

TMA

The Melbourne Anglican

December 2021, No 609

Who would
bring a **Child** into a world
like this?

Ivan Smith

Fruitful potential for Advent to carry mourning

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered ... All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went to the town of Nazareth ... because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. Luke 2:1-5.



“Our Christmas celebrations invite us ... to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and to carry the knowledge of his presence throughout all that the future holds for us.”

HOPE THAT OUR IMAGINATIONS have been enlarged during our own time of compliance to health and other directives and this means we can better understand the circumstances of Joseph and Mary in the nativity narratives. We know that difficulty and inconvenience are not the full story of complying with an enforceable directive. You will have your own impressions of 2021 that endure in your memory of this year, now ending. I'm sure that I take out of

this year a much more vivid experience of inhabiting a five-kilometre radius of permitted movement.

Whether on account of imperial edict in their time or of health directives in ours, we share the experience of disrupted expectation. I think that we can use the season of Advent fruitfully this year. I'm aware of how we have all had to miss out on important life events for ourselves or others. Disrupted schooling and tertiary education and working remotely

from our offices are perhaps the least of these. Many have been unable to participate in funerals in the way they would have liked and have needed to be satisfied with watching online. New additions to the family were met online and anyone with important life events happening interstate, let alone overseas, has a big gap in their life. It is proper that we stop and encounter our grief for those things that we have missed. We carry our mourning not just on

account of the death of those we've loved but for missed experience, even joyful ones.

Advent is a season of preparation, and we can use it well by reflecting on our journey and taking time to go more deeply into those things about ourselves that we usually avoid or seek distraction from. Used well, this Advent season prepares us, prepares our expectation for the restoration of our lives becoming “normal” once again. This does not necessarily

mean a straight return to all the old and familiar routines since, if we have grown through our hardship, much will be new for us to embrace.

Joseph and Mary had much that remained new for them to experience and comprehend, including further hardship as they sought refuge in Egypt. They carried with them the world's Saviour whom they would know in a unique way as they embraced their role in God's plan of salvation. Our Christmas celebrations invite us, and all people, to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and to carry the knowledge of his presence throughout all that the future holds for us. Every blessing for a holy journey through Advent as it carries us on to Christmas.

Philip Melbourne



Artwork a reminder of hope in God's love through troubled times

by Chris Shearer

IT'S A pat line, but Melbourne Anglican designer Ivan Smith wanted to create a reminder of hope when he made this month's Christmas cover.

The question “Who would bring a child into a world like this?” sits alongside Smith's drawing of a nativity scene.

Smith said he wanted to evoke

a sense of hope in troubled times through the design.

“It's almost a throw-away line – the question of what parent, in their right mind, would bring a baby into a world of trauma with its pandemics, terror, war, climate catastrophes, abuse, oppression, and death,” he said.

“These have been ever-present, toxic troubles over all of human history.

“But a new-born baby always seems to offer a glimmer of hope – a positive potential.

“At Christmas we celebrate that God hasn't abandoned us and in his loving mercy offers us a solution.

“Jesus eventually bears all of the toxicity – represented in the imagery surrounding the nativity scene – and, on our behalf, endures it and redeems it.

“Our loving parent-God breaks the curse of the human condition and provides an everlasting hope against its perceived finality.”

Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.” Matthew 1:22-23

Clergy Moves

Vacant Appointments as of 18 November 2021:

Holy Trinity, Bacchus Marsh with Christ Church, Myrniong and St George's Balliang; St Martin, Belgrave Heights (from February 2022); St John, Bentleigh (from January 2022); St Edward, Blackburn South; St John Chrysostom, Brunswick West (from January 2022); St Peter, Bundoora; St Faith, Burwood; St Paul, Caulfield North; St Catharine, Caulfield South; St Alban, Coburg West; Darebin South; St Matthew, Glenroy with St Linus, Merlynston; St Stephen, Greythorn (from February 2022); St Peter (Eastern Hill), Melbourne (from January 2022); St Matthias, Mernda (from April 2022); Christ Church, Newport; Pascoe Vale-Oak Park; St Matthew, Panton Hill; St Aidan, Strathmore; St Thomas, Upper Ferntree Gully; St James, Wandin with St Paul, Seville; St Paul, Westmeadows (from January 2022)

Appointments:

COLLIVER, The Revd Barbara Loraine, appointed Renewal of Priest-in-Charge, All Saints' Carlotta Tye Memorial Church, Selby, effective 4 November 2021
CONNOLLY, The Revd Matthew, appointed Incumbent [from Priest-in-Charge], St John, Lilydale, effective 18 November 2021
JACOB, The Revd Kate, appointed Priest as Chaplain [from Assistant Curate] Caulfield Grammar School, effective 4 November 2021
LOH, The Revd Richard, appointed Priest-in-Charge, Christ Church, Dingley, effective 5 January 2022
LOPEZ, The Revd Jonathan, appointed Assistant Priest, Parish of Banyule, effective 1 November 2021
NELSON, The Revd Luke Arthur, appointed Assistant Priest from Assistant Curate, Authorised Anglican Congregation, City on a Hill, West, effective 28 October 2021
PHILLIPS, The Venerable Helen Leanne, appointed extension, Archdeacon of Frankston, effective 22 December 2021
ROSNER, The Revd Natalie, appointed Assistant Priest, St Jude's Carlton, effective 1 February 2022
Permission to Officiate:
MORRIS, The Revd Rodney, Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 1 February 2022
Resignations:
MORRIS, The Revd Rodney, Incumbent St Stephen, Greythorn, effective 31 January 2022
Retirements:
MITCHELL AM, The Revd Dr Robert Bradley, CEO Anglican Overseas Aid, effective 28 February 2022
Obituaries:
SANSOM, The Revd George, 11 November 2021.

For Vacant Parishes listing contact registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au

See Tributes at www.tma.melbourneanglican.org.au

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



St Paul's Cathedral

Together transforming our City and Diocese

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursdays	1pm	Lunchtime Concert Series (see website for upcoming concerts)
Nightly till 25 Dec	9pm – 11pm	Melbourne City Council Christmas Light Festival
Sun 12 Dec	4pm	Christmas Lessons & Carols Preacher: The Dean
Fri 24 Dec	6pm	Christmas Lessons & Carols Preacher: The Dean
Christmas Eve		(also broadcast on Channel 31)
	8pm	Mandarin Christmas Service
	10pm	First Eucharist of Christmas Preacher: The Dean
Sat 25 Dec	8am	Holy Communion (BCP) with Carols
Christmas Day	10am	Preacher: The Archdeacon of Melbourne
		Choral Eucharist
Mon 31 Jan 22	9.30am	Preacher: Archbishop of Melbourne
Sat 5 Feb 22	10.30am	Opening of the Legal Year Service
Apr 11 – Jun 26, 2022		Ordination of Deacons Luke Jerram's <i>Gaia</i> at the Cathedral www.cathedral.org.au/Gaia

REGULAR SERVICES

Sundays	8am	Holy Communion (BCP)*
	10am	Choral Eucharist *
	1pm	Bilingual Eucharist 華語崇拜 (Proof of Vaccination not required for this service)
Weekdays		
Monday	2.30pm	Choral Evensong (on Channel 31)
Tuesday	5.10pm	Choral Evensong *
Wednesday	12.15pm	Holy Eucharist
Thursday	5.10pm	Choral Evensong

Proof of full vaccination required for entry to the Cathedral for all services and during the week (Tues – Sat), except for our Sunday 1pm Bi-lingual Eucharist.

Services marked with * (asterisks) are live-streamed via our website & social media

The Cathedral is open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 3pm.

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www.cathedral.org.au



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Plants bring Jesus to city's growth corridors

by Chris Shearer

FIVE NEW ANGLICAN CONGREGATIONS are set to launch in 2022 as part of the diocese's efforts to re-invigorate church-planting across Melbourne.

Among the plants are a congregation in the inner west, based out of Cairnlea, one at Merri Creek and Fairfield, one at Diamond Creek, one at Berwick and one at Tarniet.

Church Planting Canon Julieanne Laird said that these plants were just the tip of the iceberg. She said twenty-five churches had shown an interest in setting up church plants across the diocese in the near future.

Ms Laird said that despite the disruption caused by the pandemic it was "super encouraging" to see a number of churches interested.

Assistant Bishop Kate Prowd reported to this year's synod that six church plants had been established by the diocese in the last five years, including two in 2021.

Her report said that the Diocese of Melbourne's revised *Vision and Directions* document underpinned the mission for the portfolio, in particular the strategic direction to be "a compelling and outward looking presence in our communities".

"Church planting is integral to the diocese's overall vision of growth," she told *The Melbourne Anglican*.



Members of Mount Waverley based Anglican church plant "micro-church" the Sent Collective pray.

Picture: supplied

"Church plants reflect the creative and innovative steps we are taking in growing Christian communities and offering the love and forgiveness of Christ to all.

"For some, for whom more traditional church buildings seem alien ... a church plant can offer ways to engage and interact that become points of entry into church life and an exploration of the spiritual life."

Ms Laird said that a key idea behind the new plants was to establish an Anglican presence in areas where there was currently none. She said there was also a strong emphasis on establishing plants in "growth corridors", the new suburbs that are being developed and populated as Melbourne expands.

"There's actually quite a lot of people who are religious in those areas who are looking for a place

to go," Ms Laird said.

"And also there's just a heap of people who don't know Jesus and may be a little lost.

"They bought their house, they're trying work out what it means to have fulfilled their dreams in some ways, and where their faith is in that.

"A lot of people when they start having kids they start thinking about what they believe, so there's heaps of opportunities to

help people know Jesus in those communities."

Bishop Prowd agreed that church plants offered an excellent way to reach people in these newer communities.

"Being unencumbered by maintenance of church buildings and years of tradition, church plants can approach mission with a freedom of expression that results in growth," she said.

"There really is no one-size-fits-all model of doing and being church. We need different and complementary models.

"It's exciting to see how ADOM is open to pioneering and supporting variety."

Ms Laird said that the diocese was involved in considering which areas would be best suited for a church plant, but the process was often more bottom-up, with churches coming to the diocese with an intention to start a plant.

Prospective church planters should have the support of their local church and an idea of where they want to establish the plant.

"They gather a group of people and ... I basically just help them along the way," Ms Laird said.

Ms Laird said that anyone interested in beginning the process of establishing their own plant should reach out to her at julieannelaire@gmail.com.

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Coober Pedy (Minister in Charge)

An iconic outback town best known for tourism and opal mining

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bushchurchaid.com.au/jobs**



Serve where you're needed, new priests told

by Stephen Cauchi

NEW MELBOURNE priests have been urged to put aside ambition and serve where they are most needed at their November ordination.

St Timothy's Bulleen and St Mark's Templestowe senior minister Reverend Canon Ben Wong delivered the sermon on the account of Jesus feeding thousands with five loaves and two fishes.

Mr Wong said that while "ordinary Christians" could choose to serve in their preferred area, clergy should serve where it was most needed. He said Jesus distributed the multiplied fish and loaves where they were needed, not where they were wanted.

"Likewise, you are also distributed and sent to where it is in need because you each have been set apart to fulfil God's will and plans," he said.

Mr Wong said if the clergy were miserable, or at a loss in their careers, they should look to where the need was, rather than what they wanted. He said they had been chosen to be God's vessel, to accomplish his distinctive purpose.

Mr Wong urged the priests to



The 14 priests ordained by Archbishop Philip Freier at St Paul's Cathedral on 27 November were: Ros Armstrong; Russell Goulbourne; Gordon Li; Debra Saffrey-Collins; Peter Shih; Agatha Wakyereza; Breannon Wilkinson; Kirsty Brown; Kathryn Bellhouse; Patricia Hunt; Andrew Seedhom; Mark Tibben; Luke Whiteside; and James Young. Picture: supplied.

seek God's will for their career path, saying in Matthew 26 Jesus said, "Yet not what I want but what you want; your will be done".

He said that in the same way Jesus made a miracle out of ordinary fish and loaves, God could make a miracle out of ordained priests, if they placed

themselves in his hands.

"When we are ordained as priests, we are being set apart from other Christians. We have been chosen by God to be a pas-

tor, a teacher, an army chaplain, an age care chaplain, a carer, a church planter, an evangelist, a peace maker, a spiritual leader," he said.

'Gross overreach': Faith communities protest proposed state bill

by Stephen Cauchi

AN ANGLICAN leader has condemned the state government's anti-discrimination legislation due to pass in the Parliament's upper house in early December, joining with other religious leaders to do so.

The Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill 2021 would narrow exceptions to equal opportunity laws that allow religious bodies and schools to discriminate against staff and students.

But advocacy group Equality Australia says the legislation may be overruled by the federal government's revised *Religious Discrimination Bill*, if that becomes law.

Leaders from a range of religious communities raised concerns about the proposed state legislation in an open letter published in *The Age* on 16 November. Signatories included representatives from the Catholic Church, the Coptic and Greek Orthodox churches, the Churches of Christ, and Jewish, Islamic, Sikh and Hare Krishna organisations.

It was addressed to Victoria's Attorney General Jaclyn Symes.

Anglican Diocese of Melbourne Assistant Bishop Paul Barker was one of the signatories.

"The bill unfairly targets religious bodies and educational institutes," the letter read.

"In introducing the legislation, the Victorian government is seeking to dictate how faith communities should run their organisations.



An Anglican bishop has joined with faith leaders to criticise the Victorian bill. Picture: Shutterstock

"This gross overreach could see religious organisations being forced to violate their beliefs and values in managing employment matters."

Critics of the legislation say that while the bill allows schools to discriminate on the basis of

conduct, which they expected followers to keep.

Executive director Mark Sneddon said that sacking someone for wrong conduct under the new bill would be unlawful unless the body could show that it took the action because of the person's

circumstances," Mr Sneddon said.

Bishop Barker told *The Melbourne Anglican* that the State Government legislation did not recognise that faith was not just about belief. He said it was also about community, and about behaviour.

He said pornography consumption and gambling were examples of other behaviour inconsistent with Christianity and other faiths.

"If a Christian teacher is committing adultery or is an alcoholic...it's also an issue of faith," Bishop Barker said.

He said there was a further distinction in behaviour between somebody who failed but was repentant and seeking mercy, and one who was flagrant.



Bishop Paul Barker.

Bishop Barker said that disagreeing with something, such as homosexuality, was not necessarily hate speech.

"As soon as someone says they don't believe homosexuality's right, [critics] say, 'Oh, you're a homophobe and it's hate speech,'" he said.

"But loving someone with whom you disagree ... is actually a part of being Christian in the world."

Victorian Attorney General Jaclyn Symes committed to the anti-discrimination laws in September after stories were published in *The Age* newspaper about gay and lesbian teachers being sacked by religious schools because of their sexuality.

"We know the majority of Victorians have no tolerance for discrimination, but sadly, discrimination is sometimes justified in the name of religion," Ms Symes said in *The Age* in November.

"These reforms respect the independence of religious bodies while reducing critical gaps in protections against discrimination."

Equality Australia has campaigned in favour of the state government bill, saying religious discrimination against LGBTQ+ students in schools is common.

The federal government's anti-discrimination legislation was yet to be passed by the House of Representatives at the time of going to print.

The federal bill as at its first reading to parliament included a provision saying that a religious body did not discriminate against a person under the act by engaging in good faith, in conduct to avoid injury to the religious susceptibilities of its adherents.

"Loving someone with whom you disagree ... is actually a part of being Christian in the world."

Bishop Paul Barker

religious belief, they would not be able to discriminate on the basis of conduct.

Social policy think tank the Institute for Civil Society criticised the legislation saying it ignored that religions had moral codes of

religious belief or religious activity rather than their conduct.

"That will be very difficult to show in many cases because people may say they still hold the relevant belief - they just can't live it out in their conduct in current

Hopes high for new church renewal movement

by Stephen Cauchi

MELBOURNE CHURCHES hope to grow through a renewal movement which initiators say rests on a strong scriptural understanding of God.

UK church revitalisation movement HeartEdge has started in Melbourne at St George's East Ivanhoe and St Paul's East Kew. It's based on four key principles: commerce, culture, congregation and compassion.

St George's vicar Reverend John Sanderson formally launched HeartEdge in September, but lockdown forced the delay of any activities until November.

HeartEdge describes itself as a movement for renewal, fueled by people and churches sharing their assets, experience, resources and need. It was founded by Reverend Dr Sam Wells at St Martin-in-the-Fields London in 2017.

While an Anglican initiative, HeartEdge is intended to be ecumenical and international. The Diocese of Melbourne has become involved through Bishop Kate Prowd.

Mr Sanderson said HeartEdge attracted him because it had substantive theology and philosophy underpinning it, grounded in the reality of people's lives, and of scripture.

"A significant proportion of churches in Melbourne will be able to see a direct connection between how they've been living their lives and how their lives may be able to flourish even more," he said.

Mr Sanderson said HeartEdge had a strong, sound, orthodox understanding of God as revealed in scripture, in contrast to many other church renewal movements.

"You can see that it's of God. It's not somebody's sociological or managerial [theory] ... it's clearly



Reverend John Sanderson preaches to a congregation. Picture: supplied.

of God," he said.

Working together, St George's and St Paul's are the first HeartEdge hub churches in Australia. Hub churches have formal written agreements to grow HeartEdge, which they will do by growing a body of people with knowledge in the four Cs.

Mr Sanderson said hub churches acted as a model for

others, to see how the movement could be enacted locally.

He said St Margaret's Eltham was also formally involved with HeartEdge activities, while other churches in the Banyule area across multiple denominations have been invited to HeartEdge activities.

He said he hoped to expand HeartEdge in Melbourne as much as possible, to the point where

everyone could relate to it and understand it.

"We're up and running and we're looking to build," Mr Sanderson said.

"[HeartEdge] should go really great guns in Melbourne because a lot of churches in Melbourne are doing things that you can see are a very natural alignment with the four Cs."

November's HeartEdge activities at St George's included a choral evensong for Advent Sunday, with a lecture on renaissance composer Michael Praetorius by musicologist Peter Bandy.

December's activities within HeartEdge churches include a reflection group course, a reimagined jazz vespers and a reading group.

More information about December's HeartEdge activities within the Banyule churches is available at: bit.ly/3r8vPek.

Why a short-term vision might be best for your church right now

by Ken Morgan

"GIVE ME certainty!" Like politicians, local church leaders are experiencing pressure from their congregations to provide a roadmap for the future, a statement of direction and some targets. In some churches, the mission action plan expired during lockdown and the leadership feel compelled to create a new one. For these and other reasons, several vicars I coach have undertaken to embark on a process to create a new set of statements around vision and to map out a new mission action plan.

However, conceiving of a longer-term vision is difficult while contemplating a "new-normal" directly after an extended lockdown. When you're in a canyon, you can't see the horizon.

People are tired and anxious



after having endured nearly two years of uncertainty and restrictions. When humans are anxious, their planning horizon shortens. Consultation processes in the current climate tends to produce responses about shorter-term objectives, such as resumption of services and programs.

Most churches are struggling with managing the admission of unvaccinated people to worship, and wondering what damage their budgets will suffer in the coming year. It's hard to muster enough imaginative energy to envision the church in five years' time.

When people can only think

short-term, and you can only see short-term, it might be time to consider a get-out-of-the-canyon-so-we-can-see-further type vision. This could be a simple, shorter-term set of ideas and plans to carry the church towards a time when some of the current unknowns become quantifiable.

Before you protest my lack of faith, consider the Apostle Paul. His articulated forward plans were simple hopes, such as getting to Rome to encourage and be encouraged, then going on to Spain to preach the gospel there. He wasn't making "I have a dream" speeches.

A shorter-term visioning process might be a simple as:

- Make a sober appraisal of the facts as you know them including congregational engagement, budget, building capacities, staffing and volunteer capacity.

- Consider what is reasonable to postulate for the near future given the best information at hand, and recent experience of yours and other churches.
- Given your understanding of mission in your context and similar contexts, consider what might represent a reasonably optimistic future for the next six to 18 months.

A resulting vision statement could employ a metaphor, such as emerging from the chrysalis or throwing open the gates. The plan could be a few foundation-building initiatives, such as:

- Maintain and improve the service livestream so that it becomes an effective part of the mission pathway.
- Implement a parish database and leverage it to achieve a great welcome and integration

process.

- Take advantage of the opportunities emergence from lockdown presents. For instance, parents are anxious that their kids catch up on socialisation, so restart play-group and endeavour to expand to two mornings a week.
- Evaluate progress, early results, begin to think about the next iteration commencing June 2022.

A simple, credible and optimistic plan for re-emergence and strengthening will do more to focus a parish's energies and engender hope than a list of aspirations that's divorced from the realities of current challenges.

Ken Morgan is head of Parish Mission and Resourcing for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

This Christmas, help children and families create a brighter future

Your donation will help us continue our work supporting families facing disadvantage in our community, like Manal's.

Being a single parent and coming to a new country was tough for Manal - surviving through a pandemic made it even harder to support her family.

At BSL, we work to ensure that people who are facing disadvantage get the support they need, when they need it.

This meant helping Manal find the right school support for her children, as well as helping her reach her personal goals as a provider for her family.



Here at the Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) we meet many families who are just like Manal's. Starting life in a new country is tough and people experience enormous vulnerability. Add a worldwide pandemic and it's even more stressful. For Manal and many other families like hers, being linked to BSL programs, means they get the right support when they need it. For Manal, this meant reaching her personal goals of improving her English and finding educational support for her children. We have been so grateful and blessed by the kindness of parishes and individuals in supporting our children and families over these last months. **Thank you.**



Every Blessing as you prepare for the coming of the Christ Child

Debra Saffrey-Collins

Debra Saffrey-Collins

Head of Chaplaincy and Diocesan Partnerships
Brotherhood of St. Laurence

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Helping hands continue work through Christmas

by Elspeth Kernebone

A CHURCH INITIATIVE IS making special effort to help people in need this Christmas by giving out goods hampers.

St Peter's Eastern Hill plans to continue its work to support the vulnerable over Christmas through both its social enterprise Heaven at the Hill, run in partnership with Fareshare, and the Lazarus Centre breakfast program.

It's part of efforts to make sure people in need feel valued as part of a society at Christmas, and beyond.

The hampers for people experiencing homelessness will include food, and essential items such as socks and underwear.

St Peter's Eastern Hill Charitable Foundation chair Krystyna Campbell-Pretty said the COVID-19 pandemic had increased the number of people in need everywhere, including in the cohort of people experiencing homelessness.

Mrs Campbell-Pretty said more people were also needing

help from social enterprise Heaven at the Hill, after COVID-19 "cut the legs from everyone".

Ms Campbell-Pretty said St Peter's made the extra effort at Christmas, because culturally it was an important time.

"What we're really trying to say is ... 'we care about you'."

Krystyna Campbell-Pretty

"It's a time when people can normally reunite with family, and connect with people they love. A lot of the homeless don't have that luxury," Mrs Campbell-Pretty said.

"What we're really trying to say is, 'You're still part of society, you're still part of a group of human beings, and we care about you.'"



The Lazarus Centre will support its patrons with goods hampers this Christmas.

Picture: supplied.

Hardship to hit in short and long term for vulnerable workers

by Chris Shearer

TOUGH MONTHS are coming for many vulnerable workers but the long-term effect of the pandemic on their financial health will also be significant for many, according to Brotherhood of St Laurence experts.

BSL's ANZ Tony Nicholson Fellow Emily Porter said there would be long-term implications of the pandemic for many low-income earners, who often had made it through the crisis by drawing on superannuation.

Dr Porter said her research showed that despite the federal government's COVID-19 supplement a significant number of low-income earners either took on more debt or completely cleared out their superannuation.

"These groups weren't doing particularly well before the pandemic."

Dr Emily Porter

To write the Brotherhood's recent series 'Financial wellbeing during the COVID-19 crisis', Dr Porter and a colleague analysed data drawn from ANZ and Roy Morgan's financial well-being

indicator, comparing a two-year period before the pandemic to a twelve-month period beginning in March 2020.

The reports broadly found that low and insecure income earners were struggling, particularly after the federal government's COVID-19 supplement was wound back in September 2020.

Dr Porter said low and insecure income earners had faced the biggest hit to their income during the pandemic, which was likely happening again now. She said the number of people struggling was probably also higher, as there had been much less support during the latest lockdowns.

"It's important to note that these groups weren't doing particularly well before the pandemic," she said.

"Interestingly ... we actually saw their financial well-being improved during the peak of the crisis when everyone else's was deteriorating, which showed how far behind the rest of Australia they were to start with."

Dr Porter said that while the Brotherhood didn't have access to the most up-to-date data around the recent lockdowns, the findings from the financial wellbeing series allowed them to assume some similar trends.

Anecdotally, she added, the Brotherhood had heard of many more people having to take on debt to pay for daily necessities.

"A lot of people were really financially bruised from the first round of lockdowns and then faced even harder lockdowns this year," she said.

"You've got a lot of people who are going to be exiting these lockdowns in a very precarious position and struggling to crawl back to where they were."

Dr Porter said there needed to be greater national conversations about raising the inadequate social security system, and increasingly insecure work coupled with stagnant wage growth.

"There's a lot that we can do, but it involves government playing a different role and seeing that it can play a role in protecting people from the risks of the market, and protecting people in really uncertain times," she said.

"We need a society that actually invests to protect people from risks, rather than leaving people exposed to it."



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Joy to celebrate Christmas after year of trials

by Elspeth Kernebone

CARE, CAROLS AND CREATIVITY ARE just some of the ways Melbourne churches plan to approach a Christmas preceded by months of lockdown.

But ministers say their congregations are looking forward just to meeting together, after so much time spent on Zoom.

Merri Creek Anglican senior minister Reverend Peter Carolane said the church was trying to avoid making Christmas a stressful or tiring time for its congregation.

He said it would run an all-ages creative service as one of its main events, allowing people to present a Christmas passage in their own way.

"People have really missed being able to be at church together, but ... there's still this weariness about life, so it's important for us as leaders of the church to be managing that, and caring for people," he said.

At St James' Old Cathedral the Reverend Canon Matt Williams said everyone was watching the news daily, hoping they would be able to meet together for Christmas.

St James' plans to run a nine lessons and carols service on the final Sunday of Advent, as well as Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.

"There's always joy in gathering together because we love gathering with saints and angels and the people of God," Mr Williams said.



Advent begins in song at St John's Camberwell, as churches look to Christmas.

Picture: supplied.

"As much as we've made it work on Zoom... we always are in a place when we long to be back together face to face."

Glen Waverley Anglican senior minister Reverend Phil Meulman said the church was really trying to engage with the community, to let them know the good news of Christmas.

He said a Hope for Monash food drive was among the steps they had taken to help those around them.

Mr Meulman said the Christmas message spoke into the hardship of the past 18 months.

"In COVID there's been a heightened uncertainty from people, and the Christmas story offers hope that no one else can offer. There can be glimpses of peace here on earth, but there won't be true peace until Christ returns," he said.

The Christmas services at St John's Camberwell will also focus around music.

Vicar Father John Baldock said Trinity College Choir had begun the season by singing carols for the first Sunday of Advent, with about 170 attendees.

Father Baldock said his parishioners had stayed engaged during the long periods, and this was helping the church now.

"People have really missed the opportunity to worship together in a larger setting and to sing the things that they love to sing, that give real heart to his season," he said.

"Everyone was just kind of quietly but excitedly bowled over by the opportunity to do it again."

Churches rejoice after restrictions lifted in time for carols

by Stephen Cauchi

ANGLICAN CONGREGATIONS throughout Victoria are rejoicing after capacity limits and mask requirements for vaccinated services were lifted, ahead of Christmas carols services.

However, capacity and density limits, and mask requirements, remain for services for those whose vaccination status is unstated, including those who are unvaccinated.

Oakleigh Anglican Church vicar Reverend Colleen Arnold-Moore said the change was "phenomenal". She said there would be much rejoicing in larger churches, where density limits had severely restricted permitted attendance.

She said mask wearing would also have posed a severe hindrance to carols services.

"I don't think we've been allowed to do this even earlier this year when we weren't in lockdown," she said.

"It's fantastic we'll be able to open up for our services."

St James' Old Cathedral vicar Reverend Matt Williams said his congregation was really looking forward to a hopefully normal Christmas.

"It's already been a joyful thing just to be back together and you can see it on people's faces and I think that Christmas will keep ramping that up," he said.

Mr Williams said that the prospect of checking vaccination status of those coming to services or carols was "not pleasant", but many others in the community had to do the same.

"Small business people ... everybody wanting to welcome people is being put in a position where they have to do that," he said.

Advice from the diocesan centre is that while masks do not need to be worn, they are recommended when the church is full.

The centre also recommended good ventilation.

Services not requiring vaccination status remain capped at 50 people, both indoors and outdoors. Masks must be worn by everyone except one person lead-

vaccination status, refreshments can be served outdoors only, and tables and chairs are not allowed.

Christ Church Dingley minister Reverend Tanya Cummings, said the changes were certainly made things easier. But she said

"If it wasn't for a mandated event Jesus wouldn't have been born in Bethlehem."

Reverend Glenn Loughrey

ing, singing or preaching, and the four square metre rule remains.

Vaccination status applies to those aged over 12. Those aged under 12 are considered vaccinated.

Refreshments can be served before or after fully vaccinated events. For services not requiring

she was looking forward to capacity limits lifting for services not requiring vaccination status.

Christ Church currently runs two services not requiring proof of vaccination, and at one point offered three.

She said plans for carols had not been finalised, but the idea was

to offer one service for vaccinated and another not requiring proof of vaccination.

Ms Cummings said that some of the church's older congregation had not returned to church as they were not ready to do so. Ms Arnold-Moore echoed this concern, saying there was "concern and hesitation" among the most vulnerable in terms of health, generally the older people.

St Oswald's Glen Iris vicar Glenn Loughrey said the church was expecting 60 or 70 people to its carol services.

Mr Loughrey said that checking people's vaccine status at a time of inclusion such as Christmas was awkward.

But he said he was philosophical about the matter.

"If it wasn't for a mandated event Jesus wouldn't have been born in Bethlehem. So we'll just have to live with the mandate," Mr Loughrey said.

The impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable families could last years. Let's ensure no Victorian is left behind.

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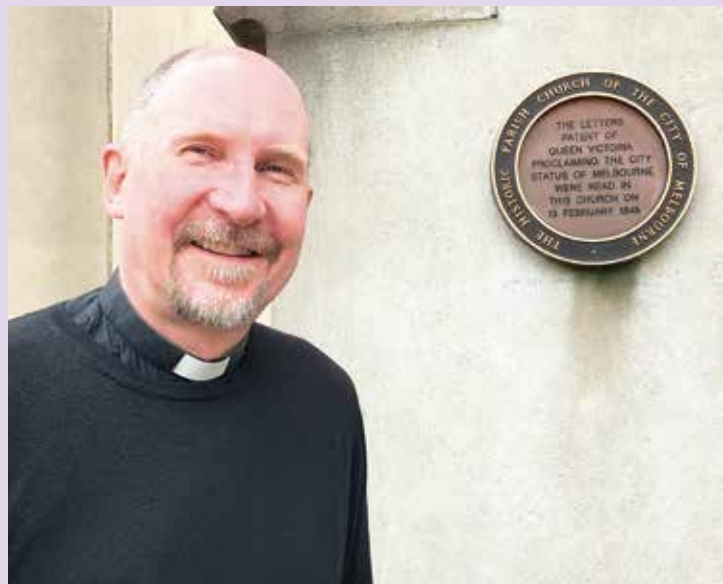
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Outgoing vicar Reverend Dr Hugh Kempster outside main entrance to St Peter's Eastern Hill. Picture: Mark Brolly.

Hugh Kempster leaves Eastern Hill for Melbourne Grammar

THE REVEREND Dr Hugh Kempster is leaving St Peter's Eastern Hill after 10 years as Vicar to return to school chaplaincy.

Dr Kempster has accepted a one-year appointment as senior chaplain of Melbourne Grammar School while the Reverend Hans Christiansen, takes long-service leave. Dr Kempster came to St Peter's after four years as senior chaplain at Geelong Grammar School.

He said he loved chaplaincy, which was an incredible opportunity to shape the lives of young people.

Dr Kempster said he had mixed feelings leaving, as St Peter's had been a spiritual home for the past 10 years.

While at St Peter's Dr Kempster also served as chaplain to the church's neighbour: the State Parliament, and senior chaplain at RMIT University.

Anglican Centre chaplain says goodbye to 'humbling' ministry

ONE OF Melbourne's first women to be ordained is set to retire on Christmas Eve.

Reverend Clem Taplin will finish her role as chaplain to the Anglican Centre after two years.

Ms Taplin was ordained a deacon in 1989 and priested three years later, working as a deacon in Mornington and Mount Martha, and as a priest in Vermont South, Mt Waverley and Chadstone, and Eltham.

She is the youngest daughter of Sir Frank Woods, Archbishop of Melbourne from 1957 to 1977, and his wife Lady Jean Woods.

"I was the first ordained woman on the Mornington Peninsula and there were a number of retired clergy, several of whom were not in favour of the ordination of women. They were very gracious, they didn't actually tell me until later," Ms Taplin said.

"I can remember them ... saying: 'Clem, I see now, it's no different.'"

Ms Taplin said her chaplaincy at the Anglican Centre had been "a humbling ministry", and that it was a privilege to be alongside staff during some turbulent years. These included the centre's move back to 209 Flinders Lane in 2018 after four years next to St James' Old Cathedral in West Melbourne, and the demands of working remotely during the pandemic of 2020 and 2021.

Ms Taplin is looking forward to continuing her spiritual direction ministry and her link with the Brotherhood of St Laurence, collecting her mother's spiritual writings and sketches and exploring Kakadu and the Kimberley in a sustainable manner. She also plans to fit in some "leisurely coffees" and seize the chance to get fitter.



Clem Taplin.

From the editor's desk



"Hail the incarnate deity"

AFTER MONTHS muffled by masks, singing carols will seem all the sweeter this Christmas.

The words are so familiar, I often barely register them. But how sweet a truth we hear in the classic carol: that we sing in praise of God made man, who lived among us.

We can't remember that, without remembering God's promise of our future hope: that he will live among us and be our God, and there will no longer be any death, mourning, crying or pain.

Our front cover this month is a similar reminder. Death, mourning, crying and pain may be all too common in the world right now – "Who would bring a child into a world like this?" artist Ivan Smith asks – but shining through the darkness is the hope brought by Jesus' birth.

As we produce our final edition for the year, we at *The Melbourne Anglican* hope you too are reminded of that joy this Christmas.

We want to hear from you

Our readers are important to us.
Take a minute to share what you think of The Melbourne Anglican.



Scan here for survey



St James' plans stained glass window for 150th

by Stephen Cauchi

A REGIONAL CHURCH IS seeking photos and stories from the past, as it prepares to celebrate its 150th anniversary.

St James' Drysdale, on the Bellarine Peninsula, will unveil a new stained glass window as part of its celebrations in July.

Anniversary committee member Pat Marks said the church was launching pledges and donations towards the new window, which would depict St James the Apostle.

Individual donors will be recorded in the archives.

Ms Marks said the decision to use a stained glass window to



Pat Whitford, Jim Meikle, Pat Marks, Sheilah Meikle, Lynette Willey and Jane Bateman are among parishioners preparing to mark the St James' 150th anniversary. Picture: supplied

mark the anniversary was "almost spiritual".

She said this unveiling would be part of wider celebrations planned for the July event, which will include tours, souvenirs, refreshments, a thanksgiving service, and a photograph display.

"We plan to celebrate the journey this church has made from its beginnings in 1872 to the present day," she said.

"There will be a thanksgiving church service on the Sunday to thank God for all he has given us in this sacred space and to ask God for his blessing on our future."

Ms Marks called on people to submit photographs about the

church's history, and share their stories, for the anniversary.

"TMA reaches many people that may have an association with the church and we are seeking any photographs they may have or even some stories about the place that they may wish to share," she said.

Ms Marks said the church had already raised \$2200 for the window, which would cost about \$18,000.

The anniversary celebrations will take place on the weekend of 23 and 24 July. To donate money for the window, photographs or stories, contact the church on bellarineparish3222@gmail.com or 0406 403 745.

Inner Melbourne church celebrates 175 years of parish life

by Mark Brolly

A MELBOURNE church has celebrated 175 years since its foundation stone was laid, marking a history devoted to social service.

St Peter's Eastern Hill retiring vicar Reverend Dr Hugh Kempster said this work, and social justice, were in the DNA of St Peter's Eastern Hill, which is also known for its Anglo-Catholic worship.

Its history includes relief work

during the 1890s depression and inviting the Brotherhood of St Laurence to Melbourne in 1933, during the Great Depression.

Superintendent of the Port Phillip District Charles La Trobe laid the foundation stone at St Peter's Eastern Hill in 1846.

Dr Kempster said La Trobe was a member of the Moravian Church, and promoted religion in what became Victoria and ensured the presence of various churches.

"La Trobe was a man of faith," Dr Kempster said. "His opening speech to the colony was too religious for a number of [the colonists]."

"He laid the foundation stone but he also laid the foundations philosophically or theologically of St Peter's very much."

Dr Kempster said the church had no stone with an inscription as would later become more common, but La Trobe likely put

something under a stone, such as a time capsule. But he said that would never be found unless the church was knocked down.

The church marked the anniversary on 5 December with a High Mass, at which Archbishop Philip Freier presided and former Melbourne Assistant Bishop Philip Huggins preached.

The event was also a farewell to Dr Kempster, vicar of the church since 2012, and the launch by Dr

Freier of a book, *Forgiveness: A Study Guide*. Bishop Huggins and Dr Kempster are among the contributors to the book.

Dr Kempster said St Peter's parishioners included people who lived in city apartments, suburbs from Sunshine to Bundoora and Heidelberg, as far away as Torquay and even a couple who spend Melbourne's winter months in the Northern Hemisphere, as well as the homeless.

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Diocese falls short of youth ministry targets

by Mark Brolly

FEWER THAN A THIRD OF Melbourne churches have hit targets for appropriate youth ministry models, putting the diocese well short of goals for 2022.

The diocese had aimed to have these models in at least half of its parishes by next year.

October's Melbourne Synod heard that 66 parishes had no teenagers, while 62 had hit targets outlined in *Our Journey: Visions and Directions 2017-2025*.

Ridley College Centre for Children and Youth Ministry director Reverend Dr Graeme Stanton said only 13 Melbourne parishes had groups of young people with more than 30 members. He said the remaining 104 parishes had an average of eight young people each.

Dr Stanton said without action, the numbers were not enough to maintain the institution of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, let alone fulfil its mission "To Make the Word of God Fully Known" among the next generation of young people.

He cited the results of nine months of work by the Youth Ministry Futures research team, which interviewed 186 vicars, covering more than 80 per cent of all parishes in the diocese.

He said what the diocese needed was a renewed commitment to build on its strengths, to fill gaps in training, resourcing and cooperating.

"We have too few leaders willing and able to share Jesus with young people, parishes lack the resources needed to help them start from scratch, we don't cooperate as much as we could. We are facing significant challenges," Dr Stanton said.

"But there are also signs of hope. When there are effective leaders for youth ministry, where there is a plan or vision for youth ministry



Only 13 Melbourne parishes have groups of young people with more than 30 members according to Reverend Graeme Stanton.

Picture: Dreamstime.

and when there is a flow of young people from children's ministry into high school, each of these are identified as factors that give us hope for the future."

Dr Stanton was proposing a motion asking Archbishop in Council to establish a broadly based Children's and Youth Ministry Working Group to review current strategies and opportunities.

The motion also called for a fully funded diocesan office to be included in the 2023 budget to effectively plan for, resource and support growth in the number of children and young people involved as active disciples in parishes, and to report to the 2022 Synod.

Synod overwhelmingly endorsed the project, 477 for, six against, with one abstention.

"Loading the future success of a multi-generational parish on one lay minister's shoulders is unrealistic and, frankly, unfair."

Reverend Dr Elizabeth Breakey

The first members of the working group will be Dr Stanton, Vicar of Bellarine Gateway Anglican Parish Reverend Dr Elizabeth Breakey, Diocesan Youth Ministry Consultant Brian Holden and KidsPlus+/GFS

Melbourne Inc Helen Petering.

Dr Breakey, who seconded the motion, said she led "a childless parish".

"Parishes like mine do not need to seek support for existing family and youth ministers – we just

need help to get started again," Dr Breakey said.

She said that last Christmas two pews were filled with people from the same family – grandparents, parents and teenagers – who parishioners had not met before. The family lingered after church and seemed to connect with parishioners in a positive way.

"The grandparents now worship with us every week but the children and their grandchildren we never saw again," Dr Breakey said.

"I asked what happened and the answer was that they went to another church on the other side of town with lots of young folk. Why? Because there were no young people worshipping in this parish. It's as simple and as stark as that.

"It's not that we haven't tried. There have been plenty of initiatives over the years. In fact, 20 years ago the parish appointed a lay minister to support young people and families to remain in this parish but he told me that he knew just a week after it was launched that it was too little, too late.

"Loading the future success of a multi-generational parish on one lay minister's shoulders is unrealistic and, frankly, unfair."

Dr Breakey said parishes such as hers were not helpless but needed some direction and help, to learn from successful ministries and for those ministries to be encouraged to collaborate. She said parishes needed a fully funded resource in the diocese to get going again.

"I know this feels overwhelming, I know it's expensive but God willing, we can find ... a path out of this sad and grievous situation," she said.

"So many parishes, including mine, are at risk of complacency, forgetting how great a treasure has been placed in our care for future generations."

Draft grievance policy set to be rewritten: Archbishop Freier

by Mark Brolly

A DRAFT grievance policy for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne is likely to be tested in a few months, Archbishop Philip Freier told synod representatives in October.

Reverend Dr David Powys of St John's Bentleigh asked about the issue, saying he had experienced, without warning, several professional standards complaints of bullying being lodged against him.

He said these took nearly two years to resolve, "giving rise to widespread hurt to myself and many others, but with the complaints against me eventually being dismissed".

Dr Freier said a draft policy had been prepared in late 2020.

He said this had been presented twice to the diocesan leadership team early in 2021, but there were reservations expressed around the current form, due to the practicalities of the recommended protocols.

He said meetings had been held with other dioceses about their



Reverend Dr David Powys.

approaches, and the draft would then be reassessed and rewritten.

"This is likely to take another two to three months to research, write and then to do some pilot testing internally," Dr Freier said.

"This will then be presented to the People and Culture committee ... and the Episcopate team for their review and final approval."

This question was among sev-



Archbishop Freier delivering the 2021 Synod charge.

eral asked during October's synod, including one from Sue Collier of Glen Waverley Anglican.

Ms Collier raised concerns about the potential legal, security and social ramifications of posting services containing content presented by people who may not have considered the possible consequences of posting their words and images on the internet.



Safe ministry inclusion officer Anne Fairweather.

She asked if the diocese had developed any guidelines about the availability of live-streamed church services or made any recommendations concerning parish privacy policies.

Dr Freier said the diocese's general manager was currently seeking legal advice on several matters relating to privacy policies and the application of these in parishes. He

said parishes would hear about this information when it was available.

St Stephen's Richmond representative Jill Pickering asked the archbishop why there had been no annual reports from the diocese since 2015 on progress towards the goal 98 per cent of the diocese being accessible for people with disabilities.

Dr Freier replied that Anne Fairweather had started as safe ministry inclusion officer for the diocese at the start of 2021 and had provided a report, including on disability inclusion, to this year's Synod.

He said a focus group would be appointed shortly to further develop the diocese's disability inclusion plan.

Nine questions were asked about the Archbishop Election Act review, with most inquirers directed to the report of the review committee.

Dr Freier was also asked about church plants in the Melbourne diocese by Reverend Dr Andrew Judd of Ridley College.

Christians Together lobbies for climate justice

by Stephen Cauchi

CHRIStIANS ARE PRAYING, lamenting and petitioning together in Melbourne's north to confront climate change and the federal government's stance on global warming.

Christians Together for Climate coordinator and Ridley College lecturer Reverend Len Firth said the group's action sprang from a desire to show Christian love of neighbour through concern for the poor.

Mr Firth said the group hoped to "move the debates" through its actions.

"Climate change adversely affects the poor over the rich," he said.

"It springs from our belief that the earth is the Lord's and we're called to be accountable stewards for the way that we use the earth and the way that we love our neighbour."

One of the group's goals when it formed in 2020 was to pray for last month's United Nations climate conference Glasgow COP26.

It has also organised to meet with the electorate's MP, Peter Khalil, who attended the Glasgow conference as part of the Australian Labor Party contingent.

Mr Firth said Mr Khalil seemed very open to listening to the group's concerns, as part of a continuing conversation.

He said the group had communicated to Mr Khalil – known for his refugee advocacy – that refugees were one of the consequences of climate change.

Mr Firth said the group would continue after the Glasgow climate conference, to make sure politicians honoured the commitments they had made.

"At last we got to some commitment to net zero by 2050 but that's probably not going to help us very much."

Reverend Len Firth

He said there was some "pretty significant leadership" at the Glasgow climate but some "very sad" absences.

Mr Firth said Australia's commitment to reducing climate emissions was better than hoped for 12 months ago, but the method and



Wills MP Peter Khalil with Len Firth and Senator Penny Wong at a recent event.

Picture: supplied.

the plan were very undeveloped.

"Personally I was not very impressed with some of the debate that was going on in Australia before the lead up to COP26 and some of the things at COP26 have been a bit overshadowed by French-Australian relations," he said.

"I really appreciated finally at last we got to some commitment to net zero by 2050 but that's probably not going to help us very much. We need more urgent action."

Christians Together for Climate

is an initiative of relief and development agency Tearfund Australia and the online Christian movement Common Grace. The group Mr Firth is part of is based in the federal seat of Wills, while other branches are active in different electorates.

Other churches involved in the non-denominational group include St Augustine's Moreland, the Salvation Army, Brunswick Uniting Church and the Brunswick Baptist Church.

Mr Firth said Christians Together for Climate hoped to expand, recently writing a letter to churches in the Wills electorate seeking new members.

"We are one of many electorates across Australia where small groups of Christians are making similar contact with their local members to raise the urgency and importance of these issues," he said.

More information is available at: tearfund.org.au.

Shining **light** this **Christmas**



Karen youth from Werribee's Karen Congregation of Victoria.

For those living with the legacy of trauma, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered the re-emergence of acute distress, both directly and indirectly.

Church communities involved with refugees and new migrant communities have a unique opportunity to find ways to engage – through increasing people's well-being, employment opportunities, and life-skill outcomes. We are the light of Christ welcoming all.

This Christmas, the **Melbourne Anglican Foundation**, is supporting the Karen and Chin migrant communities of Myanmar, who live, work and worship in Metropolitan Melbourne. **Please help us to continue our support for their assistance programs by shining light this Christmas with your donation. Give the gift of hope, peace and joy to the refugees of Myanmar.**



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SCAN:

Recovery project launches for those hit hard by June's storms across Melbourne

by Stephen Cauchi

A RECOVERY PROJECT WILL help the state rebuild from devastating floods and storms in June, which also hit churches in some areas hard.

The Anglican Church's community services agency Anglicare has launched the Eastern Storm Recovery Project to help the state rebuild from the damage.

The June storms caused devastation in the Dandenong Ranges as trees felled by strong winds destroyed dozens of homes and wrecked the electricity grid.

Anglican churches around the Dandenongs helped with relief efforts after the storms. They provided shelter, gas and electricity and served as collection points for donated groceries, blankets, and other essential items.

Anglican Parish of Mt Dandenong vicar Reverend Andrew Smith, told *The Melbourne Anglican* that residents were still "heavily stressed and traumatised" by the June storms.

The October winds caused further damage although not too much.

"Several of the hardest hit streets from June were again affected with more trees down and there are several streets that have yet to have the power restored one week on," Mr Smith said.

Rebuilding since the June storms had been slow but steady.

"There are still large trees lying everywhere but they are slowly being cleared," Mr Smith said.

"The sound of chainsaws and logging trucks [is] continuing to be the new sound of the mountain.

"A large number of properties continue to be covered in tarpaulins and reconstruction work is only just now beginning on some of them. Delays with insurance and building supplies are probably the main reason for this."

Mr Smith said the parish church had continued to be a



CFA crews clearing trees near Kalorama in June. Photo: Bill Hodgson.

hub for food relief and support. Anglicare had secured funding for case workers to support storm affected households for 12 months, he added.

The Macedon Ranges, along with the Dandenong Ranges, was also hit by the severe storms in June.

Gisborne Parish vicar Father Dennis Webster said there was still clear traces of damage from the 9 June storms.

"There's still a lot of roads

closed, there are still houses which are repairing their roofs, even now," he said.

"Everywhere you drive it's still a lot of trees lying on the side of the road."

Father Webster said the Mt Macedon Memorial Cross, on the top of the Macedon Ranges, had only just recently opened after being shut for months. Sanatorium Lake, also in the Macedon Ranges, remained closed, he said.

Gippsland Bishop Richard

Treloar said his region suffered damage in parts.

"There were a few places where the wind gusts got up above 100 kilometres per hour and here in Sale there were a lot of trees down," he said.

"We haven't had any reports of damage to church properties but it was pretty wild weather and the power was out for a long time.

"Recovery from the midyear storm is still ongoing."

Reverend
Janice O'Gorman

"It was hit and miss. Some places were quite calm, other places were horrendous. There are quite a few trees down over farms."

He said Gippsland had recovered reasonably well from the massive flooding that hit the region in June.

"It was pretty distressing at the time, but the effects haven't been too long lived. There's still a bit of mopping up but everything's in reasonable shape," he said.

There was still floodwater in parts of the region, but no lasting damage, he said. "There was a bit of nuisance value to a couple of church buildings but that's all under control," he said.

The priest of one parish hit hard by the June storms said God's faithfulness has been proved time and again despite devastating damage.

St James and St Peter's Kilsyth-

Montrose priest Reverend Janice O'Gorman said the storms in October brought some small local issues, but the main issue was still the damage from the June storm.

"Recovery from the midyear storm is still ongoing with many still working at clearing the immense amount of debris, and others working through the trauma of that night," Ms O'Gorman said.

Ms O'Gorman said the main focus for her parish was providing food parcels or other material aid, especially on a weekend when agencies tended to be closed.

She said the church had made the decision to keep a small food bank open for this purpose, with most people coming through council referrals.

Ms O'Gorman said the church was also offering free small-cut wood for heating, which was especially popular with the elderly.

"The other spin-off from the storm relief has been a much better connection with our community which has brought us into contact with local residents' groups," she said.

"The faithfulness of God has been proven time and again as the Lord brings good out of something which was, and is still for some, a terrible circumstance."

According to the Eastern Storms Recover Project's webpage, 174 households are still in desperate need of help.

"Families in Mount Dandenong and surrounding areas desperately need help as they try to recover and rebuild from the disastrous storms that swept through the region in June this year," it reads.

"It was news at the time, but months later, public attention has moved on. However, many people in the region are still struggling to rebuild their lives. These forgotten Victorians need our help."

Donate to the Eastern Storm Recovery project at: anglicarevic.org.au/donation/emergency-appeal.

Earthquake damage to churches hits near \$1 million mark

by Stephen Cauchi

AT LEAST 14 churches sustained damage after heavy storms tore through Melbourne in late October, according to the latest information from the diocese.

Another four churches have suffered a total of nearly \$1 million damage from the earthquake that hit the state on 22 September.

The damage comes as the Dandenong Ranges, the Macedon Ranges and Gippsland slowly recover from devastating storms in June.

Earthquake damage hit Holy Trinity Balaclava, Holy Trinity Coburg, St Thomas' Moonee Ponds, and the Parish of St Alban the Martyr in St Albans.

The main church buildings, and in some cases halls and vicarages

as well, suffered structural damage from the earthquake.

Balaclava and Coburg have filed claims for \$400,000 damages each while St Albans filed a claim for \$140,000. The claim at Moonee Ponds has not yet been finalised.

The cost of the October storm damage is yet to be assessed, but the most common damage was to external fittings such as roofs and gutters.

St Andrew's Rosanna and St Dunstan's Camberwell both suffered trees falling on their halls while trees fell onto the vicarages at Holy Trinity Coburg and St Stephen's Warrandyte.

Christchurch Newport was among the most affected by the October storms. Church warden Jenny Abela said the church had sustained serious damage.



October storm damage at Christchurch Newport. Picture: supplied.

"What was a part of the old wall of the church has fallen on the roof and through into the toilet block," she said.

"The wall has collapsed onto the roof below it. If you were inside the church there's a mezzanine there and that mezzanine now has no wall."

Holy Trinity Surrey Hills, St Mark's Fitzroy, All Saints Clayton, St Luke's Frankston, All Saints Preston, St Philip's East Doncaster, St Paul's Frankston, and St Andrew's Somerville also suffered damage.

The archbishop's residence Bishops Court in East Melbourne also suffered some storm damage.

Melbourne Anglican Diocese Corporation chief operating officer Matt Wilson said this was not major.



CEO MESSAGE

Something that has inspired us all over the last year has been the way some of the state's most vulnerable young people and families have made the journey from surviving to thriving. They have done this with the help of Anglicare Victoria's dedicated staff; everyday heroes who never took a step back despite the many personal and professional challenges over the last year.



By the end of 2020, Victorians thought we had beaten the coronavirus. We were wrong.

As an organisation that helps tens of thousands of Victorians every year, AV quickly recognised that a once-in-a-century pandemic would require an extraordinary response in addition to adapting and expanding our much needed regular services and support.

By mid-2021, the more infectious Delta variant of COVID-19 plunged everyone back into lockdown again, and AV was again on the frontlines and responding to new urgent needs. Partnering with Northern Health, we are providing staff and services for a new facility to care for children whose parents are in hospital with COVID-19 and unable to care for their families. With community cases growing quickly, demand for has been high and the service quickly reached capacity.

In recent months Anglicare Victoria has supported homeless people to get vaccinated at our emergency relief centres. We have adapted the way our centres work to continue providing hot breakfasts to people in need in a way that is safe for our clients, volunteers and staff.

Anglicare Victoria also established a phone support service to provide emergency relief to clients who would normally drop in to our centres for help. In just six months, this hotline connected more than 720 people with our ER sites to provide food vouchers, food parcels, bill payment assistance, medical and pharmacy vouchers, advocacy and referrals to additional services such as financial counselling.

Anglicare Victoria is an organisation of quiet achievers whose character is revealed most clearly in times we are most needed. That's something that will never change, and it's something we can all be proud of.

Wishing you all a safe and happy Christmas.

Paul McDonald

CEO ANGLICARE VICTORIA

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EMERGENCY RELIEF

"I often bring my sister, Joanne, to the ER centre for the food parcels. She struggles to manage her food shopping, having suffered serious brain injuries when younger and surviving many years of domestic violence. I tried several places to find a financial counsellor and could not find anyone who could help manage her debts. You never gave up, even when it was hard to help us. With thanks and gratitude. – Joanne's sister*

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

AV's Emergency Relief (ER) centres provided urgent support across the state for over 6,000 Victorians going through tough times. Our centres take the time to address each visitor's needs and sometimes refer to other internal and external supports that may help them further. We provide food parcels, daily breakfasts, clothing and emergency grants for bills and living costs. Some of our ER centres – like Mission House in Fitzroy – now offer a more comprehensive range of support, including case management, financial counselling and helplines.

OVERCOMING AN EPIDEMIC OF ISOLATION

ER centres have successfully navigated a year of change. This year, social distancing and hygiene practices continued at our centres, and volunteers enabled our delivery service to continue during the various lockdowns. Temporary accommodation provided by the Victorian Government meant homeless people were in many ways better cared for this year. However, those at AV's ER centres noted visits from a lot of families they had never seen before. Reported increases in family violence were also felt on the ground and through a rise in calls to our helpline.

"A young woman drove up to an ER centre. It was a newish car. She had a baby in the back. I could see she was new to asking for help. She was living with her parents (who were on a pension) after escaping domestic violence. She had no money. We filled up the car with nappies, groceries and baby formula. She was overwhelmed. Seeing her leave so grateful is something I'll never forget. We are used to helping homeless people, but seeing someone pushed into hardship for the first time really hit home." – Chris de Paiva, Program Manager, Diocesan and Parish Partnerships



COORDINATING CARE ON A MASS SCALE

When the needs of our communities rapidly changed and expanded this year, coordination of ER became a complex operation. Generous contributions from donors, schools and bulk purchases from food wholesalers solved the first issue of sourcing sufficient supplies. Storage of large quantities of frozen, tinned and fresh produce was the next hurdle. AV ER teams purchased large freezers with program funds, and food deliveries were carefully timed to avoid overstocking.

While the Victorian Parliament remained in lockdown, its kitchen donated 200-300 frozen meals to AV each week on the morning of our client delivery service. Volunteers then delivered 100 food parcels each week to vulnerable people and families.

VOLUNTEER-DRIVEN COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The selfless contribution of hundreds of volunteers drives AV's ER services. Many older volunteers stayed home to preserve their health during the pandemic. However, the void was filled by young people whose work was affected by the pandemic and additional staff employed through the Andrews Government's Working for Victoria program.

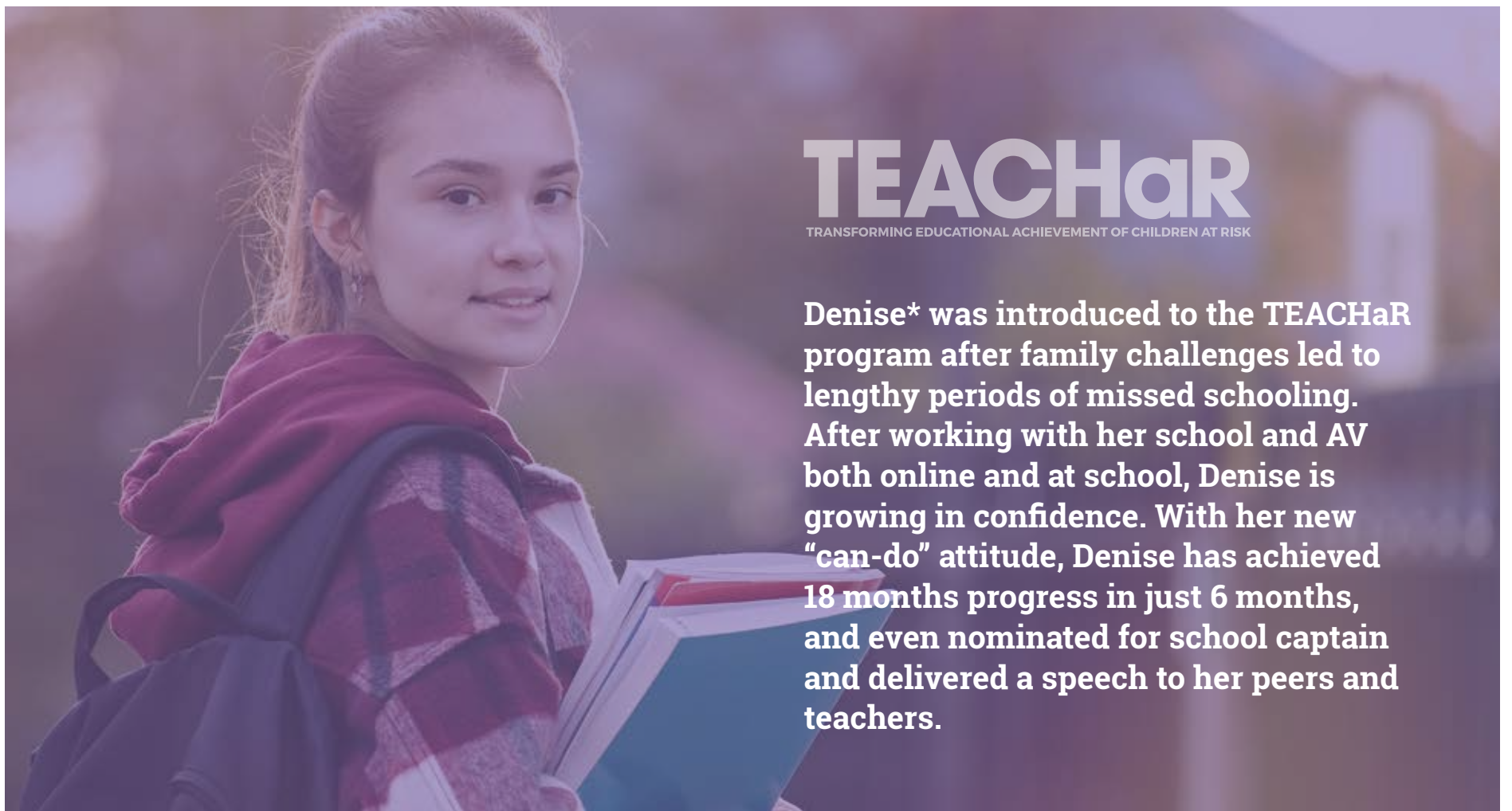
Denis is one of many cherished and committed AV volunteers. In his early 70s, he usually comes in once a week to pack food parcels, but when demand almost doubled during COVID-19, he came in five days a week. He packed around 200 food parcels a week, totalling thousands across the year. Thank you to all of our wonderful and dedicated volunteers.



375 DEDICATED AV VOLUNTEERS PROVIDED URGENT ASSISTANCE TO 6,209 VICTORIANS AT 17 EMERGENCY RELIEF SITES STATE-WIDE.



SCAN HERE
To hear how AV's Emergency Relief centres are seeing record levels of people experiencing hardship since the pandemic began.



TEACHaR

TRANSFORMING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN AT RISK

Denise* was introduced to the TEACHaR program after family challenges led to lengthy periods of missed schooling. After working with her school and AV both online and at school, Denise is growing in confidence. With her new “can-do” attitude, Denise has achieved 18 months progress in just 6 months, and even nominated for school captain and delivered a speech to her peers and teachers.

Rebuilding confidence in the classroom

AV employs 27 full-time education specialists all of whom are trained teachers and experts at working with young people to bring out their best.¹ Our TEACHaR (Transforming Educational Achievement for Children at Risk) program helps vulnerable young people in school, at home and online over a 6 to 12 month period. The program helps those who have fallen behind their peers for a range of reasons, allowing them to regain their confidence at school.

Of the young people in our TEACHaR program, more than 80 per cent maintain or improve their attendance at school, overall engagement in learning doubles, and literacy and numeracy skills end up back on track.²

The pandemic also saw a rise in young people disengaging from learning entirely and falling through the cracks in the education system. AV's Navigator team worked overtime to help those aged 12-17 rebuild their confidence and hit the books with a renewed sense of support. Unique education plans are developed for each student that steps them back into schooling gradually so that they can begin to thrive again in difficult circumstances. A key part of the program is identifying a young person's interests and passions and helping to work those into the learning environment. The team was particularly active in regional parts of Victoria, with a 45 per cent rise in client numbers overall.

In 2020/21, TEACHaR's education specialists helped
38 PER CENT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE
compared to the year before.

TEACHaR relies on donations. Without the compassionate support from donors, we would not be able to deliver our program to all those who need it.



¹ AV, 2021 Annual Report, October 2021, p20

² AV, TEACHaR Impact Report, Bridging the Education Gap for Young People in Care, May 2021, p7

HOW ANGLICARE VICTORIA HELPS VICTORIANS IN NEED



ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT,
AV HAS OVER

700

CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE IN OUR CARE



998

FOSTER CARERS
PROVIDING CARE
TO CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE



314

KINSHIP CARERS
PROVIDING CARE
TO CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE
WHO ARE RELATED
TO THEM

WORKING WITH FAMILIES EARLY MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

804

FAMILIES ENGAGED IN AV'S EVIDENCE-BASED MODEL PROGRAMS
WHICH ARE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED FOR THEIR SUCCESS
IN KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

208

FAMILIES AT RISK OF HAVING THEIR CHILDREN
PLACED INTO OUT-OF-HOME CARE (OOHC) WERE
SUPPORTED BY AV'S OWN RAPID RESPONSE.
AFTER COMPLETING THE PROGRAM, 94.2 PER
CENT OF CHILDREN REMAINED IN THE CARE OF
THEIR FAMILIES

118

MEN COMPLETED CARING DADS, A FAMILY
VIOLENCE GROUP INTERVENTION PROGRAM
FOR MEN WHICH IMPROVES THE SAFETY
AND WELLBEING OF THEIR CHILDREN

255

FAMILIES COMPLETED THE FUNCTIONAL FAMILY
THERAPY PROGRAM, A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL
FAMILY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG
PEOPLE AND FAMILIES IN CHILD WELFARE

176

FAMILIES COMPLETED THE SAFECARE
PARENTING PROGRAM, PROVEN TO
IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF PARENTAL
CARE, FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN UP
TO AGE 5 WHO WERE REPORTED FOR,
OR AT RISK OF, CHILD NEGLECT OR
ABUSE

47

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE
SUPPORTED IN FFT-YJ (FUNCTIONAL FAMILY
THERAPY FOR YOUTH JUSTICE) MODEL TO
PREVENT YOUTH RE-OFFENDING



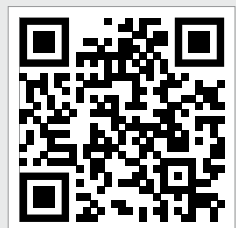
ANGLICARE VICTORIA WORKS WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO BUILD BETTER TOMORROWS.

We work with them to find solutions for children in need, create opportunities and pathways for young people, provide tools and support for families to stay together. We find innovative ways to overcome challenges. And to make the system better. We help children and families reach their full potential. And improve life for everyone.

WE WORK FOR BETTER.

**Vulnerable young people, families and individuals are more in
need of help than ever as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.
Your support can help make a difference.**

Help our clients, move from survive to thrive.



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Broadcast brings town good news through trial

by Chris Shearer

BEING THE ONLY MINISTER in town is never easy, but for Mallacoota's Reverend Jude Benton, the circumstances seem extra hard.

Not that Ms Benton betrays any weariness with these struggles. If anything, she has the kind of sunny-stoicism that seems to come from experiencing things that might have broken others.

The residents of Mallacoota – Ms Benton among them – have lived through a lot in the past two years. Bushfires ravaged the town on New Year's Eve 2019, turning the sky apocalyptic red and destroying dozens of homes.

Thousands of holiday makers were evacuated by the navy, but for most residents, there was nowhere to go. The town remained cut off for weeks, without a power grid connection until early February.

In March came the pandemic and its various restrictions that made an isolated town even more cut off. The chance to grieve as a community was hampered by lockdowns, deliveries of vital rebuilding supplies were suspended, and border closures made essential shopping nearly impossible.

Add to this the hour's drive for Ms Benton from one side of the Cooperating-Parish of Croajingolong to the other, and that next nearest minster is a two-hour drive away in Orbost, and the size of the task is clear.

But Ms Benton has made every effort to reach her community in whatever way she can. In a time when many churches went online, Ms Benton knew she had to think differently.

"When we saw that lockdown number one was coming in March last year, Mallacoota at that point didn't have NBN and our internet capacity was really very bad. Very few people would have had enough bandwidth to do any kind of Zoom online thing. I certainly didn't have enough bandwidth to do it reliably," Ms Benton said.

"I put my thinking cap on and we've got a community radio station which is all done by volun-



Jude Benton at 3MGB with her Palm Sunday donkey. Picture: supplied.

teers. I went to the committee and said, 'Look, this is going to be a problem. We're not going to be able to have church and I can't see that online is going to work. What do you think about me doing a radio broadcast on 3MGB?'"

The committee was reticent.

They said that Ms Benton would need a co-presenter, and that they'd have to read a disclaimer at the beginning and end of the show affirming that the station was a secular broadcaster. But they gave her the 9am Sunday timeslot.

Despite the initial resistance, there was support from some unusual quarters.

"We've had a lovely guy called Don who has been my radio DJ almost every week. Faithfully committed Don – he's the town atheist," Ms Benton said.

"But he was the first one off the block to say, 'I'll partner with Jude, this is important'."

Ms Benton said the only formal part of radio church was the reading the Lord's Prayer, beyond that she adapted the show to what might suit the community that

week. They have music, talks, bible readings, children's stories, time for prayers, and other segments.

"Particularly last year I'd use the information about recovery from different psychologists and link that back into the scriptures, talking about the resurrection nar-

"We've had a lot of people [listening] who wouldn't have been able to come into church in the last two years."

Reverend Jude Benton

rative through a disaster recovery lens, and linking the scriptures and where we were as a community and disaster recovery," Ms Benton said.

Radio Church recently broadcast its 55th show, and is now being live streamed online. They've had listeners sending feedback from as



Jude Benton preaches at Mallacoota in January 2020. Picture: supplied.

far away as Melbourne.

The focus however remains on the needs of the local community.

"It works because I know roughly where the community is at," Ms Benton said.

"I know when they're grieving, I know when they're joyful, I know when there's a situation happening.

"It's never going to fill the void of being together face-to-face. But it's worked in a way that I've never expected it to work either.

"We've had a lot of people [listening] who wouldn't have been able to come into church in the last two years anyway. They're aged, they're unwell, they have

The way she sees it is she's there to lend a hand or an ear, whether someone is a person of faith or not.

For example, recently a young mother in town died, and her friends organised a memorial service. Late the night before Ms Benton got a message asking if she could be there. When she spoke to the friends they said they wanted someone there who was calm, solid, and cared for the community.

"They didn't need me to be there to take it," Ms Benton said. "They wanted me there to be with them in it."

It's just one small example of the philosophy of togetherness and support that underpins Ms Benton's work in her community.

The lesson she hopes other ministers can take away is to risk trying new things, accept that sometimes they won't work, but know that in a small community everyone is watching.

"The priest or the local minister has to engage with the local community," she said.

"One of the joys and challenges of remote ministry is you can't not engage. You have to. You've got no anonymity and you've got to learn to live with it. You've got to feel what they're feeling, and know that you can't be all things to all people.

"[But] part of our role is to continue to respond to the community as it is ... you've just got to keep serving your community. There's no one else to do it."

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Not for Profit.**

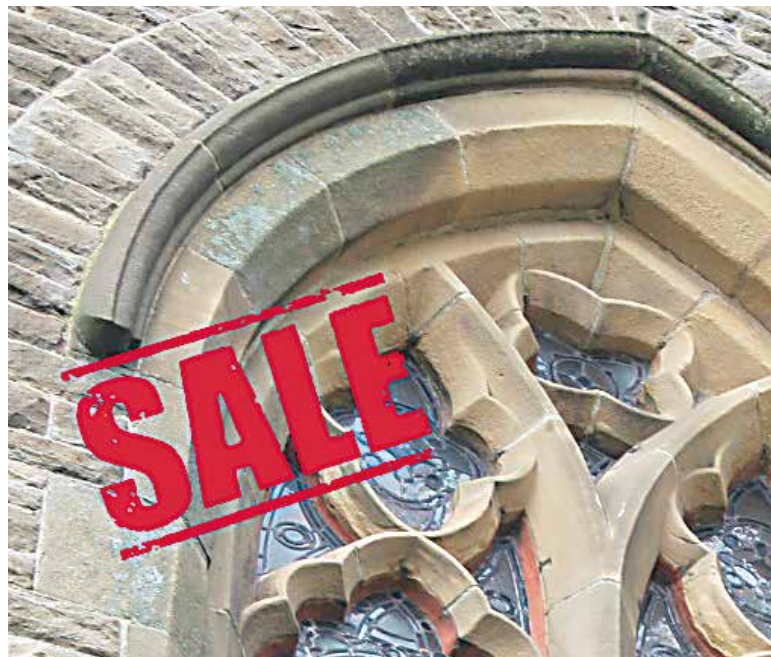


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Your say on sales, services and separation



Selling long-term assets to fund a deficit is not the answer for the diocese, writes Stephen Williams of Geelong.

Picture: File.

Sales not the answer

I was concerned that the "...Rich in Assets" headline in November's *Melbourne Anglican* meant that diocese was intending to sell assets to meet an operating deficit. Sadly, capital appreciation will not fund a deficit. Is the implication that diocese intends to sell long-term assets to fund short-term deficits? This is surely not sustainable – when the farm is all sold the supply of assets is exhausted, but the deficit remains.

One option might be to use the assets differently. Like the diocese, my parish is fortunate to have an investment property. I wonder if diocese could adopt a model I have suggested to my parish, that proposes monetising the property's income generating potential to generate a cashflow without disposing of a valuable asset. Prudent financial management does not always have to mean selling assets.

Stephen Williams
Geelong

Time to change

One of the defining features of the Anglican Church is its exclusivity. While often speaking of inclusiveness, it insists on policies which exclude whole sections of the community from worship and the opportunity to be part of a congregation.

I refer to service times. Virtually all Anglican churches hold their services in an exceptionally narrow window of 8-10 on Sunday mornings. This excludes many people: the young, who socialise on Saturday nights, the elderly, the ill, the disabled, and their carers, who often need some time to get up and get themselves organised in the mornings, night owls, who need to sleep in, and parents of children, who also take time to get organised. There is zero provision for all these people. Clearly, they are simply not wanted at church.

I hope that, in the return after lockdown, the church will give some thought to providing for this large section of the community

that it has been excluding for so long. The Catholic Church has long provided masses at a wide range of times for the convenience of the faithful. I have no idea why the Anglican Church refuses to do so.

Caroline Miley
Heidelberg

What should our buzz words be?

Ironically, the guidelines for diversity and inclusion arrived in my inbox the same week I was required, for the first time in living memory, to exclude people from worship, according to job status. "Diversity and inclusion" are nice words, but actually conformity and exclusion are ever more required.

I wondered about the use of these two words "diversity and inclusion", so expressive of the society we now inhabit. Could we not have said: "Guidelines for building strong congregations in a COVID world", or "building up the body of Christ among all kinds".

Perhaps we are using these words for our ever more curious governmental overlords who wish to ensure religious groups are conforming to their current ideological orthodoxy? They will see these two words, smile to themselves, and leave us alone. If that's our plan, it's a masterpiece! Kudos all round.

If not, then I wonder where our prophetic edge lies anymore? What makes us different? Are we church being absorbed into the spirit of the age rather than the Spirit of the ages? Am I too idealistic still to dream that we can yet build local

Letter of the Month

Considering writing in? Just in case you needed extra reason, *The Melbourne Anglican* is introducing a Letter of the Month award. Each edition the submission judged best will receive a \$30 bookshop voucher.



"What makes us different?" Phil Hurwood asks. Picture: file.

communities where love and trust are the buzz words, our guidelines are from the New Testament, and that light removed from its bushel can bring eternal hope to a floundering world?

Phil Hurwood
Frankston South

Word of God canon of our faith

I'm currently re-reading the well-known sci-fi trilogy by C.S. Lewis. Of course it's less sci-fi than it is a parable about the long war Satan is waging against God and His people. At the centre of the story of the third book *That Hideous Strength* is a battle for the hearts and minds of the human race. One strategy of the "National Institute for

Coordinated Experiments" – which is opposed to the Creator's revelation, is not to refute or deny it but to obfuscate and confuse it. Lewis's story resonated as I read 'Call for peace between Anglican Church factions' (November). Are we now to believe, as Reverend Canon Lee suggests, that the creeds (written by men) should be the canon of our faith rather than the Word of God? The Creeds are useful but can be changed. For example, the Apostle's creed should really begin: 'I believe in God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Maker of heaven and earth.' Why? Because the Bible clearly teaches that the Trinitarian God was involved in Creation – not just one Person of the Trinity. I can still say this creed confidently, however, because my theological understanding is wholly informed by Scripture. This is fundamentally where the so-called "factions" irreconcilably differ. If I was a non-Christian reading certain articles in *TMA*, I would be convinced that the Bible was not meant to be entirely believed.

Stephen Fry,
Hoppers Crossing



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Let us dream of a freedom that meets our neighbours' needs

by R.C. Dettmann

THIS WEEK I was stopped in my tracks re-listening to Joel Mckerrow's *Hope for Tomorrow*, a spoken word poem calling us to serve the world's great need for deliverance. It was fascinating to consider, what hope is, and how a message can burn even brighter, as the world grows darker.

This poem also reignited for me a conversation about freedom, especially as we currently face unprecedented and unnatural divide between those with freedom and those without it.

Many have borne witness with horror as the greatest threat to freedom around the world has been its corruption. Nations that have long championed the rights and freedoms of their citizens are suddenly struggling under pressure from philosophies of individualism or autocracy taken to extremes.

Since when is the individual "free" to harm the group?

Alternatively, how can freedom mean we have a collective "right" to despise or threaten the lives and livelihoods of those who hold valid but different opinions to our own?

Fear, hatred, exploitation or exclusion of others are not the characteristics of a free nation. "Libertine" has replaced nobler ideas of Liberty. "Freedom" without a sense of obligation towards others has become diseased. It is an infection of anarchy as dangerous to nations as a pandemic. History shows what happens when either people or governments begin to do whatever they want: society rapidly disintegrates into no one being able to do what they want.

So, what is true freedom?

One definition I find relevant in this moment: freedom is the exercise of choice to place limits on self for the sake of others; to limit our own power, like Christ, who though equal with God took the form of a servant.

From Plato to the Magna Carta, the United States' founding fathers, and beyond, freedom has only ever been conceived in partnership with responsibility.

Genuine freedom requires cognitive self-discipline and self-government. This extends to those serving within political structures, who supposedly attempt to rule the unruly, and reward the altruistic while regulating their own executive power or liberty. Humanity's capacity for this is the source of all social and political freedom.

Nations hinge on an agreed rule of law. All law will legislate somebody's "morality", but there is a limit to how much law a state can enshrine before it becomes cumbersome and unfree, even while attempting to protect freedom.

Thus, sustainable freedom is up to the people themselves. They must practice an individual and collective moral responsibility of their own volition. This requires civic leadership rather than revolution.

So Joel's poem had me suddenly understanding why I am weary of a narrative tilting too far toward "freedom from", whether that be freedom from the risk of a pathogen or freedom from political overreach, as important as each are.

I long instead, for a re-entry of a concept of "freedom to". What is our freedom for? Are we worthy of it? How will we wield it?

In Australia the beloved community are making choices that differ, for a diversity of reasons, with various consequences for their freedom. I have come to respect that to the best of their ability and information most believe they are making responsible choices with courage and conviction. This gives me hope.

What if our viewpoints are neither right nor wrong; just incomplete?

We need each other, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, jabbed or jobless, progressive or conservative. We need to find out

what the "freedom" we have or want is for.

We need to keep communicating our valuable perspectives, and steadily move forward to find solutions for one another.

Let us remain who we are at our best, dreaming up a wider freedom that meets our neighbours' immediate needs and delivers equitable outcomes. Let us get involved as citizens to support future-forward statesmanship; craft better legislation; and return a balance of power for the benefit of all.

Why? Because suffering humanity cries for our united and responsible creativity to tackle some real oppression and inspire with hope in demonstration that freedom is for a good purpose.

R.C. Dettmann, an American Australian, writes and facilitates hospitality, conservation, and reconciliation from a grazing property in Central Victoria. She worships locally, and online with St Jude's Anglican, Carlton.

A chance to innovate in violence prevention

by Chris Shearer

LONG-TERM KERRYNN LEWIS dreams of a “family safety champion” in every Anglican church in Melbourne and Geelong.

The diocese's new Prevention of Violence Against Women program manager can see both challenges and opportunities ahead for the still-new initiative.

She's looking forward to taking on both.

Ms Lewis comes to the program after 15 years working in the prevention of violence against women space via the community and public health industries. After starting in November, she is now gearing up to lead the program into 2022 and beyond.

In the recent past Ms Lewis was one of the co-leads at St Mark's Forest Hill's whole-of-church approach to preventing violence against women. This was one of the five whole-of-church pilot programs operated by the PVAW and funded by the state government.

Ms Lewis has also volunteered in other areas of the PVAW with former program manager Robyn Andreo-Boosey.

Ms Lewis said she was drawn to the position because she was interested in the program's intersection with faith.

“I see so much potential for the church to make change in this area,” she said.

“Preventing violence against women in a faith-based community brings a bit more depth and another layer that is unique in this setting compared to some other environments.

“You really get to the heart of what people believe and when people understand the importance of the issue and what they can do about it, they not only practice that in their church environment but in all aspects of their life

because they embody it. It's part of who they are.”

Ms Lewis added that the program also allowed space not only

“When people understand the importance of the issue and what they can do about it, they not only practice that in their church environment but in all aspects of their life.”

Kerryn Lewis

for preventing but responding to violence against women, and that the church environment could offer healing to those who had experienced violence.

“When you can do all those three things in one there's some great opportunities there,” she said.

Ms Lewis said great work had been done by organisations and government in the prevention of violence field in areas like sporting codes, the arts, and business, but faith-based communities hadn't received as much attention.

“The diocese doing this work is really amazing and really providing leadership more broadly in this area,” she said.

“We can sort of innovate and



New Prevention of Violence Against Women program manager
Kerryn Lewis can see huge opportunities for change within the church.
Picture: supplied.

learn and explore, so that really excites me as well.”

Ms Lewis said the work started by Ms Andreo-Boosey left her with big shoes to fill, but she planned to expand from where Ms Andreo-Boosey left off.

Ms Lewis said she brought sector knowledge and experience, so hoped to share and connect the work that the diocese was doing with other people in the field.

She also hoped to get more churches engaging with the PVAW program in the coming months, whether they were ones already working with the program or ones that were yet to sign up.

Ms Lewis said she looked forward to working with a wider range of churches because they

“I see so much potential for the church to make change in this area.”

Kerryn Lewis

were great environments for fostering respectful relationships.

“I love the intergenerational nature of churches. When you're working on this issue you're working with men and women and

children and elderly people and everyone in-between,” she said.

“That cross section is a real strength of the church that you don't get in all settings.”

But Ms Lewis said there were some challenges the program needed to face in the months and years ahead.

Among these was the need to adapt the approach to culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This year's program evaluation by the University of Melbourne found that while these communities didn't show any evidence of having higher rates of violence against women, they weren't being reached as effectively by the program as primarily English-speaking communities.

One of Ms Lewis' first tasks will be looking for someone to fill a project officer role to meet this need, which now has funding for the next three years.

Long-term, Ms Lewis said she hoped to have a “family safety champion” in every church in the diocese, who would be trained in preventing and responding to family violence and be able to offer some support or direct people to the appropriate services or resources.

But in the meantime, Ms Lewis said she was eager to hear from churches around the diocese.

“I'm keen for people to approach me if they want to discuss the issue further, or if they have ideas that they want support for in their church, or they want to find out more about the diocese's range of tools and resources,” she said.

You can find out more about the violence prevention resources for churches at melbourneanglican.org.au/pvaw/resources, or contact Kerryn Lewis directly at klewis@melbourneanglican.org.au.

Women's voices vital to address family violence in the church

by Bishop Genieve Blackwell

WHAT IS it worth to us to ensure women and girls in our churches are equally safe valued and heard?

The answer we hope for is “everything”. And it was the answer synod gave when it overwhelmingly voted in favour of receiving the University of Melbourne's evaluation of the diocese's prevention of violence against women program, noting its positive outcomes and recommendations for future action and acknowledging the need for long term commitment to the program.

But do we understand the connection between women and girls being safe, women and girls being valued, and women and girls being heard?

The National Research Project into the nature and prevalence of intimate partner violence in the Anglican Church of Australia showed that women did not always feel their voices would be heard, especially when they did not feel safe.



Bishop Genieve Blackwell.

Most Anglican victims of domestic violence did not seek help from Anglican churches. The current national conversation on violence against women shows this is a problem that reaches deep right across society.

We can be part of the solution by not simply continuing as a significant part of the problem,

as the evaluation of our PVAW program shows. It was encouraging that synod adopted the Ten Commitments, which focus on cultural change, education, training and support, as a framework for progressing our response to family violence and prevention of

what is involved in prevention of violence in the first place, and the implications for us across the diocese.

This conversation within the church is happening against the backdrop of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence

“Most Anglican victims of domestic violence did not seek help from Anglican churches.”

Bishop Genieve Blackwell

violence against women.

As it turned out, much of the debate at our synod was centred around the role of legislation in ensuring equal representation of women on our governing bodies and in leadership of our parishes. It meant essentially synod was not just talking about responding to family violence. Synod was grappling in a very real way with

Against Women on 25 November, and the 30th year in which 16 days of activism have taken place following this date.

Five parishes have also grappled with this issue, as they trialled a more intensive whole-of-church pilot project. This project built on the training for responding to and preventing violence against women, in which

nearly half of our parishes have participated. This whole church approach focused on six key elements: leadership and commitment, culture and environment, teaching and learning, professional development, community partnerships and support for parishioners and staff. It adapted the Victorian Department of Education and Training's Respectful Relationships whole-school approach.

The program took each of these parishes on a journey, and they will be able to share their learnings with other parishes, along with the resources which have been developed.

We are looking for long term generational change. The family violence sector and the government affirm the importance of faith communities playing their part in bringing this change. It is only as we value everyone's gifts and hear everyone's voice that women and girls in our churches will be equally safe, valued and heard.



Comfort in being known by God through despair

WHEN COVID-19 FIRST hit few predicted that it would still be going strong at the end of 2021. All of us hope we are coming out the other side, but either way, the suffering it has caused is untold, not least in Melbourne. A pandemic is a disease of despair.

What does Christian faith offer to those in distress? Along with the hope of divine intervention through answers to prayer and the practical, loving concern of a faith community, there are two vital resources located in the Christian tradition. One is the opportunity to voice your complaints to God, the other the notion that you are known intimately and personally by God, even in your distress. As it turns out, the two are related.

The cry of lament

The most frequent type of psalm in the Bible is that of lament, a cry of pain, sorrow and grief in the middle of suffering. In Psalm 13, verses 1-2 we hear:

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Such cries are less a crisis of faith than a crisis of understanding. The psalmists complain to God because they expect better of him.

As it turns out, almost all the psalms of lament end in trust and praise, and in many the psalmist takes comfort from being known by God. The end of Psalm 13 is a good example, reading: "But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me."



We can take refuge in the God who knows us intimately, writes Brian Rosner. Picture: Dreamstime.

John Swinton writes that, "Lament provides us with a language of outrage that speaks against the way things are, but always in the hope that the way things are just now is not the way they will always be."

Known by God

One of the things we need when facing serious hardship is the encouragement that someone knows what you are going through. The psalms also testify to such expressions of faith. In Psalm 31 we read: "I will rejoice and be glad in your faithful love because you have seen my affliction. God knows the troubles of our lives."

In the Old Testament, Israel experienced a series of distressing circumstances – slavery in Egypt, wandering in the wilderness, and exile in a foreign land. In each case God comforts the Israelites

"God knows the troubles of our lives."

Psalm 31

by reassuring them that he knows them in their distress. Though it would be an exaggeration for most of us to compare our pandemic plight to such experiences, sometimes examples with the volume turned up can be instructive.

Oppressed and enslaved

Early in the life of Israel, the people suffered considerable hardship when they were in bondage in Egypt. They performed "hard labour" under a maniacal Pharaoh.

We hear: "The Israelites groaned in their slavery." While not enslaved, many of us have experienced feelings of helplessness, and the sense that there is no end in sight. Such feelings can linger.

Exodus 2:24 confirms that Israel was not left forgotten and unnoticed by the divine. We hear: "God looked on the Israelites and *knew them*." Even if the alleviation of their suffering was some way off, knowing that God had taken notice of their anguish was the first step in its relief.

Wandering aimlessly

Following their rescue from Egypt the Israelites sojourned in difficult conditions in the wilderness for some 40 years. It was like living in "the waiting room" of the doctor's surgery. They knew of the promised land, but year after year they languished. Where was the promise of blessing the nation?

For some of us, pandemic life feels like we are in an interminable "holding pattern." So many of our plans have been abandoned or postponed. Does God know you when things seem to be going nowhere? God comforts the Israelites in the wilderness with the reassurance that he knew them even there, saying: "*I knew you* in the desert, in the land of burning heat" (Hosea 13:5, my translation).

Longing for home

Our final example comes several centuries later. In the ancient world exile was an extreme form of punishment. In 587 BC Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had captured the city of Jerusalem, destroyed its temple, and sent into exile many its inhabitants. The psalmist wrote: "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion [Jerusalem]" (Psalm 137:1).

Missing home is a powerful and unpleasant emotion and can be an

aching loss. Home is where you belong. The pandemic disruptions have left many missing the life we once had. You don't have to be queuing for a return flight to have that gnawing sense of feeling out of place. Does God know when life seems to be missing the warmth, nurture, and love of home?

In Israel's case, God had not forgotten his people in exile. Describing his relationship to them as that of a devoted parent, he insists that there is less chance of him forgetting them than of a mother forgetting her child. We read, "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, *I will not forget you!*" (Isaiah 49:15).

Taking Refuge in God

We find in the story of Israel surprising resources for our own present experience. In times of distress, we may feel worthless and unloved, as if no one cares or even notices. Being known by God is a significant counterpoint to these destructive thoughts. To be reassured of God's continued care, we can take refuge in the God who knows us intimately and personally: "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him" (Nahum 1:7; ESV).

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

If life is in danger, phone Triple Zero (000).

Reverend Dr Brian Rosner is the principal of Ridley College. He is the author of several books, including *Known by God: A Biblical Theology of Personal Identity*. This article is adapted from an article he wrote for ABC Religion and Ethics and is used with permission.

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Anglican sisters remain open to God's calling

by Mark Brolly

SISTER CAROL TANNER doesn't fit the tradition image of Mother Superior of a religious order.

A mother of five, grandmother of 16 and great-grandmother of one – and divorced – she joined the Community of the Holy Name in Cheltenham in 1993.

Six years later, she took her vows.

"It was quite a few years after the divorce that I felt a call," Sister Carol said.

"I didn't know Anglican sisters even existed [before]."

"My children were grown up by then, two were married and I had a couple of grandchildren ... what they [said] to me was, 'Mum, you supported us in what we want to do, so if this is what you want to do, we will support you'. And they have!"

Now in her late 70s, Sister Carol grew up in the Anglican Church and attended St Paul's Boronia, although she was christened in the Methodist church.

It was a very different world then.

"The church in those days was your social spot. There was a faith but nothing like there is now, which is a very close relationship to God," Sister Carol said.

"It wasn't until I was 48 or 49 ... when I changed churches after the divorce ... I did find God in a different way and became much closer and life changed."

For the past 10 years, Sister Carol has led what is Australia's oldest Anglican religious community. It has been an experience not without its challenges.

"In one way, it's frustrating for me because I have had life experience, I'm a practical person," she said.

"I come in here and they've been closeted for so long, I think ... 'It's extraordinary, just do it'."

The community of sisters was founded in 1888 by Emma Silcock, known as Sister Esther, the novice of an English order who came to Melbourne for health reasons.

The sisters were identified with

the Melbourne diocese's Mission to the Streets and Lanes from its earliest days in the 1880s, until it was absorbed into Anglicare in 1997.

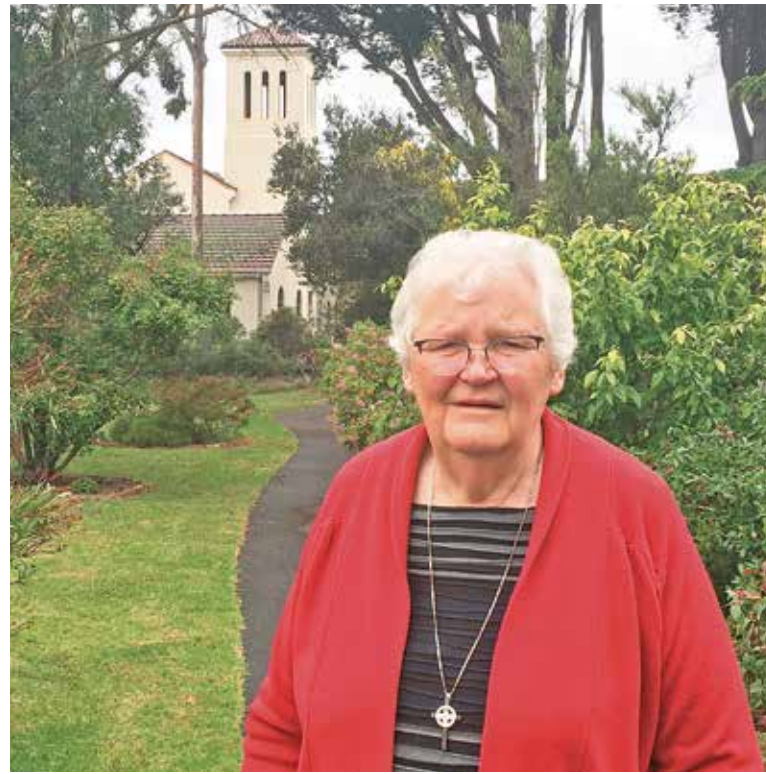
"Our future's in the hands of God, and we just have to be there and open and prepared for whatever comes."

Sister Carol Tanner

They also worked with St George's Hospital in Kew, St Ives Hospital in East Melbourne, and the House of Mercy for women and girls in Cheltenham from the 1890s, which later became a retreat house. They have also been involved with a secondary school for girls and a religious community for Papuan women in Papua New Guinea.



The former Community of the Holy Name convent. Picture: Mark Brolly.



Sister Carol Tanner outside the order's spirituality centre.

Picture: Mark Brolly.

Their former convent in Cheltenham is now a spirituality centre.

Sister Carol's community has shrunk to 12 members aged from their late 50s into their 90s.

At 78, she is the second-young-

est community member, although another woman in her 50s is to join as a postulant – the first stage towards making life vows – in December.

Four years ago, the Sisters moved out of their old convent into a new building, Esther House, at the rear of their beautiful Cheltenham property.

Not surprisingly, the community's future is a topic of pressing concern to the sisters. Sister Carol said the order attracted interest from different women, some suitable, some not.

She has thought about attracting them in different ways, such as with an "Alongsider" program, where women live beside the community for a certain time. This has met with some success.

"We've got to be particularly careful of age because if we have a lot of young people, I can't see how they would fit in at this stage," she said.

"I say to women who come to talk to me, 'You are called into a community'. One of them – she was only young – said: 'Oh, I want to go and do this, this, this and this'."

"And I said: 'Well, you are called to community first, then we discern where your gifts are and where God's calling you in ministry'. I always stress that because I think that's very important."

Sister Carol said the sisters were considering changes to their pathway to life vows. After a novice year, new Sisters take vows for three years. These can be renewed twice.

But at any time, they can ask for life vows. The sisters are now considering whether to renew vows for 12 months at a time.

The sisters also have "oblates" and "associates": women and men who make commitments to support the sisters, who work with them in what are now primarily ministries of prayer and presence.

The community prays together four times a day, and has the Eucharist daily when possible, apart from weekends. Some sisters are attached to parishes – St Augustine's Mentone, St Paul's Caulfield and St Nicholas' Mordialloc – or attend their local church on Sundays, St Matthew's Cheltenham.

They have established a nine-member board to run their spirituality centre, four of whom are sisters.

Sister Carol said she was open to the future.

She dismissed speculation that there was a five-year plan to wind down the community.

"I have to be realistic. I've come into it later and for me, it's an exciting adventure. I've said it's the fulfilment of my life," she said.

"But [the older sisters] have been in it for years – one sister has just celebrated her 60th profession anniversary, some have got up to 70 – so I can see they're tired and they're done hard work."

"I suppose my favourite saying is that our future's in the hands of God, and we just have to be there and open and prepared for whatever comes. We're prepared if we die out, but we're prepared also if we continue."

"You never know what God's going to call people to."



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Following God's call might mean care for insects

All life that God created on this planet is beautiful, complex and delicately interconnected, but do we appreciate how critical our part is in nurturing it? Biologist and geneticist Professor Philip Batterham explains why the humble insect is part of God's call to care for creation.

THE GAME OF JENGA STARTS with a tall tower being built with wooden blocks. Players take turns to remove blocks, one at a time. The player who removes a block causing the tower to fall loses the game. If I wanted to end a game of Jenga quickly, I would clumsily pull out a block from the bottom of the tower, causing it to topple.

That is what we are currently doing to life on this planet.

I became a Christian long before I became a biologist. As I contemplate care for the planet, I see my understandings of the Bible and biology intertwining like the strands of the DNA molecule that has been my preoccupation for my 45 years in research.

Our planet has a rare capacity to sustain life that comes from the composition of soil, an abundance of water, and an ideal combination of gases in our atmosphere. There are critical cycles that are elegant and so finely balanced. Plants take carbon dioxide from the air and convert it into sugars that provide energy for plants and the creatures that feed on them. Plants and animals respire replacing the carbon dioxide withdrawn from the atmosphere. Water is cycled through precipitation and evaporation. These are the foundations upon which the pyramid of life is built.

Just as all life on this planet is dependent on these chemical and physical elements, all life forms are interdependent as they live together in ecosystems. In nutrition, for example, plants are a resource for many insects and other herbivorous animals. Insects can be a substantial food resource for many small animals and birds which in turn are consumed by carnivores. At the base of this pyramid there are plants and insects. At the highest levels we have mammals, including us.

It stands to reason that if we erode the base of the pyramid, it could collapse like a Jenga tower.

My grave concern is that we

blindness and impact metabolism, reducing the capacity of insects to withstand other environmental challenges.

Global warming is also a factor. Insects are unable to control their body temperature. Hence, changes in temperature affect all aspects of

to life on this planet.

Genesis 1:28 quotes God saying that humans should rule over all other animals on the face of the earth, but this is not a licence to do as we please.

God did not declare us to be gods on this earth who could ignore his plans for the planet. Jesus modelled the humble leaders we should be by washing dirty, smelly feet.

We are deputised and have responsibilities to love and care for this planet as God does.

In Genesis 2 we see this fleshed out with God present in the garden of Eden, lovingly, joyfully, playfully rejoicing and celebrating his creation, bringing animals to Adam for naming. Adam and Eve are depicted as gardeners and caretakers of the extraordinary gift of creation that they are to love and cherish. Jesus said to whom much is given, much is expected. It is noteworthy that indigenous peoples around the world have come closest to being faithful to this commission. Conspicuously, there are permissions that are not given in the creation chapters of Genesis. There is no mandate given to tear down forests or to kill animals.

In looking at the earth in 2021, God must weep at what has become of creation and how we have failed as caretakers of the precious gift we have been given. In Genesis 1 we see God creating order from chaos. Humans have thrown that process into reverse.

Writing to believers thousands of years ago, the Apostle Paul says

wrote these words about Jesus:

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

I am haunted by the question that if it is God in Jesus who holds all things together, what does it say about us if we actively tear his creation apart or passively stand by, refusing to intervene to stop it happening?

Colossians 1:19–20 goes on to say:

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Followers of Jesus are called to be part of that work of reconciliation and restoration because all life on this earth is precious to God, not just human life.

For too long, many of us have not heeded that call.

However, individual Christians and churches are increasingly joining calls for action to care for the planet. This is good, because the needs of the planet that sustains life must be addressed as a matter of extreme urgency. It is also a vital act of obedience to the call of God on our lives.

This will require lifestyle changes and sacrifices from all of us, but this is what Jesus consistently asks of his followers.

Philip Batterham is a fellow of ISCAST—Christians in Science and Technology, and Professor of Genetics in the School of BioSciences, the University of Melbourne, where he and his team examine ways in which chemical insecticides have an impact on beneficial insects as well as pests. An illustrated talk by Professor Batterham called "Insect Armageddon" can be found at iscast.org.



Bees are a poster child, but insects offer so much more.

Picture: Dreamstime.

humans are doing just that.

This has been the focus of my whole career in research, studying interactions between insects and the environment. There are about 5.5 million different species of insects on earth. The "poster children" for insects are honeybees because we appreciate that without pollinators, we could not feed the world.

But insects are also a food resource, and they recycle nutrients, and control pests, among their many other ecosystem services. It is therefore alarming that populations of land-based insects are shrinking by approximately one per cent each year.

Why are insect populations shrinking?

Collateral damage from insecticides used to control insect pests is one of many contributing factors. Low doses of insecticides that target the nervous system are known to impact the behaviour of non-pest insects in ways that will reduce the viability of populations. Research in my laboratory has shown that low doses of some of these insecticides also cause

insect life, from reproduction to metabolism and survival.

Land clearing, urbanisation, air and water pollution, and introduced species are among the other threats to insects. We are destroying habitats and changing the composition of the soil, the air and the water on which they depend.

"Realistically, this will require lifestyle changes and sacrifices from all of us, but this is what Jesus consistently asks of his followers."

Professor Philip Batterham

This all has consequences for those of us who live at the top of a wobbling pyramid. It also tells us that we need to reduce many other assaults on this planet that sustain all life, beyond just climate change.

There is an urgent need for radical change, based on a shared understanding of our relationship

even then that the whole of creation groans (Romans 8:22). How much more is creation groaning now as result of what we have done to it since then?

Jesus being the saviour of the world is a pillar of the Christian faith, but he is also depicted as the creator. In Colossians 1:15–17 Paul

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Future golden for Christian schools: Principal

by Stephen Cauchi

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS HAVE an exceptionally bright future as families seek a value-driven education for their children, one retiring leader has said.

Tony Sheumack is set to say farewell after 25 years as principal of Beacons Hills College in Melbourne's south east. If the growth of his school is any indication low-fee Christian schools are set for success.

In 1982, Beacons Hills opened in Pakenham with 34 students and five staff. The co-educational school now has over 3000 students from kindergarten to Year 12 spread over two campuses, at Pakenham and Berwick.

Mr Sheumack has overseen most of this growth, but he modestly ascribes it to the appeal of low-fee Christian education and the burgeoning population of Melbourne's outer east.

"The success of that [low-fee Christian] model has enabled it to grow significantly from when I started to what it is now," he told *The Melbourne Anglican*.

"Christian education and particularly affordable Christian education, with all the Christian values that go with it, is the basis for what so many families want."

But demographic factors were also responsible for the school's growth, he said. These included huge demand in the growth corridor surrounding Pakenham and Berwick.

For many families, faith-based schools were a substitute for church, he said.

Mr Sheumack said Beacons Hills was the "centre of faith" for many families who were not church-going.

"They come from different faiths and of no faith, but we do believe that we are the faith community for this particular group," he said.



Beacons Hills College principal Tony Sheumack with 2016 College Dux Rachel Chen.

Picture: supplied.

"We advertise ourselves very broadly as being a Christian school for the community, not necessarily a Christian school only for Christians."

Mr Sheumack said probably the majority of parents at Beacons Hills were not practising Christians. But all of them wanted for their children the values that come with Christian education.

Beacons Hills was founded by both the Anglican and Uniting churches, so not all of the school's chaplains are Anglican-ordained priests.

Mr Sheumack said he had developed a large chaplaincy team to provide for the faith community.

"[This] really reinforces the Christian values of our community, but they're teaching chaplains so they are really part of the community," he said.

"We have been able to provide a relatively affordable Christian education for a very large community that would not have had access to that type of education."

Tony Sheumack

Beginnings

Mr Sheumack, whose father was Bishop Colin Sheumack, was awarded a federal government university scholarship to study teaching in the early 1980s. However, he only truly settled on teaching as a career when he started doing practical instruction.

"It was being in a classroom -

that's when it resonated with me that teaching would be a career I wanted to do," he said.

"That interaction, making a difference in the lives of young people, was really an experience."

A maths and science teacher, Mr Sheumack initially taught at state schools with Prahran High School his first appointment. He then moved to the country, teach-

ing at state schools in Rochester and Bendigo.

It was at Bendigo that he transitioned to working in independent schools.

He was at the Anglican Girton College in 1992 when it transitioned into Girton Grammar, a private school independent of the church.

Mr Sheumack said he learnt a lot during that transitional time, which was very difficult for both the Anglican church in Bendigo and the entire Girton community.

At Girton College he became boarding master, then at Girton Grammar the deputy head of the school.

In 1997, he moved to Beacons Hills to take on the principal position.

"From the work that I'd done at Girton I was encouraged to apply for the vacant role that was coming up at Beacons Hills," he said.

Futures

Mr Sheumack said the future of affordable faith-based schools was "very, very bright" because "we are privileged to be able to stand on Christian values".

"We have been able to provide a relatively affordable Christian education for a very large community that would not have had access to that type of education," he said.

The aim of Beacons Hills, he said, was to have young citizens with a sense of service rooted in Christian values.

In doing so Beacons Hills students would become "great citizens of the world".

He said the last two years had reinforced the importance of the community feel that faith-based schools offered.

"They are the centre of our community," he said.

"Through the COVID period where so much has been online, there's that real yearning for connection, a real yearning for well-being and being part of something that's greater than oneself - the community that you serve."



The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland seeks expressions of interest for the position of **Director of Professional Standards**

The position will become vacant due to retirement in the second quarter of 2022 with the option of an extended handover period.

For a position description, or any inquiries, please contact the Registrar, Richard Connelly, at registrar@gippsanglican.org.au



Expressions of interest are now open for an Advent Holy Land pilgrimage, to be led by Bishop Brad Billings in December 2022.

The estimated price per person (twin share) is \$6-7k depending on the number of bookings - this includes flights, 10 nights comfortable accommodation, breakfast and dinner daily, and all travel to locations within the Holy Land.

To express interest contact Bishop Brad, bbillings@melbourneanglican.org.au

Full details and the itinerary will be available early in the New Year.



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Afghanistan winter 'will be hell on earth': UN

By Rebecca Paveley

DESPERATE PARENTS IN Afghanistan are selling their children to obtain food as millions teeter on the brink of starvation, while humanitarian services are crippled by international sanctions.

The head of the United Nations World Food programme, David Beasley, warned on Sunday that, by winter, Afghanistan would be "hell on earth".

About 23 million people – more than half the population – are facing starvation within months, and the next six months are likely to be "catastrophic", as cold temperatures are forecast.

In a message to world leaders, Mr Beasley said: "To the world leaders, to the billionaires: imagine if this was your little girl, or your little boy, or your grandchild about to starve to death. You would do everything you could. And when there is \$400 trillion of wealth on the earth today – shame on us if we let any child die from hunger. I don't care where that child is: shame on us."

Mr Beasley was speaking in Afghanistan to the BBC's world editor, John Simpson. In a subsequent broadcast, Mr Simpson wept as he related the plight of one mother and her seven children describing them as "grindingly poor already".



A mother and child flee Afghanistan, which has been rocked by the Taliban takeover. Picture: AP/Gemunu Amarasinghe.

"I've seen a lot of bad things in my time, but this hasn't yet happened, and yet you know this is just around the corner. And they know it," he said.

Some reports have suggested that hospitals are already overwhelmed with malnourished babies and children, and many are dying.

Afghanistan's international

funds – about \$9.5 billion – were frozen by governments in the West after the Taliban took power, and international support has dried up as countries refuse to recognise the Taliban. Millions of workers, including medical staff, have not been paid for months. The Taliban has now banned the use of foreign currencies in Afghanistan, further damaging the economy.

The country is also suffering from a severe drought, which has ruined much of its wheat crop and sent prices soaring.

The economic collapse is crippling the work of aid agencies in the country. The UN emergency appeal for Afghanistan is only half funded, with a shortfall of \$276 million.

"Shame on us if we let any child die from hunger."

David Beasley

A coalition of 17 aid organisations has called on world leaders to "stop playing politics with people's lives", and reinstate funds to Afghanistan.

Christian Aid, a member of the coalition, has been working in Afghanistan for 30 years. It said that it was continuing to work to distribute food, but it was impossible to run a humanitarian programme without a functioning banking system.

The head of global policy and advocacy for Christian

Aid, Fionna Smyth, said: "John Simpson's emotional broadcast – a reporter who has covered some of the world's most violent conflicts – should act as a wake-up call to leaders in the UK and across the world."

"Like the UN, John Simpson is right to warn that the already desperate situation in Afghanistan will only get worse as the harsh winter arrives. With Afghanistan on the verge of starvation, and reports that mothers are selling children to buy just the simple basics, urgent action is needed."

"Until G20 leaders enable cash to flow back into Afghanistan via the banking system, however, almost all our humanitarian efforts will be left crippled. Inaction risks innocent lives."

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has called for transactions for humanitarian activities to be excluded from sanctions, and warned against "conditional humanitarianism" or attempts to "leverage" humanitarian assistance for political purposes.

The International Monetary Fund has also warned that Afghanistan's economic collapse could fuel a refugee crisis, which would affect neighbouring Turkey and Europe.

Church Times

Diocesan Bookkeeper

Expressions of Interest
– Fulltime Diocesan Bookkeeper



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Do you want to make a significant contribution to the effective governance and operation of Parish Councils?

A full-time permanent role is being offered within the bookkeeping division of the Diocesan Finance department.

If you are a qualified and experienced bookkeeper, knowledgeable in using cloud-based accounting software (XERO certifications would be an advantage) and would like to utilise your skills to aid parishes in meeting their financial reporting and governance obligations, this may be the role for you.

The Diocesan bookkeeper will contribute to the effective functioning of Parishes (or possibly other Anglican entities and trusts) and aid parish councils in accounting and financial reporting.

The ideal candidate would have intermediate to advanced Excel skills and be familiar with the administration of Anglican parishes.

To obtain details on the role and if you wish to apply, please forward your resume and a brief covering letter by Friday, 7 January 2022 to positions@melbourneanglican.org.au

Comfortable Vicarage for rent

The vicarage at **St Andrews Aberfeldie (Essendon)** will be vacant January 2022, and is available for rent.

This is a substantial and comfortable house, with a large backyard. The house has 3 to 4 bedrooms. It is close to the city, and the Moonee Ponds shopping centre, as well as being close to the Maribyrnong River, with its walking and cycling paths.

We welcome all interested parties to inquire, particularly those affiliated with the church.

Please contact David Parker
0478 225 767 for further information.

Disability Access and Inclusion Focus Group



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The diocese is asking for expressions of interest for this new group from across our parishes. We would like this group to include people who have lived experience, are passionate and suitably qualified.

If you know someone or are interested yourself, we ask that you prayerfully consider this and email your expression of interest to safeministry@melbourneanglican.org.au

If you would like to discuss this, please call **Anne Fairweather** on **9653 4220**.



Diocesan Manager

Expressions of Interest
– Volunteer Diocesan Managers



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Do you want to make a significant contribution to the work of the Melbourne Diocese and the effective operation of Parish Councils?

If you have skills across compliance, governance, finance, project management or bookkeeping and would like to utilise these skills on a part-time volunteer basis, then this may be the role for you.

The volunteer Diocesan Manager will contribute to the effective functioning of Parishes requiring additional Diocesan management. The role will facilitate the continuation of operations and will play a key role in enabling Parishes to rebuild during a period of Diocesan Management.

The role will report to Melbourne Anglican Diocese Centre General Manager.

To obtain details on the role, for queries related to the position and if you wish to apply, please forward your Expression of Interest to positions@melbourneanglican.org.au

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Local partnership to send medical aid to Uganda

by Chris Shearer

MUCH-NEEDED MEDICAL supplies will soon leave Melbourne bound for a small Ugandan hospital, thanks to a partnership between an Anglican church and the Rotary Foundation.

A consortium of Rotary clubs and St Stephen's Anglican Church in Gardenvale has collected more than \$300,000 worth of medical supplies which will go to Moyo General Hospital in Uganda.

The small facility in the country's north serves about 10,000 locals and around 300,000 South Sudanese people living in a nearby refugee camp.

Two C Arm X Ray machines, ultrasound machines, autoclaves, hospital beds, and other essential medical supplies like bandages and hospital gowns, are among the goods being sent.

The equipment drive began when church leaders heard about a Church Missionary Society doctor Neil Browning who had moved to Moyo in 2020, and found the facilities in great need of medical supplies.



Goods collected in Melbourne will go to a small hospital in Uganda.
Picture: supplied.

St Stephen's Warden and Rotary member Bronwyn Stephens said she heard about this need from a friend, who asked if she had capacity to help.

Ms Stephens said to give her a wish-list. What followed next was extraordinary.

"The things on Neil's wish-list are very specialised so we thought we could get perhaps half of them

but not all of them," she said.

"But as is with prayer, it was quite a 'God-incidence', that all of the things on the wish-list started arriving.

"St Stephen's involvement was critically important. Also parishioners were contributing funds once they knew about it, and in the shipping container I've got notes of encouragement and prayers, sealed



Dr Neil Browning.
Picture: Supplied.

envelopes and little gifts to encourage [Neil]."

Ms Stephens said still on the wish-list for Moyo General Hospital was a fracture table, a kind of operating table specifically for broken bones.

"They retail at about \$80,000 each but they don't wear out, they go on forever, so hospitals don't donate them," she said.

She's also hoping they'll be able to send some laptop computers in the shipping container to donate to Moyo's Kajo-Keji Christian College, where Dr Browning's wife Sue works as a lecturer and mentor.

Recent delays have prevented the goods from being shipped, but the consortium has secured a shipping container and hopes the supplies will be on their way in the next few weeks. It's expected to spend six weeks at sea before arriving in Africa.

Those who might be able to contribute in some way to the initiative are encouraged to reach out to treasurer@ststephensgardenvale.org.au.

'No downside' for Bronwyn in taking a prayer-filled chance

by Chris Shearer

FOR TWELVE years Bronwyn Stephens has worked tirelessly to help her community in whatever way she can as a Rotary member and parishioner at St Stephen's Gardenvale.

Not even the pandemic has been able to really slow her down.

In 2020 she spearheaded the provision of gratitude bags for health-care workers during Melbourne's second wave of COVID.

In the past few months she's coordinated obtaining much needed medical supplies to be shipped to Moyo Hospital in Uganda.

Today, she's still working diligently to develop a satellite Rotary Club at St Stephen's that will bring in members of her local community, who might not otherwise worship at the church nor join the club.

It's a commitment to helping others that's the big draw, with a little support from the Holy Spirit.

"It seems to be a natural fit because the mantra of Rotary itself



Bronwyn Stephens.
Picture: Supplied.

is 'service above self', and of course that just fits so well with 'love your neighbour as yourself,' Ms Stephens says.

"So to collaborate with Rotary just makes sense.

"When people see what is possible through this collaboration, at the local level, they've seen that they can bring their ideas to the table and have this partnership take them forward."

"We're seeing this love for other people and this well of care for people less fortunate."

Visitor to St Stephen's

The group has already held several meetings with people who neither worship at St Stephen's nor belong to Rotary, to talk about their ideas for the community.

Ms Stephens says the hope is that the group will be able to sign on the requisite eight members needed to establish a satellite Rotary Club at St Stephen's, under the auspices of the Brighton North club, then eventually work their way up to 15

members so they can incorporate on their own.

But perhaps none of this work would have been possible without the support Ms Stephens received from St Stephen's vicar Paul Carr and the wider congregation.

"When the community of the church is the body of Christ and people are encouraged to pray together, identify each other's gifts... and really pray for those gifts to flourish and bloom and really go for it, things happen. That happened for me," she says.

"Not just from Paul but from the people he was encouraging and were coming into St Stephen's. They were coming around me and saying 'We're seeing this love for other people and this well of care for people less fortunate. This is clearly something that is being used in your life.'

"It gave me more of sense of, 'Yes, this is what God has been doing'.

"I sensed the Holy Spirit working in me, and it gave me new energy, and it gave other people

around the community energy too, because they were using their gifts."

Ms Stephens says that for others who are thinking about how to best use their gifts in their local community, it's a good idea to pray on it, but then they should go for it.

"There's no downside," she says. "There's so much joy in taking a chance if it's a prayer-filled chance. People will wrap you in love and encouragement and prayer.

"It doesn't really matter if it's a large thing or a small thing, and sometimes a large thing can end up being a small thing. Sometimes I've had a grand plan, and people have raised their eyebrows... and it ends up being a thousandth of what I'd dreamt.

"But that's ok. Because a small thing is better than nothing.

"Even if this satellite club doesn't actually work out, people have discussed ideas that they want to actually champion in their community. It's given them an appetite to do something, to have some hope, to have some faith, and ultimately, love."



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REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

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

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- Child Safe Officer
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KOYOORA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
1800 135 246

Breathtaking work makes equality crystal clear

Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy, Third Edition, edited by Ronald W Pierce and Cynthia Long Westfall, (IVP, 2021).

by Kevin Giles

WOMEN’S LIBERATION may have transformed society over the past six decades, but evangelicals remain divided on the role of women in the church, and in marriage. Many Christians remain opposed offering women equality of status and ministry opportunities in the church. They argue that the Bible teaches men should be in leadership, and women should accept their subordinate status. However, those continuing to

argue that the Bible gives “headship” to men have been losing ground over the years. Every text or argument used to make “the biblical case” for male headship has been shown to be inconclusive at best. Excluding women from leadership in the church looks more unjust and unfair as every year passes. It is a debate that must end because it implies that the good news of the Gospel found in Jesus Christ is bad news for women. Evangelicals are shooting themselves in the foot by making this argument. In desperation, an international group of scholarly evangelicals decided to co-opt their most informed and able theologians to critically evaluate every appeal to

the Bible to subordinate women. The fruit of their work has just been published, titled *Discovering Biblical Equality*. It is a breathtaking work of scholarship. Every appeal to the Bible is carefully considered and everyone is refuted so comprehensively it is hard to see how any serious reply could be made. It is a big book of 657 pages with 31 chapters. What it makes crystal clear is that when examined critically, the small number of proof-texts, supposedly excluding women from leadership, do not do so. For example, it is true that in Genesis 2 woman is created second, but this does not infer women are second in order. In Genesis 1, man and woman are created last, yet rule supreme.

It is true that Genesis 2 says that woman is made to be man’s “helper”, but in every other instance where the Hebrew word *ezer*, translated “helper”, is found it is used of a superior helping an inferior. Several times God is said to be our “helper” – and he is not our subordinate! It is true, the Twelve Apostles were all men, but they were also Jews. We hear no one arguing all church leaders should be Jewish. Yes Paul says the husband is “the head” of his wife (reflecting a patriarchal culture), but before saying this he says to husbands and wives “be subordinate to one another”. Immediately after he exhorts husbands to give their lives for their wife like Christ gave his

life for the church (Ephesians 3:21-23). In other words, Paul turns male headship as this world knows it on its head! I have said enough. If you honestly want to know what the Bible in fact teaches on women, this is the book to buy. It’s the last word on this topic. I could not recommend it more highly. It’s a *tour de force*. I was so thrilled to see this book appear that I want to let as many people as I could know about it. Reverend Dr Kevin Giles was in parish ministry for forty years. He has published widely on the biblical case for equality, church and ministry, and the Trinity. He is a contributor to *Discovering Biblical Equality*.



Prayer Diary

Can also be downloaded from melbourneanglican.org.au/spiritual-resources/

DECEMBER 21
Sun 19: The Church of the Province of Central Africa (Abp Alfred Chama, Primate); The Diocese of Gippsland (Bp Richard Treloar, Clergy & People); Police Force Chaplains (Drew Mellor, David Thompson & other Chaplains) and members of the Police Force; St Mark’s Templestowe (Ben Wong, Ivy Wong, Paul Hughes, Dietrich Cheung); St Philip’s Collingwood – Confirmation Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St Alban’s the Martyr – Pastoral Visit (Bp Kate Prowd).
Mon 20: The Diocese of Grafton (Bp Murray Harvey, Clergy & People); Trinity Grammar School (Adrian Farrer, Principal; Chris Leadbeatter, James Hale, Chaplains); St John’s Toorak (Peter French, Keiron Jones).
Tue 21: Ministry with the Aboriginal people of Australia (Bp Chris McLeod, National Aboriginal Bishop, Aboriginal Clergy & People); Anglican Historical Society (Wendy Dick, Chair); St John’s Upper Beaconsfield (Shannon Lee).
Wed 22: Ministry with the Torres Strait Islander people of Australia (Torres Strait Islander Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Geelong (Jill McCoy); Upper Yarra Parish (Luke Whiteside).
Thurs 23: The Diocese of Melbourne (Abp Philip Freier, Asst Bps Paul Barker, Bradley Billings, Genieve Blackwell, Kate Prowd, Clergy & People); Yarra Valley Grammar School (Mark Merry, Principal); Parish of Holy Trinity Upwey/Belgrave (Bruce Hallyburton).
Fri 24: The Diocese of Newcastle (Bp Peter Stuart, Asst Bps Charlie Murry, Sonia Roulston, Clergy & People); Anglican Media (Elspeth Kernebone, Editor); The Parish of the Holy Name of Jesus, Vermont South (Victor Fan); Christmas Eve – St Paul’s Cathedral (Abp Philip Freier)
Sat 25: The Diocese of North Queensland (Bp Keith Joseph, Clergy & People); Anglican Men’s Society; St Luke’s Vermont (Peter MacPherson, Mark Simon); Christmas Day Service – St Paul’s Cathedral (Abp Philip Freier); St John’s Bentleigh – Confirmation Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell).
Sun 26: Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America (Abp Julio Murray, Primate); The Diocese of North West Australia (Bp Gary Nelson, Clergy & People); St John the Baptist Wantirna South (Stephen Morris).
Mon 27: The Diocese of Perth (Abp Kay Goldsworthy, Asst Bps Jeremy James, Kate Wilmot, Clergy & People); Brighton Grammar School (Ross Featherston, Principal; Chester Lord, Chaplain); St Stephen’s Warrandyte (Mark Hanson).
Tue 28: The Diocese of Riverina (Bp Donald Kirk, Clergy & People); Anglicare Victoria (Paul McDonald, CEO); St

Thomas’ Werribee (Ken Bechaz, Nisher Kunoo).
Wed 29: The Diocese of Rockhampton (Bishop Peter Grice, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Kew (Greg Allinson); Anglican Parish of Westmeadows/Bulla (Joseph Emmanuel).
Thurs 30: The Diocese of Sydney (Abp Kanishka Raffel, Regional Bps Chris Edwards, Michael Stead, Peter Hayward, Peter Lin, Malcolm Richards, Gary Koo, Clergy & People); Beaconhills College (Tony Sheumack, Principal; Peggy Kruse, Chaplain); St Matthew’s Wheelers Hill (Jed Crispin).
Fri 31: The Diocese of Tasmania (Bp Richard Condie, Missioner Bp Chris Jones, Clergy & People); Anglican Overseas Aid (Bob Mitchell, CEO); Christ Church Whittlesea w St Peter’s Kinglake (Ruwan Palapathwala).
JANUARY 22
Sat 1: The Diocese of The Murray (Bp Keith Dalby, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of La Trobe (Gavin Ward); Holy Trinity Williamstown (Elizabeth Murray).
Sun 2: Province de L’Eglise Anglicane Du Congo (Abp Masimango Katanda, Primate); The Diocese of The Northern Territory (Bp Greg Anderson, Clergy & People); Camberwell Girls’ Grammar School (Debbie Dunwoody, Principal; Helen Creed, Chaplain); St Thomas’, Winchelsea w. Holy Trinity, Barrabool and St Paul’s, Deans Marsh (Wendy Gravalin); St Mary’s Camberwell South – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St James’ Dandenong – Pastoral Visit (Bp Paul Barker).
Mon 3: The Diocese of Wangaratta (Bp Clarence Bester, Clergy & People); Authorised Stipendiary Lay-Ministers; Yarraville Anglican Parish (David Fuller).
Tue 4: The Diocese of Willochra (Bp John Stead, Clergy & People); Benetas (Sandra Hills, CEO); St Andrew’s Aberfeldie (Michael Danaher).
Wed 5: Anglicare Australia (Bp Chris Jones, Chair; Kasy Chambers, Exec Director); St Silas and St Anselm Albert Park (Sophie Watkins).
Thurs 6: Theological Colleges, Church Schools & Church Kindergartens; Camberwell Grammar School (Paul Hicks, Principal; Charles Butler, Chaplain); St Eanswythe’s Altona w. St Clement’s Laverton (Chris Lancaster, Katie Bellhouse).
Fri 7: Mission Agencies of the Anglican Church of Australia; Anglican Criminal Justice Ministry Chaplaincy (Rob Ferguson, Senior Chaplain & Chaplains); All Saints’ Ascot Vale (Andrew Esnouf);
Sat 8: Religious Orders serving within the Anglican Church of Australia; Archdeaconry of Maroondah (Bruce

Bickerdike); St Matthew’s Ashburton (Kurian Peter).
Sun 9: Iglesia Anglicana de Chile (Abp Tito Zavala, Primate); Locums and all retired clergy; Caulfield Grammar School (Ashleigh Martin, Principal; Ryan Holt, Amanda Lyons and Kate Jacob, Chaplains); Holy Trinity, Bacchus Marsh w. Christ Church, Myrning and St George’s Balliang (Richard Litjens); St Mary’s Camberwell South – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell).
Mon 10: The Anglican Church of Australia (Primate Abp Geoffrey Smith, General Secretary Anne Hywood, the General Synod & the Standing Committee); Brotherhood of St Laurence (Conny Lenneberg, CEO, Michelle Trebilcock, Debra Saffrey-Collins, chaplains); Holy Trinity Balaclava & Elwood (Kathryn Watt).
Tue 11: The Diocese of Adelaide (Abp Geoff Smith, Asst Bps Denise Ferguson, Timothy Harris, Christopher McLeod; Clergy & People); Bush Church Aid Society (Greg Harris, National Director, Adrian Lane, Regional Officer); St Barnabas’ Balwyn (Randle Bond).
Wed 12: The Diocese of Armidale (Bp Rod Chiswell, Clergy & People); Chaplain to Anglican Centre staff (Vacant); Parish of Banyule (Denise Nicholls, Jonathan Lopez, Patrick Senn).
Thurs 13: The Diocese of Ballarat (Bp Garry Weatherill, Clergy & People); Christ Church Grammar School (Neil Andary, Principal; Emily Fraser, Chaplain); St Stephen’s Bayswater (Jacqui Smith).
Fri 14: The Diocese of Bathurst (Bp Mark Calder, Clergy & People); Melbourne Anglican Diocesan Corporation (Justin Lachal, GM); St Michael & All Angels’ Beaumaris (Wayne Walters).
Sat 15: The Diocese of Bendigo (Bp Matt Brain, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Melbourne (Heather Patacca); St Martin’s Belgrave Heights (Martin Oliver).
Sun 16: The Church of England; The Diocese of Brisbane (Abp Phillip Aspinall, Regional Bps Jeremy Greaves, Cameron Venables, John Roundhill, Clergy & People); Firkbank Grammar School (Jenny Williams, Principal; Christine Croft, chaplain); Bellarine Anglican Parish (David Willsher); St Thomas’ Moonee Ponds – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); Holy Trinity Hampton – Pastoral Visit (Bp Paul Barker).
Mon 17: The Diocese of Bunbury (Bp Ian Coutts, Clergy & People); Calling Melbourne2Prayer Group (Jill Firth, Rachel McDougall, Jamie Miller, Philip Trowse); Bellarine Gateway Bellarine (Elizabeth Breakey).
Tue 18: The Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn (Bp Mark Short, Asst Bps Stephen Pickard, Carol Wagner, Clergy &

People); Children’s & Families’ Ministry; St Stephen’s Belmont (Shirley Littras).
Wed 19: Ministry to the Defence Force (Bishop Grant Dibden, Chaplains & Members of the Defence Forces); Converge International (Jenny George, CEO, and Chaplains); St John’s Bentleigh (David Powys); St John’s Malvern – Pastoral Visit (Bp Brad Billings).
Thurs 20: The Diocese of Gippsland (Bp Richard Treloar, Clergy & People); Geelong Grammar School (Rebecca Cody, Principal; Gordon Lingard, Howard Parkinson, Chaplains); Christ Church Berwick Anglican Church (Wayne Schuller, Reece Kelly, Samuel Creek); St John’s Malvern – Pastoral Visit (Bp Brad Billings).
Fri 21: The Diocese of Grafton (Bp Murray Harvey, Clergy & People); Chinese Ministry (Richard Liu, Missioner); St Agnes’ Black Rock (Jennifer Furphy, Bruce Everett).
Sat 22: Ministry with the Aboriginal people of Australia (Bp Chris McLeod, National Aboriginal Bishop, Aboriginal Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Stonnington (Howard Langmead); St Alfred’s Blackburn North (Peter MacPherson, Nick Curtis, Mike McNamara, Mark Simon).
Sun 23: Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (Abp Andrew Chan, Primate); Ministry with the Torres Strait Islander people of Australia (Torres Strait Islander Clergy & People); Hume Anglican Grammar School (Bill Sweeney, Principal; Peter Waterhouse, Chaplain); St John’s Blackburn (Andrew Price, Mark Chew); St Thomas’ Moonee Ponds – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell).
Mon 24: The Diocese of Melbourne (Abp Philip Freier, Asst Bps Paul Barker, Bradley Billings, Genieve Blackwell, Kate Prowd, Clergy & People); Church Missionary Society (Jonathan Wei-Han Kuan, Victorian Director; Andrew Gifford, Andrew Livingstone); St Paul’s Boronia (Vaughn Spring).
Tue 25: The Diocese of Newcastle (Bp Peter Stuart, Asst Bps Charlie Murry, Sonia Roulston, Clergy & People); Community of the Holy Name (Sr Carol Tanner); St Peter’s Box Hill (Shane Hubner, Esther Zhang, Alasdair MacKinnon-Love).
Wed 26: The Diocese of North Queensland (Bp Keith Joseph, Clergy & People); St Andrew’s Brighton (Ian Morrison, Michelle Wang).
Thurs 27: The Diocese of North West Australia (Bp Gary Nelson, Clergy & People); Ivanhoe Girls’ Grammar School (Deborah Priest, Principal, Jenny Sonneman, Chaplain); St Peter’s Brighton Beach (Jonathan Chamberlain).
Fri 28: The Diocese of Perth (Abp Kay Goldsworthy, Asst Bps Jeremy James,

Kate Wilmot, Clergy & People); Cross-Cultural Ministry; Brimbank Parish (Dave Thompson, Agatha Wakyereza, June Robertson).
Sat 29: The Diocese of Riverina (Bp Donald Kirk, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of The Yarra (Tim Johnson); Broadmeadows/Dallas Parish (Valentina Emmanuel).
Sun 30: The Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean; The Diocese of Rockhampton (Bishop Peter Grice, Clergy & People); Ivanhoe Grammar School (Gerard Foley, Principal, John Sanderson, Chaplain); Christ Church Brunswick (Lindsay Urwin OGS, Russell Goulbourne, Jack Lindsay); St Thomas’ Moonee Ponds – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell).
Mon 31: The Diocese of Sydney (Abp Kanishka Raffel, Regional Bps Chris Edwards, Michael Stead, Peter Hayward, Peter Lin, Malcolm Richards, Gary Koo, Clergy & People); Deacons’ Ministry; St John Chrysostom Brunswick West (Steve Sonneman, Len Firth).
FEBRUARY 22
Tue 1: The Diocese of Tasmania (Bp Richard Condie, Missioner Bp Chris Jones, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Williamstown (Glenn Buijs); St Timothy’s Bulleen (Ben Wong, Ivy Wong, Dietrich Cheung); Korowa Anglican Girls’ School – Year 12 Leaders’ Induction Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell).
Wed 2: The Diocese of The Murray (Bp Keith Dalby, Clergy & People); Janet Clarke Hall; St Bartholomew’s Burnley (Matthew Healy).
Thurs 3: The Diocese of The Northern Territory (Bp Greg Anderson, Clergy & People); Diocesan Building Committee; Church of the Ascension Burwood East (Anthony Frost).
Fri 4: The Diocese of Wangaratta (Bp Clarence Bester, Clergy & People); Diocesan Finance; St Thomas’ Burwood (John Carrick, Michael Prabakaran, Joshua Millard).
Sat 5: The Diocese of Willochra (Bp John Stead, Clergy & People); St Dunstan’s Camberwell (Jobby John); Ordination of Priests – St Paul’s Cathedral (Abp Philip Freier).
Sun 6: The Church of Ireland; Anglicare Australia (Bp Chris Jones, Chair; Kasy Chambers, Exec Director); Korowa Anglican Girls’ School (Helen Carmody, Principal; Kirsten Winkett, Chaplain); St John’s Camberwell (John Baldock, Helen Creed); Confirmation Service – St John’s Highton – Pastoral Service (Abp Philip Freier); St Paul’s Caulfield North – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell).

An idle question that nags away at a music lover

by Barney Swartz

MEN WANT BETTER METHODS, but God wants better men. So goes the old saying and it surely expresses a profound truth, if we take men to mean “people”. In line with this principle, I recently wrote in the *Sunday Age* that we should judge our political leaders by their character even more than their policies. I observed that Paul told Timothy the requirements for church leaders, and these were not a bad model. Integrity is built across time and disappointment, but great humans possess it.

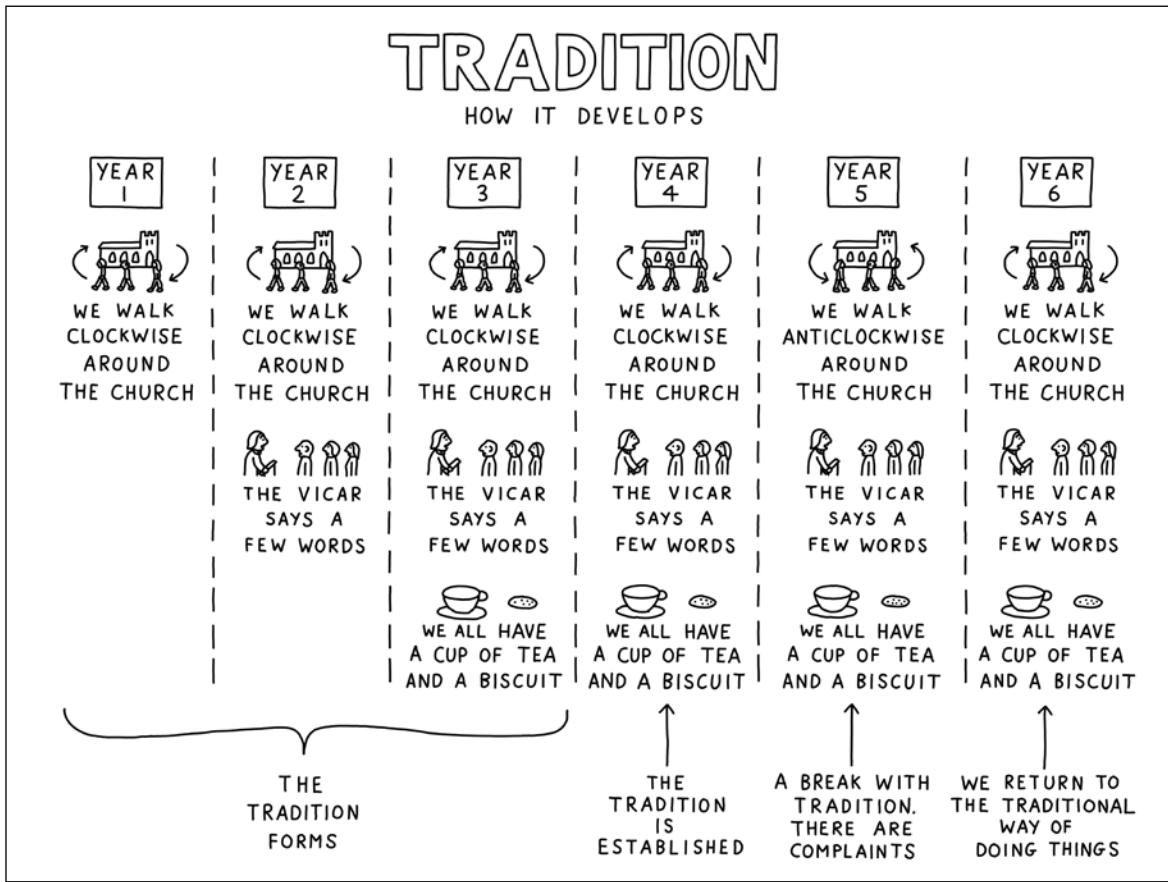
If this is clear to me in politics, in the arts it is much less so. For decades I have struggled with this question: should I take into account people’s character before admiring their work, or does the work stand independently on its own merits?

Mostly it is an irrelevant question because we don’t know the artist’s life in detail, or their frailties don’t emerge in the work. But sometimes we do know, and they do emerge.

This applies to painting, think Caravaggio or Picasso, sculpture, literature, all the arts, but I will discuss music as the arena I know best.

Most music lovers don’t know that the Renaissance composer Gesualdo murdered his wife and her noble lover after catching them in flagrante. Being an aristocrat himself, he got away unpunished. Nothing of that appears in his music.

The case is more mixed with the Russian composer Scriabin. A mystic, he believed the first performance of his masterwork, would end the world as we know it. Perhaps fortunately, he never finished it. He was also a serial



Dave Walker, cartoonchurch.com

predator of young women and girls, and a vain man who died of blood poisoning when a sore under his luxuriant moustache became infected.

A critic described Scriabin as “simmering in a warm nurturing bath of his megalomania”. Something of this apparent in some of his music, but I cannot deny his fascinating originality.

The classical locus for this debate is, of course, Richard Wagner, the 19th century German titan who so inspired Hitler. Wagner cannot be blamed for this, as he died 50 years before Hitler came to power, but his appropriation by the Nazis as the prime exemplar of Aryan art has tainted his memory.

Self-obsessed to the point of narcissism, and viciously anti-Semitic, Wagner was disloyal, ungrateful, a ruthless exploiter, a philanderer, polemical, pugnacious, a habitual liar and financially dishonest. He was also a sybarite who liked silk and satin underwear and luxuries paid for by others.

At one point he wrote: “I hold the Jewish race to be the born enemy of pure humanity and everything noble in it”.

Despite this, it is undeniable that Wagner was one of the most far-sighted, ambitious and original geniuses the west has seen, on a level with Shakespeare.

It is debated to what extent his contempt for Jews appears in his

operas – was Alberich in *The Ring* or the unpleasant Beckmesser in *The Mastersinger of Nuremberg* a Jewish stereotype? But it is obvious in the last act of that opera in Hans Sachs’ paean of praise to holy German Art. Also problematic is Wagner’s concern for salvation, which usually comes at the hands of a woman rather than religion.

Of course, the obverse is even more important: how often the great composers have glorified God, almost uniting heaven and earth in admiration.

Think of Handel’s *Messiah*, or Bach’s *Mass in B minor*. Composers from Vivaldi, a priest, to Stravinsky, a devout Orthodox Christian, have been motivated by love of God. Bach wrote “SDG”



Barney Swartz
is media adviser to
Archbishop Philip Freier and
a Senior Fellow of the Centre
for Public Christianity.

on every manuscript, meaning *solus Deo Gloria*, or Glory to God alone.

Most people may find my dilemma an idle and irrelevant question – how could they enjoy many actors or modern music stars if they shared my qualms? I accept that, but that it nags at me sometimes. Would Paul consider Wagner’s operas edifying? I never ask that question of Mozart, even though *Così fan tutte*, with its swapped lovers, is not particularly moral.

I believe it is to do with the way Wagner’s personality enters his music. Magnificent? Absolutely. Sheer genius? Undoubtedly. Often rousing bombastic, but also tender and lovely? Quite true. And yet...

My conclusion (for now) was expressed best in a music Internet forum I inhabit:

Here is one of the endless paradoxes in life: Wagner, one of the glories of Western culture and one of the base anti-Semites glorified by the world’s worst despot. Ah, the mysteries of human existence. So we do what we must – live with it.

Heightened sense of God’s presence through pain

by Clare Boyd-Macrae

MY LIFE advice for anyone is simple, regardless of whether they are a person of faith or not. If you surround yourself with good people, you’ll get through the mixed bag life dishes up. Looking back on 2021, however, two other things stand out as this year’s lessons for me.

To tackle the less positive one first, I have accepted that I am always weary. That that’s the way it is at the moment, maybe for the rest of my life as I age, and that that’s okay.

Everyone I know is struggling with tiredness. If you look at the context of the last two years, it’s not surprising. It’s COVID-19, it’s unemployment for some and overemployment for others, too many hours spent videoconferencing, and not having had a proper holiday in many months. It’s not having the shot in the arm that time with loved ones or a



change of scene brings. It’s also the profound grief and despair provoked by the climate crisis, and the seeming determination of our leaders not to take it seriously. I doubt I’m alone in feeling embarrassed to be Australian when I think of our record on both the environment and on refugees.

This year I have learnt something about the wisdom of accepting my context and my age. I’ve learnt something about the relief of understanding that I can do so much, but I can’t fix everything and it would be hubris to try.

The second thing that has

been the basis for everything this year has been my heightened awareness that our God – the God of the Incarnation – is with us in it all.

The last six years have been difficult for my immediate family, with more than our fair share of divorce, disease, death and a dozen other traumas that are not my story to tell. In the middle of piercing loss and anxiety, there has also been an overwhelming awareness of the love and prayers of others and a powerful conviction that God is beside us in every human experience if we let God in.

When my husband was

diagnosed with incurable cancer six years ago, I mentioned to my then spiritual director that, I was astonished by the richness and immediacy of my experience of God’s everlasting arms in my intense grief. “But,” I said, “of course I ain’t seen nothing yet. He hasn’t really been ill yet, he hasn’t had all the brutal treatment.” “And what makes you think that God won’t be in those experiences just as much, waiting to meet you there?” she countered.

She was right. Connecting deliberately and deeply with the big love that is God doesn’t shelter a person from any of life’s slings and arrows and the pain that goes with them. None. But in my experience, they come hand in hand with a heightened sense of God’s presence in every joy, every heartbreak and all the mundane moments in between.

Clare Boyd-Macrae’s blog is at
clareboyd-macrae.com



Spirit Words

“My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”

Luke 2:30-32

Disbelief persists as the impossible is realised

by Wendy Knowlton

THE CLASH BETWEEN PESSIMISM and belief generates the main tension in *The Rescue*.

Almost no one involved in the operation to save the 12 members of the Thai soccer team and their coach believed anyone would emerge alive from the deep, flooded cave system in which they were trapped. British divers had located the group after days of dangerous searching, but initial euphoria was quickly overwhelmed by waves of hopelessness. The deaths of some or even all, seemed inevitable.

The fact that one of the Thai Navy Seals involved in the attempt did die, is a sobering reminder that these fears were justified.

We all know the end of this story, but that doesn't matter. The tale is still riveting because the impossible happened.

As the "how" is revealed, a feeling of disbelief persists. So much had to go right. And, at every point,



The rescue is a riveting tale of tragedy turned to triumph.

Picture: National Geographic Documentary Films

when most had mentally given up, someone had to believe. At different times, different people did believe, transforming tragedy into triumph.

Central to this documentary

is the group of recreational cave divers who did what the trained Navy Seals could not.

Watching the film is an engrossing, and chillingly claustrophobic,

experience. Real footage is interspersed with re-enactments carried out by those involved. The murky waters, narrow passages and eerie isolation are captured in a way that makes the audience question why anyone would cave dive as a hobby.

The volunteer divers themselves were drawn from all over the world. These quiet, largely middle-aged, unassuming men came into their own here, doing what no one else could.

Quite apart from the physical demands of the rescue, the divers faced the very real possibility of public outrage and legal actions if they failed. Screens were set up in anticipation of disaster and body bags were waiting. An exit plan was devised to get the volunteers out of a country that could have blamed them for a risky and untried strategy. It was a strategy that saw each boy given an anaesthetic that could have killed them, before they were brought out individually. Their masks could have flooded and caused them to drown, they

could have woken and panicked, or the monsoonal rains could have defeated the work of the pumps, washing everyone away into the darkness.

As their coach kept the boys calm through meditation, a nation prayed.

The size of the operation required to answer those prayers was enormous.

It was only through cooperation and belief in the tentative hopes of all involved that waiting ambulances could finally rush the rescued boys to hospital, just as the tunnels were completely submerged by waters that did not recede for eight months.

The Rescue is an amazing story of resilience and persistence. It depicts a spirit of international teamwork and personal faith that made a miracle possible.

The Rescue is showing at Cameo Cinemas Belgrave, Cinema Nova Carlton, and Classic Cinemas Elsternwick.

Growing up takes a lifetime in twist on coming of age saga

by Tim Kroenert

IN AN interview with *Variety*, Joachim Trier describes his latest film as "a coming of age tale for grown-ups who wish they had already done so".

"While the classic coming of age novel would follow someone in their late teens," he says, "This is about someone who turns 30, making life choices as she struggles with relationships and with herself."

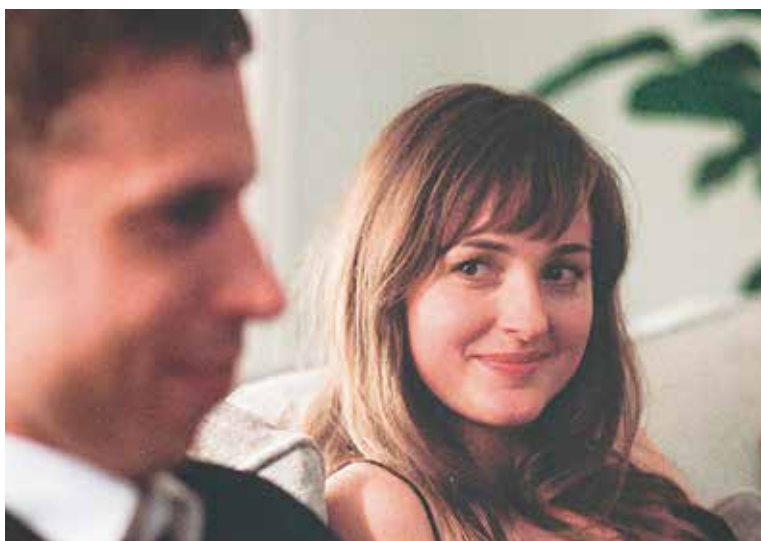
This might seem to imply the central character in *The Worst Person in the World* is childish, but she is far from it.

The film introduces us to Julie (Renate Reinsve), a young woman in Oslo in her late 20s who is struggling to find her place, in society, in her work, her family and relationships. In a prologue we see the exceptional student Julie ducking from one academic focus

to another – first medicine, then psychology, then photography – as her interests and passions evolve. With each switch, she changes romantic partners.

We are meant to see her as flaky. But we also see a woman who knows that her choices are her own, and intends to exercise control of her destiny. As the film progresses, we see her grapple with social pressure towards motherhood. We see her own her creative and sexual appetites. She eschews toxic relationships, and pursues those that nourish her. Not all her decisions prove to be sound, but she makes them with full respect to her own autonomy.

Trier's film is abstracted in a way that defies sentimentality. Julie's story is divided into 12 chapters, a prologue and an epilogue. Each segment has a distinct focus, while propelling and thematically informing the others. In one



We are meant to see the protagonist Julie as flaky, but we also see a woman who knows her choices are her own.

Picture: justwatch.com

ostensibly emotional sequence, a coolheaded voiceover drowns out the charged dialogue. Another sequence is hopelessly, magically romantic, as Julie has a rendezvous

with a would-be lover in a world that has frozen still for her benefit.

When the film is overtly emotional, the emotion is deeply complicated. Julie crashes a wed-

ding, where she immediately bonds with a male guest, Eivind (Hans Olav Brenner). Both are partnered, and they spend the night testing the boundaries of what constitutes "cheating". Thus they achieve incredible levels of intimacy without crossing into outright sexuality. The sequence feels authentically human, with all the fallibility this term implies.

The title is, in part, ironic. In that same *Variety* profile Joachim jokes the film is his *Eat Pray Love* – an existential tale about personal growth and self-acceptance. For all the hardships Julie encounters and the sometimes poor choices she makes, she emerges from these experiences with a better defined sense of self, and self-worth. The film's ending is not, of course, "the end". Julie's story is a reminder that "growing up" is a lifelong process.

In cinemas 26 December.

Tale of dancer drawn into dangerous world forms a masterpiece, completing unofficial trio

by Tim Kroenert

ZOLA, THE new film by writer-director Janicza Bravo, feels like a spiritual sequel to Harmony Korine's controversial 2012 film *Spring Breakers*. At release, Korine's story of young women hard-partying on the precipice of adulthood, then trailing their excesses into violent criminality, was maligned by some as exploitative trash dressed as art.

It's since undergone a fair amount of critical reappraisal. There is a pointed foreboding to its images of young, near-naked bodies gyrating in slow motion on a Florida beach. For one character this is a literal religious moment in her life – she narrates these images with incongruous reverence. The film explores a confluence of willing sexual objectification, hedonistic excess and violence in a way



Zola is uncomfortably relevant.

Picture: imdb.com.

seems uncomfortably relevant to an era immersed in commodified bodies, and identities carefully curated via digital media.

Zola revisits these themes and updates them for a time where platforms like Twitter and Instagram have become near indistinguishable from our broader social fabric. It is in fact based on a viral Twitter thread, whose author, A'Ziah "Zola" King, is credited as an executive producer.

The character based on Zola, Taylour Paige, is a professional dancer, who is drawn into a series of seedy and dangerous events by a new friend, Stefani (Riley Keough). Though she is accustomed to using her body as a source of income, her bodily and personal autonomy are tested by the manipulations of Stefani, Stefani's "roommate" Johnathan (Nasir Rahim), and

various other shady characters they encounter.

The film seems in direct dialogue with Korine's, stylistically as well as thematically. Reminiscent of those *Spring Breakers* beach scenes, the camera lingers with surreal dread equally on the women styling their hair with excruciating precision, as it does on limbs curled around dancing poles under the gaze of male patrons.

This is the body as sexual product, and these bodies pose regularly for phone-cam posterity. The social media-ness of it all is inescapable, with notification-alert tones bleeping in and out of Mica Levi's score. The descent into more explicit forms of sexual, psychological and physical exploitation and violence feels both relentless and, given the power inequities present within the group, inevitable.

But this is not to say the film is judgmental. Not even cautionary, at least not in any glib way. There is a playfulness to the performances and direction that provides plenty of humour. It also has an authenticity that dignifies the characters' humanity.

Perhaps Sean Baker's 2015 film *Tangerine*, which recounts a raucous night in the life of a Los Angeles prostitute, sits with the pair in unofficial trilogy. Like *Zola*, it centres the experiences of sex workers with a rare guilelessness.

Taken alone, *Zola* is an intriguing and entertaining piece of pop art. Read in the context of these other two films, it may be a masterpiece.

Zola is in cinemas now, screening at Cinema Nova. *Zola* is rated MA15+