates, and the balloting process has a prescribed path.

Under the proposed bill the new legislation would also be able to direct the voting processes, and accommodate electronic voting, and there would also be courses of action for dealing with conflicts of interest.

The Melbourne Synod will take place in a blended online-in person format from Wednesday 12 October to Saturday 15 October. A further single day session may be held on Saturday 3 December.

You can help young people experiencing disadvantage build better lives for themselves

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) works with young people that would otherwise be ineligible for many existing services and programs. Our teams are here to support young people, providing not only vital job-hunting skills, but also building a community of support, that encourages and empowers young people to make lasting connections in their communities.

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Thank you.



Every Blessing

Debra Saffrey-Collins (Rev'd)
Head of Chaplaincy and
Diocesan Partnerships
Brotherhood of St. Laurence

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A translation to the modern world

Translator Guinevere Swan.
Picture: Janine Eastgate

■ Kirralee Nicolle

Bible translation practice has recently adapted to be more technology-driven, team-based and focused on local engagement, language workers say.

The pace of translation this century has been greater than that of the previous two centuries, experts say.

In the 19th century the Bible was translated into less than 500 different languages, according to Bill Gardner and Richard Gretskey of Wycliffe Bible Translators. Wycliffe is a global organisation begun in 1942 focused on Bible translation as mission work. In the 20th century more than 1000 translations were completed, Gardner and Gretskey said.

Translation workers such as Dave Sharp and Guinevere Swan have experienced translation work very differently.

Dave Sharp and his wife Elly relocated from Australia to West Africa in 1992 with Wycliffe. They began living alongside the Gergiko people of Central Chad. At first, they were largely working on their own to

build relationships with members of the community and begin a project. In 2020, they celebrated the dedication of the Gergiko New Testament. They continued to translate other portions of the Scripture remotely. Dave is now working on the book of Genesis.

"Back then, it was mainly sending out families who went and lived in a village and learned language and culture," Mr Sharp said.

"That's not necessarily the norm anymore. Often there are people working in clusters of languages these days."

Mr Sharp said that he had now seen a shift towards oral Bible translation. He said that translators would arrange recorded Scripture readings to test comprehensibility and naturalness of the text.

Guinevere Swan and her husband Philip have worked as translation advisers with Wycliffe and the Summer Institute of Linguistics since 2010. Guinevere has worked with the Papuan Malay language and Philip as part of a group working in a cluster of languages.

Ms Swan said over the years, there had

been a greater shift towards the professional development of native language translators. She said this was partly a reflection of more advanced education levels in remote communities but was also part of a broader shift in the practice.

"I have seen over the years in Papua a shift towards recognising and building the capacity of Indonesian translators," she said.

"When I trained as a consultant five years ago, there were about 30 trainees. I was one of only two non-Indonesian trainees. I don't think that would have been the case when we first arrived."

Ms Swan said this change was reflected at all levels.

"Until now, the Papuan Malay team has been led by a Canadian, and more recently by an Australian, then just recently the leadership's been taken on by one of our Papuan translators," she said.

"This reflects something that's been developing in SIL over many years, which is a focus on localisation. We're seeking to partner more effectively with the resources that are already there."

For an Anglican Approach



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Christine Haines wants to inspire her community to recycle household products they would normally send to landfill. Picture: Janine Eastgate

Recycling goods to build relationships

■ Kirralee Nicolle

Recycling programs are a way for the church to be even more relevant to the community, a Melbourne Anglican parishioner says.

St Paul's East Kew is looking to host a Community Recycling Campaign for items which would normally be sent to landfill.

The program would be organised through TerraCycle, an international initiative which partners with brands to offer pathways to recycling for household goods. The items include used beauty products, oral care products, coffee capsules and pet food bags.

Long-term St Paul's member Christine Haines is trying to begin the initiative. She said she was a mum who was passionate about recycling.

"It's a very practical demonstration that we care about this beautiful world we've been given," she said.

"It's a very practical demonstration that we care about this beautiful world we've been given."

Christine Haines

"That's how I see the church being relevant. It's all about building relationships and connections and saying we care."

Ms Haines said she had noticed a frustration in the community with a lack of action on climate. She said she had

gotten a sense that those in the community around St Paul's would be interested in having a central location to take items such as aerosols, blister packs and makeup containers.

"There is more we can recycle that isn't made available to us through our council recycling or REDcycle," Ms Haines said.

"It's a way for our church to say this is important to us."

She said they were looking for expressions of interest in the program, as without enough interest it would not be able to go ahead.

"It can only happen with community support and buy-in," Ms Haines said.

To contact St Paul's East Kew and register your interest in being involved, email: spek.recycle@gmail.com.

Briefs

TRIBUTES FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH II

The late Queen Elizabeth II's faithful Christian leadership and humble service have been remembered as key elements of her reign. Faith leaders worldwide expressed their sadness, and praise of her Christian example. Melbourne Archbishop Philip Freier said his prayers were with the King, the royal family and the people of the United Kingdom. Dr Freier said he remembered the late Queen as a faithful Christian, and leader of the Church of England.

BRISBANE ARCHBISHOP RESIGNS

The Most Reverend Dr Phillip Aspinall AC has announced he had tendered his resignation after 21 years as Archbishop of Brisbane in August, effective in February. Dr Aspinall said it had been a unique privilege to serve as archbishop. He thanked supporters for their support, prayers and collegiality through ministry that had been at times demanding. Dr Aspinall said a great deal had been achieved over the past 20 years, and much more remained to be done in a new chapter.

GOD CAN WORK IN EX-PRISONERS

Leaving prison can be a difficult time. People often need someone to spend time with them over a cuppa. Anglicare Victoria's Get Out for Good is a mentor program where volunteers meet informally with people leaving prison and help them back into the community. This can mean meeting for a coffee, going with the person to appointments or a phone catch-up. If you are interested in volunteering, contact cathrine.muston@anglicarevic.org.au. Cathrine Muston.

COVID-19 cohort capable, determined

■ Kirralee Nicolle

Missed opportunities were a major challenge during COVID-19, school leavers say.

The Melbourne Anglican surveyed VCE and VCAL students from private schools across Melbourne and Geelong about how they had found hope amid the pandemic.

Many students surveyed said that missed opportunities were the hardest part of the past two years. Other answers were remote learning, having COVID-19 or trying to avoid getting it, burnout and isolation from friends.

They also said that they experienced a lowered capacity to concentrate in class, had difficulty maintaining friendships and struggled to get back into routine. But there were positives. An anonymous student from Beacons Hills College said they believed the pandemic had prepared students better for the world.

"I think that this cohort of students will have more reliance and determination," they said.

Students also cited an increased ability to work from home and a better work-life balance as things for which their unique experience of schooling had prepared them.



Hume Anglican Grammar student
Isabella Cassar.

Photo: supplied

The Melbourne Anglican also asked them about what they hoped to offer the world, their sources of hope in this time and what they were looking forward to as they finished their schooling. Here's what they had to say.

What do they hope to offer the world once they graduate?

"I hope to share my love of learning, especially when I become a primary school educator" – Isabella Cassar, Year 12, Hume Anglican Grammar.

"A loving and compassionate member of the community" – Anonymous, Year 12,

Beacons Hills College.

"I hope to learn more about myself and my passions and hope to contribute to the world" – Caitie, Year 12, Geelong Grammar School.

"I hope to offer the help and support me as a nurse can provide to others" – Bridget, Year 12, Shelford Girls' Grammar.

What have been their sources of hope in this time?

"Church community" – Charli, Year 12, Camberwell Girls' Grammar School.

"Whatever you eat you drink whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" – Isabella Cassar.

"My friends, because [they] would be in the same situation as [me] and not being able to fly back home, so we would just spend a lot more time with each other and make the most of it" – Cassie, Year 12, Geelong Grammar School.

"My mum – she has always been there for me and reassures me" – Caitie.

"Online communication apps such as Discord which have made me feel included in the online world without feeling isolated" – Bridget, Year 12, Shelford Girls' Grammar.

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Retirement 2.0 calls for 50-year priest

■ Kirralee Nicolle

A Melbourne priest who struggled to finish school and later studied at St Stephen's Seminary in Oxford is celebrating 50 years of ordination.

Father Noel Whale's career in ministry has taken him to the United Kingdom, Jerusalem, Turkey and Manhattan, as well as several parishes across Melbourne. He also served as Precentor of St Paul's Cathedral for several years. Mr Whale recently retired as vicar at Holy Trinity Port Melbourne, just prior to turning 81.

He said that he was born into a nominal Anglican family in Gippsland but knew early on that the priesthood might be a pathway he wanted to pursue. He can remember telling his mother very early on he was interested in being ordained, and that she didn't think it was a good idea at all.

The family later moved to Dandenong, where he said they lived on a shoestring. Here he became much more involved in the church. He was confirmed as a teenager by Reverend Michael Clark of St James' Dandenong, a key influence in his life.

Mr Whale left school without graduating to provide for his family and was forced to complete his education at night after work. He said he was always interested in the rest of the world, and eventually Dandenong began to feel small. He dreamed of living in the United Kingdom. All the while in the back of his mind, a call to ministry was growing. He moved to England in his early working life and settled at a parish in Kensington.

Eventually in 1967, through the influence of former Melbourne Bishop James Grant AM



Father Noel Whale is celebrating 50 years in the priesthood. Picture: supplied

and Frank Woods, former Archbishop of Melbourne, he chose to study at St Stephen's House in Oxford. He said the seminary study was challenging, as he had been in the workforce for 10 years and had no tertiary education. But he persisted. He was ordained at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford in 1971, then served his curacy at St Michael's and All Angels in Amersham.

Mr Whale returned to Australia in 1973 by working as a chaplain on a migrant ship. He began his second curacy at All Saints' Newtown in Geelong, before serving his first appointment as a priest in Australia at St Eanswythe's in Altona. After nine years in this role, he took a leave of absence to study at St George's College in Jerusalem, then briefly worked in Manhattan at the episcopal

Church of the Transfiguration.

Upon his return to Australia, he served at St George's East Ivanhoe and St Peter's Bundoora. Between these appointments, he also served a stint as Precentor of St Paul's Cathedral.

Mr Whale also retired twice – first when he was 70. But, soon after this, he left retirement to take vicar role at Holy Trinity.

Mr Whale said he had felt a lifelong responsibility to listen to the voice of God, and was committed to seeing God at work wherever he was.

"If you're touched by the hand of God, in a way it's scary. But it's hugely liberating and [offers] confidence and security. And that's what I love about it, the fact that I just feel that I don't walk alone," he said.



conversations
with the
archbishop

with:

Danielle Wood, CEO of the Grattan Institute, a leading think tank, and the keynote speaker at the opening of the recent national jobs summit.

Travers McLeod, Executive Director of Brotherhood of St Laurence. He previously led the Centre for Policy Development.

Shaun Carney, leading Age columnist and commentator.



Victoria Votes

Public cynicism about politics has seldom been higher as Victoria heads into a state election next month. Surveys show that both the main party leaders carry polarised views about their leadership into the campaign. What will be the key issues, and what should they be? Pandemic management, the state health system and political integrity are likely to be prominent. Can the personalities of the politicians be separated from the issues, or are they interlocked?

Join Melbourne Anglican **Archbishop Philip Freier** in the last of his public conversations for 2022. His guests will be **Danielle Wood**, **Travers McLeod** and **Shaun Carney**.

Wednesday, 19 October 2022 at 7:30am via Zoom

Registrations open on 3 October via **Trybooking** - <https://www.trybooking.com/CCVFS>

THE Melbourne Anglican



Melbourne
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Foundation



Tending gardens helps church members,

■ Jenan Taylor

Shortly after catastrophic bushfires swept through the Croajingolong Cooperating Parish in January 2020, a monumental locally-driven effort to help the community recover got underway.

The parish's Reverend Jude Benton found herself tasked with easing the psychological scars of locals and being a voice for them.

As the months passed and the remote region was also buffeted by floods, and the further isolating effects of pandemic restrictions, Ms Benton observed a troubling shift. Many people had developed a vastly different stance toward their natural surroundings compared to before the fires.

"The emotion around the bush was all about fear rather than the balance of environment itself," Ms Benton said.

"As Cann River had endured worse than Mallacoota because it had been entirely surrounded by fire, we decided to try find a way to address that there."

Climate modelling shows that climate change related extreme weather events including storms and bushfires will become more severe and frequent in Australia.

Trained in environmental resource management, Cann River church member Kate Cowden said she was well acquainted with those projections. Ms Cowden saw a chance to build her community's resilience to future events through fortifying their environment. She had been involved with the native grasses project of her neighbour, author and farmer Bruce Pascoe, and had learned some Indigenous environmental history from him.

After the fires Mr Pascoe had a bumper crop of grains,



School students at St Margaret's Eltham yarning circle. Picture: Jenan Taylor

Ms Cowden said. She'd also seen tall acacias and tree ferns springing up seemingly out of nothing, while long-dormant orchids and flowering plants brought a dramatic beauty to the post-fire landscape. Yet she was aware of many people who were suspicious of Indigenous vegetation, often burning it.

Ms Cowden was certain the church could do something to help change that mindset.

"A church's business is people, nurturing their relationship with our creator, and modelling His love and care for all of His creation," she said. "With this in mind, as a parish, we chose to extend some peace and love at Cann River by developing a community garden."

Community garden projects have boomed in Australia in the last 30 years. Research has shown that projects employing responsible gardening approaches add green space to urban areas and help to reduce heat, among other environmental benefits. Community Gardens Australia said schemes also increased wellbeing, health and friendship.

With the help of Cann River school students, Ms Cowden and fellow congregants created a reflective space surrounded by native plants around the town's combined Uniting and Anglican church. Opposite the community centre and next to a café, the

garden extended public picnic areas and led to a nature walk. The idea was to establish plants that weren't so flammable, and to provide a place of beauty and comfort where people could meet and spend time, she said. For Cann River, where people often live far from each other, social connections are critical to good mental, spiritual and emotional health.

Ms Cowden also chose plants that were appropriate for the habitat recovery of the area's fauna, and created a green avenue for them. Many shrubs are still in plastic tubes, but recently wildlife droppings have begun to appear along the green trail. The small signs of revival encouraged Ms Cowden to feel hopeful the project might help locals come to love natural wilderness again, and feel stronger as community.

Wiradjuri man and St Oswald's Glen Iris vicar the Reverend Glenn Loughrey has always believed that it was important that people learned to appreciate the land.

When he concludes a baby's baptism ceremony, Mr Loughrey often strokes a bit of earth onto infants' palms to get them used to the feel of it. He does a similar thing when older children visit the church.

"I remind them that the ground is their mother and everything in it is all that we



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UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICES

Sun 2 Oct	8am & 10am	Preacher: Canon Jane Window
Tue 4 Oct		Choral Evensong recommences for Term 4
Sat 8 Oct	10am	First Nations Cultural Awareness Session, Barbara Darling Room
Sun 9 Oct	8am & 10am 6.30pm	Preacher: The Dean Choral Evensong with the Archbishop of Canterbury preaching. (3 tickets are provided for each parish, clergy are invited to robe and process, some seating will be unallocated).
Thu 13 Oct	5.10pm	Faiths 4 Climate Justice Service
Sat 15 Oct	9.30am	Synod meeting at the Cathedral
Sun 16 Oct	8am & 10am	Preacher: Canon Dr Bob Derrenbacker
Sun 23 Oct	8am 10am	Preacher: The Dean Annual Seafarers Service. Preacher: The Dean
Sun 30 Oct	8am 10am	Preacher: Canon Dr Stephen Ames Preacher: The Precentor

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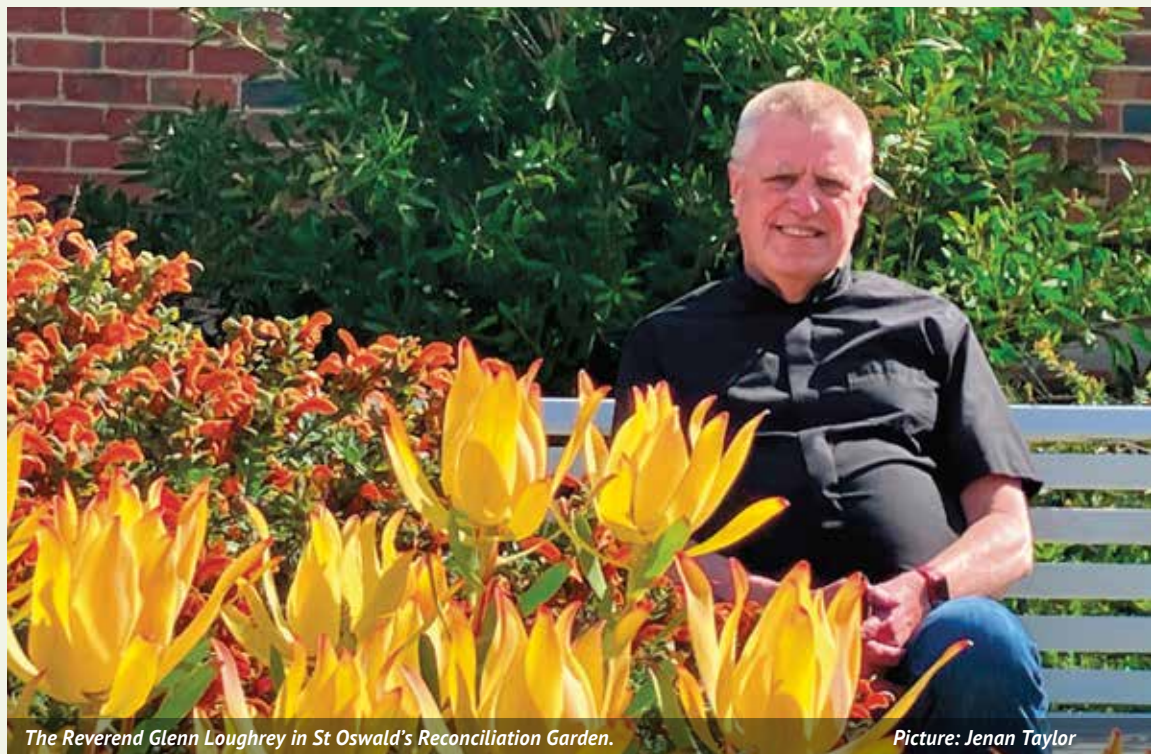
community cope with a planet in crisis

need to live. All the wisdom is there in that bit of earth. And I put some in their hands, and then I tell them to go and place it somewhere in the Reconciliation Garden. That becomes their space,” he said.

In St Oswald’s Reconciliation Garden pathways curve around beds of kangaroo paws, bird-attracting trees and other hardy and Indigenous vegetation. Near the entrance, sylvan benches surround a yarning circle with a timber pulpit and fire pit. The garden was established in 2017 on the site of an old tennis court. It was a simple and reasonably cheap step to make the place more ecologically friendly and create a gathering space, Mr Loughrey said.

Congregation members spend a lot of time in the garden, but Mr Loughrey has also noticed regular visitors who aren’t part of the church. Mr Loughrey said often people engaged with the garden just by pulling out weeds, or brushing their hands across shrubs and inhaling the scent on their skin. He saw these as gentle acts of responsibility that moved people closer to understanding Indigenous Australians.

But Mr Loughrey said he also wanted Aboriginal community members to want to understand non-Indigenous



The Reverend Glenn Loughrey in St Oswald’s Reconciliation Garden.

Picture: Jenan Taylor

people. He believes Indigenous gardens like his, or St Margaret’s Eltham’s, would be conducive to engagement about this.

“Many Indigenous people may never want to go inside the church because there’s too much history, but they may feel more comfortable talking in the garden around the fire,” he said.

The Community Gardens Australia directory lists more than 580 initiatives, but only 38 are run by faith institutions. Christian justice agency Tearfund said in April

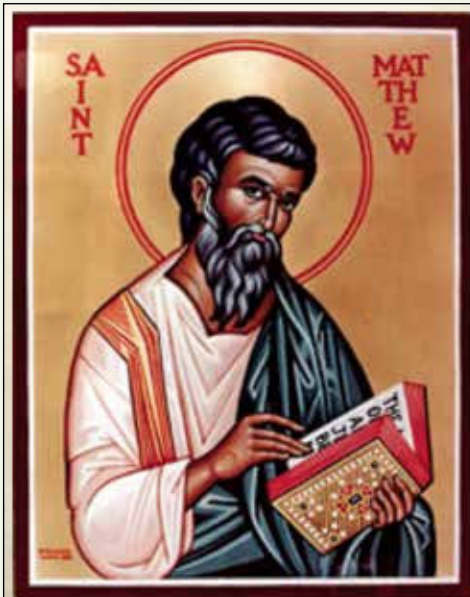
that almost half of all young Christians thought that churches weren’t doing enough to address climate change. A survey found that many wanted their church leaders to be willing to try anything. Setting up community gardens was a popular idea.

Mr Loughrey said he believed that most clergy would love to address climate change. But there were challenges such as aging congregations, and vicars’ capacity. But he said it was important that parishes tried

to care for environment and in doing so, make right their relationships with Indigenous Australians.

Mr Loughrey said church leaders had a better chance of finding people willing to be involved if they formed ties with other believers, as well as neighbourhood organisations.

“Getting people to help might work if people started to see the church and its spaces as not belonging to the Anglican Church or to Anglicans, but to the whole community,” he said.



“As spoken by the Prophets”: Studies on readings for Year A

A day for clergy and lay people to be introduced to the Gospel of Matthew and some of the lections from Old Testament prophetic texts for the forthcoming Church Year A – the Year of Matthew. Lead by The Revd Canon Dr Robert (Bob) Derrenbacker and Dr Rachelle Gilmour of the Trinity College Theological School.

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A call to action named the year's winner

■ Jenan Taylor

An Anglican agronomist's life story has won the 2022 Australian Christian Book of the Year.

Tony Rinaudo's autobiography *The Forest Underground: Hope for a Planet in Crisis*, was awarded the SparkLit prize at an awards ceremony on 1 September.

The book tells of Mr Rinaudo's 17 years spent in Niger, West Africa, where he worked with farmers to regenerate the land using simple, sustainable methods.

Mr Rinaudo described his tale as being about a faith journey in which a boy, despairing at the world's suffering due to environmental degradation, asks God to help him make a difference, and sets about doing that.

It was also about the restoration of hope, and a call to action, he said.

"Hope doesn't happen by accident. It doesn't fall out of the sky. With God's grace, you make it happen," Mr Rinaudo said.

"If you're not happy with the state of the world, call out to God and do something about it."

The first-time author who also works for



Tony Rinaudo with Michael Collie and ISCAST's Chris Mulherin. Picture: supplied

World Vision Australia said he had aimed to write the book in a way that focused on the importance of human relations and the faith aspect of his journey.

But he said it would never have happened without COVID, because his work volume had been reduced by pandemic restrictions and he'd been able to spend time writing every day.

Mr Rinaudo said he was keen to see the book translated into other languages such as French and Spanish, but also the major languages of developing countries.

SparkLit national director Michael Collie described Mr Rinaudo as modest, and a man with a mission.

Mr Collie said *The Forest Underground* showed that there were often simple solutions to even the most complex problems.

"It's a hopeful book, a positive book and a responsible book because it talks about how humans have the responsibility and ability to solve the problems they cause," Mr Collie said.

While observing the judging process Mr Collie said he had noted that the judges had used words like "warmth", "humility", and "grand adventure" to describe Mr Rinaudo's work.

Christians by journalist Greg Sheridan, and *Bullies and Saints* by John Dickson were also among the 10 books that were shortlisted for the top prize.

Victorian writer Rachel Board won the Australian Christian Teen Writer category, and NSW writer Nichola Chadwick's won the Young Australian Christian Writer award.

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Hume Anglican Grammar students have won a business award for their proposal. Picture: supplied

Church's care café to open

■ Jenan Taylor

People who live with dementia, and their carers will soon have a social meeting place at an Eltham church.

The Memory Care café at St Margaret's Anglican aims to be a place of respite and friendship for people in the local community who have cognitive impairments, and their carers. Trained volunteers from the church will provide introductions and conversation for carers, and a Health Ability staff member will oversee activities for the customers who have dementia.

Volunteer Sheila Cheary said in the Nillumbik area there were hundreds of people suffering with cognitive illnesses and some existing dementia cafes were being very well frequented.

She said the first Nillumbik Memory Care Café in Hurstbridge in particular had proven a huge success among carers who were previously unaware of others in the same caring situation as themselves.

"Every single day they have to commit to looking after the people they with, and we've noticed that after a few weeks of being able to get to a place where they can socialise with others who understand what they've been through, they're in a much better mood," Ms Cheary said.

Ms Cheary said St Margaret's church hall where the café would be located, could accommodate around 20 people.

A HeartEdge initiative for St Margaret's, the café will open in collaboration with community organisation Health Ability in late September and operate fortnightly.

More information is available at stmargaretseltham.org.au.

Hume students take waste award

■ Jenan Taylor

Students at an Anglican college have won their third business award in a row with an environmental proposal that has a social justice theme. Hume Anglican Grammar students' plan to solve the problem of waste in the community won an entrepreneurial award in the City of Hume.

English teacher Shirley Kutin said the project was about being able to make a difference to a number of communities.

Ms Kutin said judges had told her that they were concerned about the growing issue of hard rubbish and that they were particularly interested in the students' ideas about how to engage populations to be more aware of the problem. She said the plan had been tabled by the Hume City Council who wanted to adopt parts of it, and had also attracted interest from business groups, and from university researchers in the United States.

Sarah, one of six participating students, said the project had involved finding a way to help multiple underprivileged communities in the area with a

sustainable and affordable way to reduce waste.

Fellow participant Nathan said in coming up with their solution they had considered the impact on the community in terms of the way could be put to better use. They then identified small issues in the Hume and looked at the statistics people felt about their surroundings, the adverse effects of pollution on peoples' health, and whether things that get thrown away, and from there were able to work out how they were all linked, he said.

"The main connection was that people were dumping rubbish that could have been used for something else. They could have had a second chance. We thought low-income families could have benefited from that," Nathan said.

Ms Kutin said the students had had a short time frame to finish the challenge. Sarah said they had had to keep up with their schoolwork and find a way to meet up with each other to finish the project.

"We had to be able to delegate around different people and work with their strengths ... so that was how we were able to meet the deadlines," Sarah said.

Renovations create space for Bentleigh community

■ Kirralee Nicolle

Parishioners at St John's Bentleigh recently celebrated the unveiling of a new entrance, as well as an upgraded kitchen, stage and flooring. Since 2020, members of the church have arranged for the removal of asbestos in the church and hall, upgraded the toilets, ceiling, lighting, windows and sound equipment. Vicar-in-charge Reverend Santa Packianathan said the renovations had made the space very welcoming to the community. He said he hoped it would lead more people to come to

church. Building works for the latest set of renovations at St John's Bentleigh began in 2020 but faced a number of pandemic-related setbacks. Mr Packianathan said former incumbent the Reverend Dr David Powys was an instrumental part of starting the renovation process. The congregation also managed to raise \$130,000 to fund the upgrades. As part of the upgrade, the church hall was also named Pickford Hall. Mr Packianathan said that the late Tom and Marj Pickford had been core long-term members of the church community, who the parish council wished to recognise.



Members of the Pickford family at the opening. Picture: Alex Scutt



Masih church plant.

Picture: supplied

Plant finds a home in Melton

■ Jenan Taylor

An Indian community focussed church plant has opened in a western suburbs' Anglican church after outgrowing its location in its pastor's house. Masih

Church Melbourne has begun meeting at Melton Anglican, after the growing number of worshippers meeting at the Reverend Mohit Sampson's home forced it to find an alternative venue.

Mr Sampson said the gatherings had started at his Aintree home in 2018 with just his immediate family members, but had grown to around 60 participants. He said the church, which targets the north Indian community, had also used a venue in Chadstone, but that that stopped because of building renovations and an uncertain future. Mr Sampson conceived the idea for the plant in 2017, and had initially believed that there would be a larger Hindu and Punjabi community around Melbourne's eastern suburbs. But the COVID pandemic halted those plans, and during that time Mr Sampson realised there was a thriving Indian community to reach in the west.

"We are a young generation of Indian migrants, with children who have been born and brought up here and so we wanted to be a church that focussed on them as well," he said.

He said when lockdowns finished the number of people attending the services grew until there had been standing room only at his house. He had gone in search of a suitable, alternative space in the Melton area but was unable to find one. Mr Sampson said he had approached Archdeacon Glen Buijjs and the Melton Anglican parish council about a partnership involving sharing the church venue, with a fruitful result. He said Masih church's first service in their new, shared home was joyful for its large number of worshippers and that afterwards they had celebrated with traditional food.



Indonesian dancers.

Picture: supplied

Parish celebrates hall's 100 years of community usefulness

■ Lachlan Thompson

Saturday 22 August saw Archbishop Philip Freier opening the Centenary Celebrations of the Kennon Hall in Kooyong. The hall,

gifted by Margaret Kennon of a local coach building family, was built and opened in 1922 at the side of All Saints' Church. Since opening the hall has been in continuous use by community and church groups. The hall's community groups shared in celebrations, showcasing activities including Indonesian welcome and cele-

bration dances, singing performed by the Indonesian members and traditional Urdu songs by Pakistani members. A honeybee garden science adventure was introduced by the archbishop for the Sunday school. Vicar Reverend Kuncoro Rusman welcomed guests including Dr Freier, Edwin Kennon and siblings, the Reverend Hugh Prentice and Widha Chaidir, leader of the Victorian Indonesian community. First incumbent of All Saints' the Reverend William Prentice was represented by his great and great-great grandchildren.



The Gisborne group.

Picture: supplied

Stewarding part of God's creation

■ Jenan Taylor

A church group's farm animal welfare and biodiversity project has challenged members to increase their environmental knowledge and skills. The Anglican Parish of Gisborne Animal Welfare Group's efforts to help farmers plant shelter belts compelled members to learn about the area's ecology.

Co-convenor Janine Mc Dougall said the group had raised aid for pets and wildlife networks and undertaken advocacy work since 2016. She said it was inspired by stewardship, reflecting God's nature of love.

From the editor



Hello and welcome to the new-look Melbourne Anglican! It's fantastic to see you here. Doesn't it look great? We've got a new format, a new design, and a new masthead. It's an exciting change, which we hope allows us to serve you better with faith news, and stories celebrating out community.

The pages may be different, but our community's faces are still beaming out from them. From Heidin Kunoo welcoming us in on the front, to Mayre George, Guinevere Swan, Noel Whale and more inside, the edition is full to the brim. We're also brimming with opinion. Denise Cooper-Clarke explores debate around the complex issue that is abortion, while Professor Dorothy Lee discusses Anglicans' unity in Scripture.

So, we've got a fresh new look – but we're continuing to connect, support, equip and celebrate our community, and drive conversations relevant to the Anglican church and its communities. Enjoy!

Divisions make for disturbing dilemma

It is becoming increasingly evident that there are some disturbing divisions developing within the Church we love so deeply on the matter of blessing same-sex unions.

My own feeling about same-sex marriage is that it will go on happening no matter what the Church does or does not do. Whilst I feel that marriage between persons of the same sex is seen by many to be wrong, including myself, what cannot be denied is that millions of gay people worldwide marry another of the same sex for pure love. I certainly do not condone marrying same-sex couples in Church, as that is contrary I would think to Christ's teaching. However, I have no real complaint if a same-sex couple marry in a civil ceremony and then ask for a blessing, not a marriage ceremony, to seal their union.

Christ loves everybody whether they be gay or not gay and He tells us that we are to love everyone, and for me, that includes gay people. Gay people are just as capable of loving others as those who are not gay. Nowhere have I seen anyone in the Church mention the difference between a "blessing" and a "marriage".

I have no doubt that this debate will carry on for quite some time and I pray that some sort of solution can be found that will resolve the dilemma that our Anglican Church finds itself in.

Lin Richards
Dandenong

GAFCON is not helping the gospel

The view of many researchers that same-sex attraction in most cases is genetic raised doubts about the biblical condemnation of homosexuality which were written by people who had never heard of genes. Scientists tell us that same-sex behaviour is a natural part of our diversity as a species.

Like many Christians, I've always found CS Lewis a good guide. In his view the ultimate question is whether the doctrine of the goodness of God or that of the inerrancy of the Scriptures is to prevail when they conflict. Lewis states that: "The doctrine of the goodness of God is the more certain of the two. Indeed, only that doctrine renders this worship of Him obligatory or even permissible."

Christians impede their message if they deny or denigrate the findings of science.

Many of the "barnacles" on the gospel result from a literalistic interpretation of the Bible or of church doctrines. Educated congregations need reassurance that they are not expected to believe, as was the queen in Alice and Wonderland, six impossible things before breakfast.

Joel McFadyen in September's *Melbourne Anglican* provides a motto for Australian Anglicans when he says that to reject tolerance is to accept irrelevance. GAFCON's move to establish yet another church is no help in promoting the gospel in our modern society.

James Moore
Kogarah

THE Melbourne Anglican

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We must avoid simplistic ‘debate’ about abortion



Picture: iStock

■ Denise Cooper-Clarke

“The plumbline doesn’t judge disagreement. But it does hold me and each of us to account for how we disagree” – Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby in his presidential address to General Synod, 2015.

After the United States Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* (1973) in June 2022 and ruled that the US Constitution does not confer a right to abortion, there was a flood of commentary on mainstream and social media, including here in Australia. *Dobbs* was a legal judgement about the US Constitution, not a statement about the morality of abortion, yet most of the commentary was directed at the moral, not the constitutional question. And much of it was extremely polarised.

This article does not address the morality of abortion as such, but the way the arguments about it are conducted in public discourse.

In thinking through my unease with much of the social media commentary, I was interested to explore what kind of arguments would be persuasive. That is, the arguments that might actually shift someone’s thinking a little, or even change their minds. A friend recommended I read *Good Arguments* by Bo Seo.

Because abortion is controversial, discussion about it is commonly referred to as the “abortion debate”. But for a number of reasons debate might not be the right framework. First, debate dichotomises views. Debaters must adopt either a “Yes” or “No” position in relation to the given topic, and there is a winner and a loser. But in relation to abortion, most people’s views do not fit neatly into “Yes” and “No” categories. They might be “Maybe” or “It depends”. For example, one might take the view that while abortion is generally

immoral, it should not generally be illegal. Or one may consider that abortion is more or less morally justified depending on the circumstances, including how far the pregnancy is advanced.

Second, debate is adversarial. We use the language of attacking and defending. We conceive those with whom we disagree as opponents, or even enemies. If our aim is victory at all costs, we risk dehumanising “the other side” and may be tempted to use unscrupulous rhetorical techniques such as misrepresenting their position.

“Most people’s views do not fit neatly into ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ categories.”

Denise Cooper-Clarke

An inquisitorial model would be more helpful in framing a nuanced discussion of abortion, or any other complex and sensitive issue. Suitable questions might include “Under what circumstances might a Christian doctor be justified in performing a termination of pregnancy?” and “What factors should a Christian couple take into account when faced with a decision to terminate a pregnancy after a diagnosis of foetal abnormality?”

On the other hand, according to Seo the principles of formal debate can teach us a great deal about how to have good arguments. What he means by a good argument is implicit in the subtitle of his book: *How Debate Teaches us to Listen and Be Heard*.

In formal debate, the topic is agreed on by both sides. This avoids people talking at rather than to each other. The topic must be clear and specific: “abortion” is too general.

More specific topics would be, “That the Bible teaches that the life of a foetus is inviolable from the moment of conception”, “That there should be no legal barriers to women accessing abortion in the first trimester”, “That danger to the mother’s life or cases of rape and incest are the only valid moral reasons for abortion”, or “That unrestricted access to abortion is necessary for the equality of women”.

It is important to listen carefully to those with whom we disagree to identify exactly where the disagreement lies and where we have common ground. For example, the disagreement may be about the interpretation of specific texts such as Exodus 21: 22-25 or Psalm 139. Or there may be agreement that these texts are ambiguous, but disagreement about the implications of other biblical teaching for abortion. Or we might agree that both the moral status of the foetus and women’s welfare and autonomy are important moral considerations, but disagree about how we balance these in particular situations.

If we genuinely wish to persuade those with whom we disagree we will show respect for their moral convictions even when we disagree with them, rather than “playing to the gallery” or “preaching to the choir”. We will acknowledge qualifications and uncertainties. And we will not impugn their motives or resort to insults or derision.

It is difficult for people to change their minds on significant moral issues. As well as using logical arguments, if we are to be persuasive we need to demonstrate that we can be trusted to take the other person’s views seriously, and that we are open ourselves to being persuaded.

Denise Cooper-Clarke is a medical ethicist and member of the Social Responsibilities Committee of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

We all accept the authority of Scripture,

■ Dorothy Lee

One of the things Anglicanism believes across the spectrum, is that the Bible, in the words of Article 6 of *The Thirty-nine Articles*, “containeth all things necessary to salvation”.

The article means that we Anglicans are committed to an intelligent understanding and wholehearted following of the Bible. We are committed to its revelation of God and the forming of God’s people; its intricate, overarching narratives that make sense of human existence; its teachings on spiritual and moral issues; and above all its adherence to Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, crucified and risen – the core interpreting principle of the Bible.

The immediate issue dividing us across Anglicanism is not biblical authority in itself, but rather our interpretation of the Bible. Anglican Christians disagree, not on the centrality of Scripture, but rather on the ways in which Scripture is to be interpreted for us today.

To my mind, there are three principles involved in interpreting Scripture. In the first place, hearkening to Scripture means taking seriously the diverse contexts out of which it arises. This includes awareness of the ancient world more generally which is so very different from the modern Western world in its values and structures. It also includes listening to the immediate contexts out of which individual texts might have emerged. Our question is this: to what people and what immediate context are the biblical authors addressing their narratives, prophecies, rhetoric, teachings?

“To complicate matters further we also believe that the Holy Spirit not only inspired the sacred writings but also continues to inspire its interpreters.”

Dorothy Lee

This question is of vital importance in interpreting Scripture because it is possible for any of us to make erroneous assumptions about what the text means. It is all-too-easy to view the text as a mirror in which we see only our own preferred worldview, our own presuppositions, even our own prejudices, reflected back at us.

The second issue is that tradition plays a role in understanding and interpreting Scripture. The early creeds and councils of the Church in the first centuries outlined core aspects of Christian belief. The doctrines of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ are not always explicit in the New Testament. These teachings are drawn out through the experience and reflection of the early church into something much clearer and more specific, something to which we as Anglicans give our assent.

The noted Anglican scholar Kevin Giles has argued that tradition plays a part in the interpretation of the Bible, in *What the Bible Actually Teaches on Women*. For him tradition represents the ongoing consensus of the church in its exploration of scriptural truth



Professor Dorothy Lee.

for the current context. It may take time and disagreement before the church reaches consensus on a particular matter but the discussion and even the disagreement are part of the process.

Giles says what needs to be discerned is the difference between church teaching that goes beyond the Scripture – that is, moving into new areas that the Bible itself does not envisage – and teaching that goes directly against it. The former is inevitable, the latter theologically problematical. However, on how this distinction operates, Anglicans may sharply disagree.

Yet we all agree that new problems and new contexts that have no direct word from Scripture require new answers, guided by

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where we differ is its interpretation



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theological principles that derive ultimately from the Bible itself.

The third aspect that is essential in interpreting Scripture is the role of experience. Previous generations might have spoken of this as “reason” but this refers to something similar: the lived out Christian reflection on our context and on creaturely existence in general that informs and shapes our response to Scripture.

In *Surprised by Joy*, C.S. Lewis comments that “the universe is true wherever you fairly test it”. This wise statement confirms that reason and experience can be helpful guides and have a role to play in our interpreting of Scripture. The teachings of the Bible are neither irrational nor arbitrary. They are

not there to test our credibility. Rather they arise from the experience of community – Israel and the Church – and are directed at shaping and deepening that experience. Biblical teaching does not run contrary to reason, though it may well take us beyond it.

To complicate matters further we also believe that the Holy Spirit not only inspired the sacred writings but also continues to inspire its interpreters. This is whether they are scholars and theologians, or ordinary Christians endeavouring to live their lives as faithful disciples of Christ in the light of God’s gracious and sovereign rule.

This theological belief presents us with a challenge. It means, apart from anything else, that we need to gather around the

Scriptures in dialogue not only with the text but also with one another, bringing our diverse perspectives to bear on how we read and live out the sacred writings. We need each other to understand the text, even when (especially when?), we disagree, and we need to remain in prayerful and dynamic conversation with each other. That is part of what it means to be church.

To sum up: as Anglicans we accept the authority of Scripture in its prophetic and apostolic witness to Jesus Christ, the Word of God. Where we differ is in the ways in which we interpret the text. That might include the different weightings we give to tradition and experience or reason in our interpretation of Scripture. To my mind, Scripture always comes first: to feed and nurture tradition, to help us interpret experience, to show us how to reason in the light of divine revelation.

Our commitment to worship, mission and evangelism – the drawing of people to Christ, the care of creation, and the need to transform unjust social structures – is sourced and nourished by the Bible itself and provides the basis of unity. We are united in our love of the gospel and our desire to proclaim it to the world around us in word and deed. Together, in our diverse readings of the text – no matter how painfully we disagree at times – we are called to bear living witness to Jesus Christ, to the holy Trinity, and to the comprehensive reach and reality of God’s grace.

The Reverend Canon Professor Dorothy A. Lee is Stewart Research Professor of New Testament at Trinity College, University of Divinity.



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000**

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Priesthood wasn't in Heidin's plan, but it

■ Jenan Taylor

The Reverend Heidin Kunoo once dreamed of traveling the world as a missionary. Now she's on a quest to fortify local parishes, with a little inspiration from her own traditions.

At St Paul's East Kew where she is an assistant priest, Ms Kunoo runs a monthly lunch get-together for young adults at a pub.

It's a social thing, and there's no mention of Bible study.

Conscious that many young people would rather be elsewhere than church, Ms Kunoo wants to take the time to build a solid relationship with them first.

Ms Kunoo who was ordained in November 2017, sees building the links that eventually flourish into healthy faith communities as being like gardening.

"As a priest, I need to discern where their hearts are. You cannot force someone to do something if they don't want to do it. It won't be fruitful otherwise. God is the only one who can make things grow," she said.

Since beginning her work in churches, Ms Kunoo has held placements at locations including Bacchus Marsh and Queenscliffe.

What she wants more than anything is to help young people see how important the church is for them, and how vital they are to it.

A member of the Karen ethnic group, Ms Kunoo was a young teen herself when she arrived in Australia in 2005 with her parents and two older siblings.

The family settled in Melbourne's west and joined a nearby Anglican church.

Buffeted by language and cultural barriers, Ms Kunoo looked forward to meeting other young people and making friends but was dismayed to find that she was the only young person in the congregation.

On asking about it, she was told that in Australia most young people preferred to spend their Sundays at sport or work, or other activities.

It perplexed her.

In Myanmar's Karen Christian community, the youth group, the mother's union, the men's society and the Sunday school, are the four pillars of the church, with each being valued as much the others.

If any pillar is diminished or removed, the structure collapses.

The ideal of the community working together, is something that Karen youth then become aware of from a very early age.

They come to learn that people in a community can depend on each other.



The Reverend Heidin Kunoo is assistant priest at St Paul's East Kew. Picture: Janine Eastgate

They also learn that where there's strong family, there's a strong community, and vice versa.

"So, family and community is extremely important," Ms Kunoo said.

"When someone falls, there is someone who will pick you up."

That focus was what kept the congregations animated and involved, she said.

Ms Kunoo remembered how at church in Myanmar there were always people around. They were there during services and for hours afterwards, and every single day there was background laughter or something going on somewhere on the premises.

But for her, there was nothing quite like Christmas time, to cement the idea of the community as family.

Myanmarese Christmas celebrations are famous for being spread over several days, and for being occasions where believers, as well as the unchurched, come together and sing traditional Karen carols, dance, and share roasted meats and glutinous rice, and traditional soups at midnight.

Ms Kunoo has fond recollections of the

noise of the games and tournaments, the smoke and heat of campfires and the excitement of exchanging gifts with everyone, so that no person left empty handed.

"Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, we were hardly at home because we were always at church and there were so many things going on. And the only time that we go home is when we go to sleep," she said.

The role of faith in people's lives was never understated, however, and the degree to which they attended to it was a very serious matter.

For many young Karen people, religion, like their education, was by no means optional, Ms Kunoo said.

As the daughter of retired Anglican priest, the Reverend Nisher Kunoo, and the great granddaughter of one of Myanmar's most well-known missionaries, family and religion have always been inextricably linked for Ms Kunoo.

Indeed, she was very young when she first received her calling to priesthood.

For Ms Kunoo it was a voice telling her

became a calling she couldn't ignore

that her father loved her. Given that her dad was a priest, Ms Kunoo didn't pay it attention at first.

Back then her dream was to be a missionary and work in developing countries.

Priesthood in Myanmar was not a reality for women, so it had never been her plan then, and wasn't a goal, even as she grew to adulthood in Australia.

Still, she heard that voice telling her that father loved her often enough over the years to spend lots of time alone contemplating it.

Nonetheless, she didn't welcome the idea of becoming a priest even as she neared the end of a theology degree at Trinity College.

She thought often of her childhood ambitions of being a missionary. The idea of returning to Myanmar and travelling away from the clamour of its urban centres to work among the country's most needy and remote people, was appealing to Ms Kunoo.

But she could see no future in that for her, and she turned to her family for guidance about her direction.

She wouldn't be rushed into making her decision, so she asked her parents to accompany her to retreats and her discernment so that they could spend time in reflection and

praying together about her future.

Gradually, Ms Kunoo became aware that whenever she rejected the idea of ordination, she felt anxious. But when she contemplated it as a possibility, she felt far more peaceful.

That came from her conviction that within the Church there was always going to be the community of family, she said.

Eventually, Ms Kunoo realised that a sense of parish closeness was what she most wanted to feel around her, so she decided to become ordained and pursue a life of parish ministry.

Some days Ms Kunoo still feels thrilled at the idea of trekking the jungle canopied mountains and valleys of Myanmar to take God's word to forgotten people, but she has decided to leave that to a working holiday for now.

Having conducted a survey among young people once at a Melbourne diocese parish a little while back, Ms Kunoo said she'd found that most believed that church was some place their parents or grandparents attended.

"They said they were too busy studying or working and that when they started to age, they'd finally go to church. Some even suggested that religion was more of a club

for old people," she said.

So, she is keen to show them that faith is a journey on which it is important to build foundations.

Ms Kunoo said it was unlikely she would get to the point where all parishioners opted to spend Christmas day together with each other, or that the gentle hubbub of voices would be around the church well after services, but that was not her aim.

Rather, helping young people start to develop a love of church community was something she was determined to work slowly at.

For that, she will draw on what she knows of the significance of family and community.

"For people on their own it's easier to give up. But when you are in a group, there is encouragement to keep on going through difficulties, instead of losing faith," Ms Kunoo said. "Through family, you see the presence of God working."

This profile of the Reverend Heidun Kunoo is part of a series on women in ministry, marking the December 2022 anniversary of 30 years since women were ordained in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

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'It's not about what success I'm having ... it's about who God says I am'

This month ISCAST Publications Director Dr David Hooker catches up with Dr Sarah Sweet, a lecturer in astrophysics at the University of Queensland. We are privileged to hear Sarah share her thoughts on her science and faith journey.

David: On behalf of ISCAST and our Melbourne Anglican readers, thank you Sarah for your time.

Sarah: Thanks Dave. So, to introduce myself, people call me Sarah. I'm 41 and my interests are my family, with a husband and children. My kids are nearly six, four, one-and-a-half and one on the way! I'm a lecturer in astrophysics at the University of Queensland. I did my PhD in astrophysics here at UQ as well.

David: Could you explain to us more about your role? I'm wondering what astrophysics means, and what grabbed your attention about this chosen field in the first place?

Sarah: My job is part teaching, part research, part admin, and includes discovering new things about the universe, especially galaxies like our own Milky Way. These galaxies are collections of stars, gas, and mysterious dark matter. I investigate how these "island universes" have changed over time, how they move, what they're made of, and how this relates to what they look like. This tells us more about our place in our own Milky Way galaxy.

David: The mind boggles to think of dark matter! Let's talk more about your science career. What are a couple of challenging career chapters, and what led to those challenges?

Sarah: One of the biggest challenges I've had is dealing with something called "imposter syndrome". Many scientists encounter this, and particularly women scientists – but many men as well.

This is where one feels that, regardless of the amount of success one is having, that maybe one has just been lucky, or it's just a coincidence. Sometimes, one may feel like another person should've been chosen instead. I'm unsure this is something that ever goes away but I think I've been able to make friends with it, and recognise that there are many who experience it, even those more senior than me. That's somewhat encouraging. But, also, a secret weapon has been to know that it's not just about what success I'm having or what other people say about me, or even what I say about myself. It's about who God says I am. That's what's really important. At the end of the day, his view of me, a child of God, is so much more important than validation I get from anywhere else.

David: Thank you, Sarah, for sharing your personal insights there. Was there another challenge in your science career?

Sarah: Yes, navigating job insecurity, particularly trying to fit having babies

around my work. For my postdocs I moved from UQ down to ANU and to Swinburne and back here again. I had my first child while at ANU, just at the end of my contract, and my second while at Swinburne before coming back here. It's been difficult to time everything well and to navigate the changes that having babies brings to my career involvement. Having both career and children can impact collaborations. Fortunately, I've been blessed with some great bosses and colleagues who are mostly very happy for me. I also have an extremely supportive husband who has been doing the bulk of the childcare! I certainly couldn't do it without him.

Job security is also affected by being on fixed-term contracts. The uncertainty of "will that grant be successful, will I have another job?" – that's a difficult thing, and having children adds to the complexity.

In all this, knowing the Prince of Peace is so important. Without Jesus I couldn't keep an even keel.

David: Thanks, Sarah. It's clear Jesus has been close to you in your work. So how did you become a Christian? And did science or particular people influence you in that point of your journey?

Sarah: With parents as pastors, I was brought up in a Christian home. I was very young when I asked Jesus into my heart and feel very blessed to have that foundation. At a similar age I remember just having a sense of awe and wonder at the night sky, the vastness and beauty of it, how it spoke to the vastness and beauty of God, his thoughtfulness and care for us. That sense of awe and wonder in God, together with his creation, always seemed very compatible to me.

David: As committed Christians there's both the intellectual challenges of melding our faith and our science together, and of course being a witness for Christ in the workplace. How has being a Christian in a scientific field challenged you?

Sarah: Having grown up in a Christian home and attended a Christian school, it has been challenging to encounter and understand people with different points of view. I have several Christian colleagues, but a few colleagues are quite anti-God. At one of my workplaces, I was next door to an anti-theist having loud religious conversations. He seemed quite angry, and the impression was he must have been really hurt. I was very impacted by this. I never got to speak to him about why he felt like that. This challenges me to be always

prepared to give an answer for the hope I have. But most of my colleagues are quite accepting or keep their views to themselves.

David: How has science shaped your Christian faith?

Sarah: There's a lot that science doesn't understand, and this matches what it says in Proverbs: it's the glory of God to conceal, and our glory to discover. It's our privilege to be able to do that; it wouldn't be fun if we had all the answers! We can keep

"Science has really enhanced the wonder that I feel and my trust in God's providence."

Sarah Sweet

increasing our knowledge, but it still falls so far short of the entirety of understanding God's creation, and therefore how amazing he is. I can see through science his loving sovereignty in the way that he's created us and the kindness of his hand at work. It's like that verse from the Bible: "when I consider the heavens, the works of his

hands, what is man that you are mindful of him?" So, I think science has really enhanced the wonder that I feel and my trust in God's providence.

David: Where would you like to go in your science faith journey?

Sarah: In deepening my understanding about the partnership between science and faith, I'd like to help allay people's concerns about the "conflict narrative." And I want to become better at talking to my colleagues about faith and science.

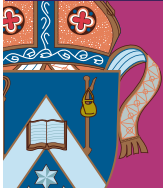
David: Thanks, Sarah. In closing, is there any advice and encouragement you'd like to give our readers, some of whom may aspire to be scientists one day?

Sarah: Absolutely. It's so important to cultivate our personal relationship with God and to keep alive that sense of wonder and awe at who God is, at his care and love for us, and the care that he's put into showing who he is. If we can hold on to that wonder and that assurance of his love for us, I think that's so foundational to who we are as scientists and as Christians.

David: It's been wonderful to chat, Sarah. Thank you.



Sarah Sweet feels the privilege of discovery in her work as an astrophysicist. Picture: supplied



Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

Prayer Diary



OCTOBER

Sat 1: The Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn (Bp Mark Short, Asst Bp Carol Wagner, Clergy & People); The Parish of St Matthew's, Glenroy/Hadfield w. St Linus; Merlynston (Robert Koren);

Sun 2: The Anglican Church of Canada (Abp Linda Nicholls); Ministry to the Defence Force (Bishop Grant Dibden, Chaplains & Members of the Defence Forces); Trinity Grammar School (Adrian Farrer, Principal; Chris Leadbeater, James Hale, Chaplains); All Saints' Greensborough (Julie Blinco-Smith);

Mon 3: The Diocese of Gippsland (Bp Richard Treloar, Clergy & People); Melbourne Anglican Diocesan Corporation (Justin Lachal, GM); St Stephen's Greythorn (Incumbency vacant; Hugh Prentice interim locum);

Tues 4: The Diocese of Grafton (Bp Murray Harvey, Clergy & People); Calling Melbourne2Prayer Group (Jill Firth, Rachel McDougall, Jamie Miller, Philip Trowse); St Alban's Hamlyn Heights (Jon Taylor);

Wed 5: Ministry with the Aboriginal people of Australia (Bp Chris McLeod, National Aboriginal Bishop, Aboriginal Clergy & People); Christ Church Newport – Commissioning service, Steve Faragher (Bp Kate Prowd); Holy Trinity Hampton Park (Argo Biswas);

Thurs 6: Ministry with the Torres Strait Islander people of Australia (Torres Strait Islander Clergy & People); Yarra Valley Grammar School (Mark Merry, principal, Dietrich Cheung, chaplain); Holy Trinity Hampton (Ross Duncan); St John's Malvern East – Pastoral visit (Bp Brad Billings); St Paul's Caulfield North – Commissioning Service, Brendan McDonald (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St Michael's & St Luke's North Dandenong – Commissioning Service, Jeremiah Paul (Bp Paul Barker); Retired clergy service, St Paul's Cathedral;

Fri 7: The Diocese of Melbourne (Abp Philip Freier, Asst Bps Paul Barker, Bradly Billings, Genieve Blackwell, Kate Prowd, Clergy & People); Angliss Health Services; Holy Trinity Hastings (Tim Anderson);

Sat 8: The Diocese of Newcastle (Bp Peter Stuart, Asst Bps Charlie Murry, Sonia Roulston, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Dandenong; Christ Church Hawthorn (Andrew Dircks);

Sun 9: The Church of the Province of Central Africa (Abp Albert Chama); The Diocese of North Queensland (Bp Keith Joseph, Clergy & People); Brighton Grammar School (Ross Featherston, Principal; Chester Lord, Chaplain); St Columba's Hawthorn (Mark McDonald); Christ Church St Kilda – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St John's Upper Beaconsfield – Pastoral visit (Bp Paul Barker); St Paul's Cathedral – 175th year anniversary service (Abp Philip Freier);

Mon 10: The Diocese of North West Australia (Bp elect Darrell Parker, Clergy & People); Children's & Families' Ministry; The Parish of St John's, Healesville w. St Paul's, Yarra Glen (Matt Smith);

Tues 11: The Diocese of Perth (Abp Kay Goldsworthy, Asst Bps Jeremy James, Kate Wilmot, Clergy & People); Chinese Ministry (Richard Liu, Missioner); St John's Highton (William Orpwood, Josh Simon, Christopher Lynch);

Wed 12: The Diocese of Riverina (Bp Donald Kirk, Clergy & People); Defence Force Chaplains; Church of the Epiphany Hoppers Crossing (Glenn Buijs, Trish Hunt, Hei Ler Kyi Shwe); Melbourne Synod;

Thurs 13: The Diocese of Rockhampton (Bishop Peter Grice, Clergy & People); Beacons Hills College (Tony Sheumack, Principal; Peggy Kruse, Chaplain);

Parish of Hume (Satvasheela Pandhare); Melbourne Synod;

Fri 14: The Diocese of Sydney (Abp Kanishka Raffel, Regional Bps Chris Edwards, Michael Stead, Peter Hayward, Peter Lin, Malcolm Richards, Gary Koo, Clergy & People); Church Missionary Society (Jonathan Wei-Han Kuan, Victorian Director; Andrew Gifford, Andrew Livingstone); The Parish of St Paul's, Inverleigh w. St John's, Bannockburn and Church of the Epiphany, Meredith (Tim Smith); Melbourne Synod;

Sat 15: The Diocese of Tasmania (Bp Richard Condie, Missioner Bp Chris Jones, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Essendon (Vanessa Bennett); Melbourne Synod; St George's Ivanhoe East (John Sanderson, Kristen Dillon);

Sun 16: Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America (Abp Julio Murray); The Diocese of The Murray (Bp Keith Dalby, Clergy & People); Camberwell Girls' Grammar School (Debbie Dunwoody, Principal; Helen Creed, Chaplain); St James' Ivanhoe (Incumbency vacant, Jessica Cheung, Ruth Li); St Augustine's Mont Albert – Pastoral visit (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St Hilary's Kew – Confirmation Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); Upper Yarra Parish – Pastoral visit (Bp Paul Barker);

Mon 17: The Diocese of The Northern Territory (Bp Greg Anderson, Clergy & People); Community of the Holy Name (Sr Carol Tanner); St Paul's Kew East (Heidin Kunoo, Stacey Slater);

Tues 18: The Diocese of Wangaratta (Bp Clarence Bester, Clergy & People); Cross-Cultural Ministry; Holy Trinity Kew (Robert Newton, Lesley Dixon, Elizabeth Webster, Ruth Li, Rick Cheung);

Wed 19: The Diocese of Willochra (Bp John Stead, Clergy & People); Police Force Chaplains (Drew Mellor & other Chaplains) and members of the Police Force; Parish of Kew/North Balwyn and Mont Albert North (Adam Cetrangolo, Elizabeth Webster, Yi Cheng Shih, Wendy Wade, Tavis Beer, Kathryn Beer, Richard Bruce); St Martin's Hawksburn – Induction Service, John Raike (Bp Genieve Blackwell);

Thurs 20: Anglicare Australia (Bp Chris Jones, Chair; Kasy Chambers, Exec Director); Camberwell Grammar School (Paul Hicks, Principal; Charles Butler, Chaplain); St James' and St Peter's Kilsyth-Montrose (Janice O'Gorman); St Paul's Cathedral – Valedictory service (Abp Philip Freier, Bp Kate Prowd);

Fri 21: Theological Colleges, Church Schools & Church Kindergartens; Deacons' Ministry; All Saints' Kooyong (Kuncoro Rusman, Lachlan Thompson);

Sat 22: Mission Agencies of the Anglican Church of Australia; Archdeaconry of Frankston (Helen Phillips); The Parish of St Thomas', Langwarrin w. St Peter's, Pearceedale (James Connor);

Sun 23: Province de L'Eglise Anglicane Du Congo (Abp Titre Ande Georges); Religious Orders serving within the Anglican Church of Australia; Caulfield Grammar School (Ashleigh Martin, Principal; Ryan Holt, Amanda Lyons and Kate Jacob, Chaplains); The Parish of Holy Trinity, Lara w. Christ Church, Little River (Roxanne Addley); St Paul's Caulfield North – Confirmation Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); All Saints' Mitcham – Pastoral visit (Bp Paul Barker); St James' Dandenong – Confirmation service (Bp Paul Barker); All Souls' Rowville – Confirmation service (Bp Paul Barker); St Mary's Sunbury – Building opening (Bp Kate Prowd);

Mon 24: Locums and all retired clergy; Diocesan Building Committee; St John the Baptist Lilydale (Matthew Connolly);

Tues 25: The Anglican Church of Australia (Primate Abp Geoffrey Smith, General Secretary Anne Hywood, the General Synod & the Standing Committee); Diocesan Finance; Parish of Longbeach Chelsea (Suzanne Bluett);

Wed 26: The Diocese of Adelaide (Abp Geoff Smith, Asst Bps Denise Ferguson, Timothy Harris, Christopher McLeod; Clergy & People); St George's Malvern (Gregory Seach);

Thurs 27: The Diocese of Armidale (Bp Rod Chiswell, Clergy & People); Christ Church Grammar School (Neil Andary, Principal; Emily Fraser, Chaplain); The Parish of Saint John and Saint Agnes East Malvern and Glen Huntly (Alexander Ross);

Fri 28: The Diocese of Ballarat (Bp Garry Weatherill, Clergy & People); Diocesan Liturgical Committee; Holy Trinity Melbourne East (Grant Edgcumbe);

Sat 29: The Diocese of Bathurst (Bp Mark Calder, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Geelong (Jill McCoy); St James' Old Cathedral Melbourne West (Matthew Williams, Michael Raiter);

Sun 30: Iglesia Anglicana de Chile (Abp Hector Zavala); The Diocese of Bendigo (Bp Matt Brain, Clergy & People); Firbank Grammar School (Jenny Williams, Principal; Christine Croft, chaplain); St Luke's Melbourne South (Jon Cox, Michele Moorhouse); St Timothy's Bulleen – Pastoral visit (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St Thomas' Langwarrin – Pastoral visit (Bp Paul Barker); St Agnes' Black Rock – Pastoral visit (Bp Paul Barker); St John's Diamond Creek – Pastoral visit (Bp Kate Prowd);

Mon 31: The Diocese of Brisbane (Abp Phillip Aspinall, Regional Bps Jeremy Greaves, Cameron Venables, John Roundhill, Clergy & People); Diocesan Property Committee; St Mary's Melbourne North (Jan Joustra, Dorothy Lee, Mark Lindsay).

NOVEMBER

Tues 1: The Diocese of Bunbury (Bp Ian Coutts, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Kew (Greg Allinson); St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne (Andreas Loewe, Heather Patacca, Jane Window, Robert Vun, Christopher Carolane, Cleopas Zhang);

Wed 2: The Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn (Bp Mark Short, Asst Bp Carol Wagner, Clergy & People); Geelong Grammar School (Rebecca Cody, Principal; Gordon Lingard, Howard Parkinson, Chaplains); Parish of St Matthias Mernda (Sandy Solomon);

Thurs 3: Ministry to the Defence Force (Bishop Grant Dibden, Chaplains & Members of the Defence Forces); Diocesan Provincial Council; Merri Creek Melbourne (Pete Carolane, Patrick Senn, Robert Miller, Beck Miller);

Fri 4: The Diocese of Gippsland (Bp Richard Treloar, Clergy & People); Diocesan Risk Management and Insurance (Matthew Wilson, Manager); All Saints' Mitcham (Greg Wong);

Sat 5: The Diocese of Grafton (Bp Murray Harvey, Clergy & People); St George's Monbulk (Simon Elliott);

Sun 6: The Church of England (Abp Justin Welby); Ministry with the Aboriginal people of Australia (Bp Chris McLeod, National Aboriginal Bishop, Aboriginal Clergy & People); Hume Anglican Grammar School (Bill Sweeney, Principal; Peter Waterhouse, Chaplain); St Thomas' Moonee Ponds (Vanessa Bennett); Parish of Pascoe Vale/Oak Park – Pastoral visit (Bp Genieve Blackwell); Longbeach Parish – Pastoral visit (Bp Paul Barker); St Mark's Reservoir – Pastoral visit (Bp Kate Prowd).



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Invest to keep young people in church

■ Brian Holden

I recently concluded a trip to Queensland with a group of children, family and youth ministers, visiting a variety of churches to explore different approaches to working with young people. Spending time with clergy leadership and staff at the churches and asking questions was a great learning experience.

The following is a collation of thoughts from the team as they reflect on what we learnt.

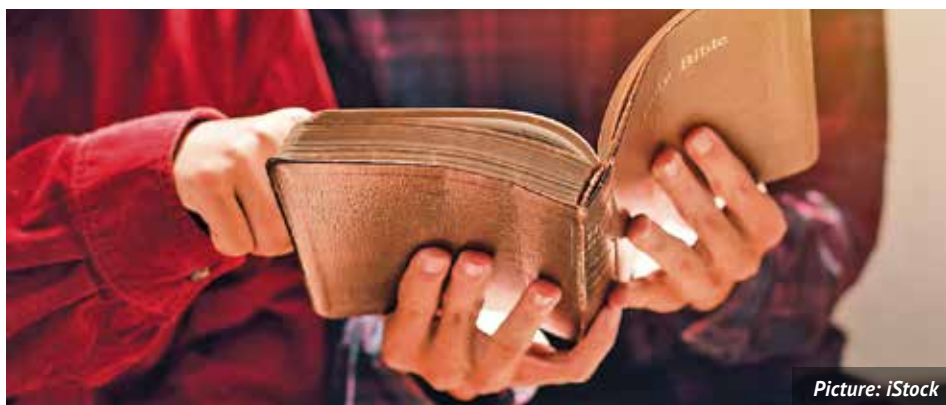
Investment is key

"If you prioritise children's ministry it will grow. Some churches did this by investing in modern buildings, spaces and resources, others had everyone in the leadership read and discuss books like *Growing Young* to better understand how to grow children and youth ministry, and why it is important."

"The churches we visited had children and youth as strong part of their culture. It was clear when we talked to the senior leaders that they had taken the time to invest in the ministries to young people."

"What stood out for me across all the churches we visited was the core commitment to ministry with young people. This played out in various ways across buildings, promotion, funding, and genuine leadership roles for young people, amongst other things."

"I learnt that sustained change in



Picture: iStock

ministry takes time and dedication. The most successful ministries had full-time children and youth staff, who had theological training, and some also had teacher training."

Children and youth are members of the body of Christ

"Our children and young people are full members of the church today and involving them in the life of the church helps them not only feel a part of the family but helps them in their own faith formation journey."

"The importance of finding or creating meaningful ways that our young people can be serving and contributing towards the life of our churches is key." "Where young people are serving, they are staying in the church."

"I think my greatest learning is the role of the leaders in shaping a culture that cultivates a focus on ministry to young people. Where the leaders of churches tell stories about, and celebrate ministry to and

with young people, the church as a whole values young people. Not as an added extra, or a burden, but instead as a group vital to the life of the body of Christ."

Diversity in Expression

"I also learnt that ministry can be very diverse depending on the context in which you minister. Being able to identify and meet the needs of the young people in which you minister to, is crucial in helping them to develop their relationship with God."

"I learnt that I love learning more about God, and the different ways to minister to young people. It isn't one size fits all."

Community of practice in learning

"It was a really engaging process of learning – I loved being able to freely ask questions to dig deep into the 'whys' of their particular ministry model and see how that was reflected in their practice."

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My friend just came out as transgender, how should I respond to this?

Picture: iStock

■ Lauren Foster

Welcome to the first of “Curly Questions” a monthly column written by experts dealing with tricky conversations that touch on faith, in a compassionate, practical and biblical way. Here Lauren Foster begins the series.

My friend just came out as transgender, how should I respond to this?

There is no doubt that being the person someone trusts to share this with is a huge privilege. However, it can also be pretty confronting for everyone.

It is easy to overthink and worry about saying something unhelpful or harmful. So, let us explore how to support someone when they come out as transgender.

In these conversations, it is good to hold onto two things: love for the person in front of you and curiosity about their experience. It can be easy to fall into a reaction rather than a response. Take a deep breath, suspend your judgment and be intentionally curious about the person's story. As people, there are universal experiences that we all share which means people who are gender queer are not that different to you. LGBTQIA+ people will also have differences in their experience to you which means there is great importance in listening and in not making assumptions.

Firstly, know your role. The best thing that you can do is to know your role and act

inside of it. You are not their counsellor, you are their confidant.

Take the time to actively listen to your friend. Take the pressure off yourself and know that the most important thing you need to do is listen. It is important to remember this: when a person shares something big, they want to be seen, known, and heard – they want to know that their story is worthy of your time. Thank them for trusting you and sharing with you. You can ask questions like:

- How can I support you with this?
- What has this experience been like for you?
- What are some helpful next steps for you?
- Do you have people supporting you? Can I help you get support?
- If you get stuck, you can always say “tell me more”.

Ask them what language and pronouns they would like you to use. This is a big way that we can honour and love the person in front of us. Biblical scholar Preston Sprinkle speaks of pronoun hospitality which is not about our personal view about gender identity but about respecting the person in front of us. Calling a person by their preferred pronouns can be considered an act of Christ-like love regardless of what you think about the LGBTQIA+ movement. If you make a mistake, that's ok, just apologise and move on.

Be aware of your reactions and your language. Your friend will likely be on high alert for your reaction. Notice if you are feeling heightened and breathe through it to focus on them.

Take care of yourself: hearing someone's story will likely impact you and it is important that you debrief with someone safe if you need to. Speak to the person about this as it's an easy way to honour them. Know your limits and do not engage in anything that you are not trained to do.

Discipleship is all about being willing to sit with people in the messy parts of life. Preston Sprinkle's words hit the core of this issue when he says: “we need less outrage and more outrageous love. Our truth will not be heard until our grace is felt, because the greatest apologetic for truth is love.”

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

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



Lauren Foster is a wellbeing coordinator in a Christian secondary school and co-director of the Big Kids' Table ministry.

A journey that still has much to reveal

■ Wendy Knowleton

Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy was a towering achievement, but Amazon Prime's *The Rings of Power* is perhaps more ambitious still.

Drawing on Tolkien's appendices, this series travels back 3000 years from the destruction of the One Ring, and journeys through and beyond Middle Earth to the Sundering Seas, the island city of Númenor and the threshold of the Undying Lands. The scope is extraordinary, the detail and mythology almost exhausting. But for devotees of such a world, delving into the conflicts and corruptions that allowed Sauron's rise to power and the forging of the Ring will be irresistible.

The experience is immersive and visually stunning. The design and cinematography,

the New Zealand locations and the special effects produce the nature-inspired beauty of the High Elves' city of Lindon, the Somme-like desolation of orc-ravaged territory and the glory of the dwarves' realm Khazad-Dûm.

Despite the time that separates this series and Frodo's quest, familiar characters bind the two. We meet Elrond (Robert Aramayo), ambitious and political, and Isildur (Maxim Baldry), fated to fail to destroy the Ring when he has the chance. Most memorable is the young Galadriel. Morfydd Clark is superb as this tempestuous warrior who refuses to believe Sauron was obliterated in the War of the First Age and seeks to find and destroy lurking evil. In this Second Age of Middle Earth, Galadriel possesses little of the celestial calm of Cate Blanchett in the films. When gifted passage to the Undying

lands after years of travail, she turns her back on the heaven-like realm of Valinor, and chooses to fight on. And perhaps there are more familiar characters, not yet recognised. Who might be the mysterious stranger who falls from the stars and is discovered in a circle of flames? Could Sauron already have appeared? Who is Halbrand, who tells Galadriel that "looks can be deceiving" but fails to say more about his origins?

The wealth of detail provided in this epic battle between good and evil, might put off those unfamiliar with Tolkien's world. Purists may object to inventions and additions. However, it's a series where the more you watch, the more it will absorb you. We might know how the story ends, but the journey still has much to reveal.

The Rings of Power is streaming on Amazon Prime.

This summer of joy is tinged by the fear of its ending

■ Tim Kroenert

Colm Bairéad's lyrical Gaelic-language film *The Quiet Girl* unearths great emotional complexity from a relatively simple premise.

In the summer of 1981, introverted young girl Cáit (Catherin Clinch) is sent by her neglectful and poor parents to stay with her mother's "people", Eibhlín (Carrie Crowley) and Seán (Andrew Bennett), during her mother's pregnancy. Here on her relatives' idyllic dairy farm, the wide-eyed child comes to better understand herself, her relationship to the world, and the complicated relationships that exist among adults and the people in their care.

The film is a masterclass in cinematic

storytelling. Bairéad employs colour and light, sound and visual composition to describe with precision Cáit's emotional state and inner life. Within evocative spaces, the human drama plays out with an economy of words and a cacophony of emotional import. True to the title, Cáit says little, but Clinch's performance speaks volumes through captivatingly detailed expression. From Eibhlín she receives physical nurture and care unlike any she has known. Eibhlín gently scrubs her toes in a warm bath, and counts 100 brushstrokes to revive her tangled hair. Seán takes longer to warm to her but eventually provides a different kind of nurture, engaging her in physical tasks on the farm that are their own kind of play.

Early in her stay, Eibhlín promises Cáit there are no secrets in this house. Yet the child's clothes that hang long-unused in a closet upstairs put the lie to that claim, as eventually does a gossiping neighbour. Gradually Cáit comes to learn she has as much to offer these de facto parents as they do to her. Along the way there are moments of devastation, breathless tension and unbridled joy. This summer holds more life for Cáit, and for Eibhlín and Seán, than they have yet experienced. Still the film leaves unanswered potent questions about the future. Can this happy present be sustained, or will the ugly past reassert itself?

Screening at Cinema Nova.



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