



# THE ADVOCATE

Our Diocesan Vision is to walk in the way of Christ.

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WINTER 2023

*But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.*

proverbs 4:18



## 41st Synod sparks transformation, paving a promising path for the Diocese of Wangaratta

BY CALEB FRANCIS

Representatives from parishes across the Diocese convened at the Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre on Friday, June 2, and Saturday, June 3, for the inaugural session of the 41st Synod of the Diocese of Wangaratta.

Throughout the event, representatives engaged in substantive discussions and strategised for the future of the church and its community.

Following a warm welcome and light lunch, the Synod officially commenced at noon with prayers

from Rev'd Canon Scott Jessup. This spiritual atmosphere guided the assembly's deliberations over the next two days.

On the first day, Bishop Clarence delivered a potent charge to the Synod. Most notably, reflecting on the church's evolution from its early centuries, he emphasised how theological debates and structural developments have come to largely define its operation. However, he expressed concern that these facets might inadvertently eclipse the core essence of God's calling - to love and share love.

Bishop Clarence asserted

that administrative matters, while necessary, should serve God's mission. He said God's transformational power and the good news of the Gospel should be visibly at work, effecting change both within and outside the church. He also added that we must embody the change that we aspire to see within our world, society, and church.

The Bishop's charge inspired a forward-looking vision of a Diocese radiating warmth, love, and inclusivity - a haven where all are welcomed and valued.

During Synod, the Very Revd

Sharon Nell, who is currently spending her sabbatical in our Diocese, was warmly welcomed and given the opportunity to extend greetings from the Diocese of Port Elizabeth in South Africa.

Throughout the gathering, presentations were given by key figures of the Diocese.

Diocesan Treasurer Norm Kenny, Auditor Brad Bohun, and Financial Adviser David Ritchie presented various financial matters.

The Registrar Julie Torpey presented the report from the Council of the Diocese, while Rev'd

Canon Glenn Loughrey provided insights into the Referendum on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament. Archbishop Phillip Freier shed light on the Lambeth Calls - a series of declarations, affirmations, and appeals to the church on ten crucial issues, which were discussed at last year's Lambeth Conference.

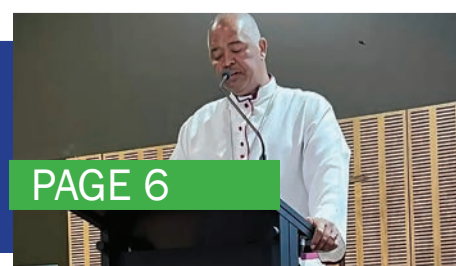
The Synod was briefed on the latest developments from Kooyoora, the organisation working with the Diocese to maintain and improve professional standards checks and protocols.

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# 41st Synod sparks transformation, paving a promising path for the Diocese of Wangaratta - *continued from page 1*

Principals of Anglican Schools in the Diocese reported on their respective institutions' curriculum, inclusivity, service learning, and identity.

Professor Dr Jane Freemantle presented the Diocese's Ministry Action Plan, which was introduced at the 40th Synod. Despite a busy year filled with local, diocesan, national, and international activities, she highlighted the significant progress made towards its goals. She also acknowledged areas requiring further focus, emphasising the need for continued efforts and collaboration.

During the Synod two motions were passed unanimously. These included the proposal from the Advocate of the Diocese Rachel Ellyard to review the Professional Standards Act and that heartfelt congratulations be extended to the Diocese of the Murray for its historic vote allowing women's ordination to the priesthood.

Rev'd Matthew Healy's motion, welcoming the Referendum to change the constitution to recognise Australia's First Peoples, also passed, marking a significant step towards reconciliation.

This Synod was an election Synod, enabling the nomination and election of members for several key committees. These included the Council of the Diocese, Board of Electors, Board of Nominators, Diocesan Tribunal, General Synod, and Cathedral Canons, all of

which play a pivotal role in the administration and guidance of the Diocese.

The assembly took a moment to commemorate the lives of Kate Jessup and Margaret Batt through heartfelt obituaries, acknowledging their unwavering service to the Diocese.

At the Synod Eucharist, where Archbishop Phillip Freier delivered the sermon, Cobram Anglican Grammar Year 12 student Isaac Brown was recognised with the Matthew McInnes Award for excellence in youth ministry and the inaugural Bishop's Award was presented to Professor Dr Jane Freemantle for her enduring

commitment to the Diocese.

The first session of the 41st Synod demonstrated a steadfast commitment to transformation and service, laying fertile ground for an optimistic future for the Diocese of Wangaratta.

**PHOTO BELOW:** Dean Sharon Nell delivering her greetings **PHOTOS RIGHT:** *Top to bottom;* Members of Synod during session; The Principals of the Anglican Schools with Archbishop Phillip and Bishop Clarence; The Choir from Holy Trinity Cathedral with Archbishop Phillip and Bishop Clarence.



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**Photo on front page: Whorouly Landscape. Photo taken by Cannon Scott Jessup**

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# New priest the heart of uniqueness in Kilmore

On Saturday the 27th of May, the Reverend David Kerr was inducted as Priest in Charge of the Parish of Kilmore. This is Revd David's first parish, or 'solo adventure', after training in the parishes of Shepparton and Alpine since first coming to the Diocese in 2020. The liturgical colour for the induction service was red in view of Pentecost and the mood was equally warm and full of energy. Clergy and parishioners from all over the Diocese gathered at Christ Church Kilmore, along with a few supportive friends from Revd David's time in Melbourne. Bishop Clarence preached on the theme of finding ways to 'make church great again', while the former incumbent, Revd Andre Du Plooy, spoke about the joys of 'uniqueness'. Revd David quite agrees that the Church needs to embrace its uniqueness and considers himself a decent fit for the task. His background is quite varied, encompassing painting, performing, gaming, screenwriting, and even working for a time on the airside of Melbourne Airport. Revd David is looking forward to the variety and diversity of the towns of Kilmore,

Broadford, Pyalong and Tallarook - their charming purity of rural character, in spite of their proximity to the urban heart of the state. He describes the enormity of one's first parish as 'a little daunting but mostly exciting' and he is grateful for the huge outpouring of support from those involved with his formation over the years. And of course, what would an induction be without a sumptuous feast afterward; parishioners truly outdid themselves with the

hospitality they provided. Revd David will have to get busy in the kitchen as well as at the altar if he's to hold to that standard! His first two Masses, on the Day of Pentecost, were very warmly received, and his preaching characteristically challenging; he's not going to go easy on parishioners just because he's new!

**PHOTOS BELOW; Top; Revd David Kerr. Bottom; Clergy and Parishioners at the induction.**



## Clergy conference a blooming success

BY REVD DAVID KERR

Let your ministry bloom. This was arguably the overarching topic at the heart of a recent clergy development conference. About 25 clergy from around the Diocese gathered at Bright for fellowship, worship and learning from two of the state's most learned bishops. Bishop Paul Barker looked at a post-pandemic Church through the lens of scripture, applying the words of the prophets and a 'robust doctrine of the Fall' to how we look after each other in a disillusioned and fractured new post-covid reality. Bishop Andrew Curnow reflected on some

of the practical aspects of rural ministry, drawn from his time as Bishop of Bendigo. He emphasised the need for ministers to walk with folk outside the church walls, finding local need and raising up locals for ministry, even when the person in question may not even be aware of a vocation. One could say clergy got all three legs of Hooker's stool of Anglicanism: scripture, reason and, for tradition, regular, distinct and intentional times of breaking bread together, both in worship and times of conviviality. It was amazing to see just how such diversity of opinion, theology and practice, done intentionally,

can yield such ripe food for thought. The Diocese of Wangaratta remains a place of great variety and it is the task of its clergy to embrace and nurture that variety in the spirit of raising up new possibilities to awaken God's purposes in each of the towns in our care. Thanks also must go to the team behind the scenes at Bright Chalet for their outstanding hospitality once again. They make retreats of this nature a high point, albeit a more laid back one, in all of the clergy's otherwise packed schedules.



**PHOTO ABOVE: Revd Mario Hendricks, Revd Gunnar Rippon, Revd Emily Payne, Revd Moira Evers and Revd Jacques Jefferies**



**PHOTO ABOVE: Revd Maryann Leonard, Venerable Neil Hicks, Revd Victor Adams, Revd Andre Du Plooy and Revd Cathy Carden**

## Clergy Movements as of June 2023

**VACANT POSITIONS**  
NIL

**APPOINTMENTS**  
Reverend David Kerr - Priest-In-Charge, Parish of Kilmore.

**PERMISSION TO OFFICIATE**  
Revd Robert Davidson - effective as of 5th June 2023  
Revd Bill Squire - effective as of 26th June 2023  
Revd Gunnar Rippon - effective as of 26th June 2023

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## Parish Partnerships Anglicare Victoria

BY REVD DAVID STILL

### Anglicare Victoria – Diocese of Wangaratta Winter Appeal.

As we are now in the colder, wetter, and darker months of the year, it is a good opportunity to stop and think about those who are facing all sorts of challenges around homelessness, those who struggle with being able to meet their food needs or are struggling with increased costs in what is becoming a very difficult time, especially for those who are at the lower end of the economic spectrum.

As we have done for many years throughout the Diocese of Wangaratta, again this year we are holding our Winter Appeal to encourage the people of the Diocese to think and pray about ways in which we can make a difference. This could be a Soup Sunday after Church to raise funds for a local food bank or food share program within your parish. Funds can be contributed to the Diocese to be shared around where there is a need if not able to be used locally. Alternatively, you may wish to collect food for one of the Emergency Food Relief programs that are in the Diocese, Loaves and Fishes – Christians Caring in Wangaratta, Euroa FoodShare in the Parochial District of Euroa or St Mark's Food Bank in the Parish of Northern Albury. These three programs fall under Anglicare Victoria, and there are other parishes running their own programs, especially at St Matthew's Albury and in the Parish of Kilmore.

As we make our way through these Winter months, please keep in mind and in your prayers, those for whom life can be and is a struggle, either through the lack of housing or facing the challenges of rising costs and let us work to make a difference as God's people.



## MU Lady Day & Prevention of Family Violence workshop

BY REVD RICHARD PENNINGTON

There are some things that we should be able to take for granted, and safety in our homes, communities and churches, is certainly one of them. Violence in our communities is unacceptable, whether that violence occurs in the street, in our home, in our workplaces or in our churches and regardless of who perpetrates the violence.

Abuse of power is at the heart of many relationship problems in the community. Abuse of power is one person's misuse of power over another. This can occur as a one-off event or as a pattern of behavior. Sadly, research has found that women are far more often the victims of abuse. Abuse is not just physical but can also include emotional abuse, threatening, coercive or controlling behavior, physical or sexual abuse and spiritual abuse. The Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Study 2016 found that:

- 1 in 2 women and 1 in 4 men had experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime.
- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men had experienced emotional abuse by a partner since the age of 15.
- 17% of women and 6% of men had experienced violence including physical and / or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15.
- 2 in 5 people aged 18 years and over had experienced violence including physical and / or sexual violence since the age of 15.

There is no doubt that these are dramatic and very concerning figures and point to a problem in our society that is sometimes hidden from view.

On the 25th of March this year approximately 50 Lay representatives and Clergy members of all parishes and parochial districts celebrated

the annual Mothers' Union 'Lady Day' Eucharist at the Holy Trinity Cathedral and then took part in a Prevention of Family Violence Workshop in Purbrick Hall led by The Reverend Tracy Lauersen.

The reason that Mothers Union was celebrating 'Lady Day' was because in 1897 the 25th of March was formally adopted by the Mothers' Union as the yearly day of prayer, intercession and thanksgiving. It is known throughout the world as 'Lady Day' where members of MU gather in small groups in village churches, in parishes, and in Cathedrals from England, through Africa, in islands such as Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu and New Zealand and of course in Australia. The service is a Eucharistic service of thanksgiving and in many cases at the end of the services members of the MU are recognised for their voluntary service to communities through their work with MU. Certificates of Recognition and membership bars to the MU membership badges were awarded with Wangaratta Diocesan members this year celebrating from 60 years of active service through 50, 45, 25 and 20 years of continual service. In adding up the years of membership from the 12 members recognised this year the total years service given to the communities in the Wangaratta Diocese by these members of MU was 475 years of active voluntary service.

Following the eucharist all gathered for the "Prevention of Family Violence workshop" led by the Reverend Tracy Lauersen. Rev. Lauersen is not only an advocate for gender equity in the Church and chairs a National Working Group on Family Violence for the Anglican Church of Australia, she was also appointed as Rector of St Paul's Warragul (Gippsland Diocese) in 2018.

The workshop took the form of information sessions followed by break out groups

to discuss questions like "what is violence against women?" "What is family violence?" "What is intimate partner violence?" "What can we do if we think someone is affected or experiencing domestic or family violence?" "How do you prevent family violence?"

We discussed gender inequality within our society. Discussions also centred on the response by the Anglican Church of Australia and their initiative to address the terrible injustice of domestic and family violence and the necessity of tailoring a caring and compassionate response towards those affected. To that end a document entitled "Ten Commitments for Australian Anglicans" has been developed and is a tool to help resource and empower our Anglican provinces, dioceses and parishes, to bring about change, and to continually improve the churches preventative work. The "Ten Commitments" provide a foundation to guide the work of making the church a place where women, men and children are safe, where violence is prevented, where the wounded are healed and justice prevails, a place where God's grace can flow into the lives of all.

This workshop was eye opening and informative and showed that the Anglican Church is taking a proactive role in response to what is a horrific and sadly, a somewhat prolific problem in today's society.

For further information please contact the Families and Culture Commission via the General Synod Office – 02 8267 2701 or [fcc@anglican.org.au](mailto:fcc@anglican.org.au).

Closer to home for help and support and further information contact the orange door network Ovens Murray 1800 271 157 or refer [orangedoor.vic.gov.au](http://orangedoor.vic.gov.au).

## Diocese of Wangaratta Winter Appeal



### 2023 Emergency Relief Winter Appeal

Over the three months of Winter, we will be asking members of the Anglican Community to donate food, blankets, or money to assist the Emergency Relief programs throughout the Diocese.

Raise funds to support the work of one of the Emergency Relief Programs within the Diocese

- **Loaves and Fishes**

Christians Caring in Wangaratta, Euroa FoodShare, St Mark's North Albury Food Bank.

- **Soup Sunday**

Have a bring a share soup meal after church as part of fund-raising activities. This can be another way of raising funds.

- Donations may also be made at the Wangaratta Anglicare Office 39 Ovens Street, Wangaratta. For further information please contact David Still, Community Development Coordinator David Still [david.still@anglicarevic.org.au](mailto:david.still@anglicarevic.org.au) phone 03 5723 7900

# Induction of Reverend Elwyn Enos

BY CAROL HENDERSON

On Friday 31st March at 6pm Bishop Clarence Bester, assisted by Archdeacon Neil Hicks and Revd Jerome Francis inducted Revd Elwyn Enos into the Parish of Yarrowonga as Priest in Charge. The service was attended by Clergy from throughout the Wangaratta Diocese and Mulwala, local church representatives and many parishioners. Revd Elwyn and his wife Riya have come to live with us in Yarrowonga from Mumbai in India. The service was followed by supper in the hall and a welcome cake.

Revd Elwyn started work in the Catering Industry following his schooling, then moved into Sales and Marketing and Business. He started Theological training in 2011 and was ordained as a Priest in 2015. He has a Masters in Arts and Theology and is currently continuing a PhD in Christian Studies. He is a cricket lover and plays the organ and guitar.

Revd Elwyn and Riya are being assisted by parishioners in adjusting to a new culture and small town.



# De-consecration of Bethanga

BY REVD JACQUES JEFFRIES

On Saturday, 1st April 2023, the service of Thanksgiving and De-consecration with Bishop Clarence presiding, and thirty-eight people in attendance. It was a very emotional final closure of the church which had served the community of Bethanga since before 1887. Many of those in the pews on the day related their connection with the Bethanga Church since their early childhood. Some were Christened at the church, and one gentleman talked about his days in Sunday School going back before the Church Building was re-located from up the hill on Beardmore Street, where the old rectory now beautifully renovated still stands, down to 2 Armstrong Street. It is sad when a church must close, but it is a reality that we face in this day. We give

thanks for all those who over the years has ministered and worshipped at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Bethanga. We are grateful for and give thanks to God for the faithful who laboured and kept the church going all these years.

The disposal and sale of the contents went ahead as advertised on Saturday 15th April 2023, when many interested buyers from the local community and as far as Melbourne turned up to clear all items for sale. The altar was donated to Cobram Anglican Grammar School for use in their chapel, while the Honour Roll has now found a new place for display in the Bethanga Soldiers Memorial Hall. Elders Real Estate Wodonga is the agent appointed for when the property goes under the hammer on Saturday 10th June 2023.



# Farewell Revd André & Patty DuPlooy

BY CAROLINE BURGE

On Sunday April 16th, Revd André and Patty DuPlooy were farewelled from the Parish of Kilmore, Broadford, Pyalong and Tallarook after just over five years of a wonderful ministry in the parish.

Revd André came to the Parish following time as the Assistant Priest in the Parish of Shepparton and, in the years following, his new parish embraced his ministry; learnt of his time in South Africa; supported his studies to complete his Masters degree;

participated in Study Groups; were involved with him in the work of Love in Action; Ecumenical occasions; the local Community Garden, and so much more.

On the evening prior to their farewell service, Revd André and Patty were farewelled by Fr Prakash and members of the local St Patrick's Roman Catholic Parish. How wonderful to see our ecumenical community in the town farewell "our" priest.

Their farewell at Christ Church saw parishioners from all four

centres of the Parish, join together to give thanks for the Ministry of André with his wonderful wife Patty. Farewell speeches were given from Warden - Caroline Burge on behalf of the whole parish; Barbara Radford on behalf of the work and support of André with Love in Action; Joan Grimwade as President of St Matthew's Village; John Patterson from Broadford; Norman Rose and Shirley Evans from Kilmore. Without a doubt, here was a priest who had been well loved in his time in the parish.

With blessings to the Co-operating Districts of Euroa, Longwood, Violet Town, Murchison and Rushworth as André and Patty start their new ministry there.



# To be a Pilgrim

BY REVD MATTHEW HEALY

In Lent 2023 the parishioners of the Parochial District of Beechworth and The Parochial District of Yackandandah used a study on 'The Beatitudes' from the teaching series called 'The Pilgrim Course.' It has been well received by the participants, with many positive comments on how much they have enjoyed learning, praying, and sharing together their experience in the journey of faith. Both Parochial Districts are now into their second group discussion using the study guide on 'The Lord's Prayer.'

The Pilgrim Course is a teaching and discipleship resource developed by the

Church of England in 2013 and it is loosely modelled on the teaching component of the Catechumenate. It aims to help every local church create a place where people can explore the Christian faith together and see how it can be lived out each day. Its methodology is not to approach the great issues of faith through persuasion, but through participation in a pattern of contemplation and discussion with a group of fellow travellers.

Pilgrim is comprised of two stages: the Follow stage for those very new to faith, and the Grow stage for those who want to go further. Each stage contains four short six-session courses which focus on a major theme of Christian life.



It is worth considering as a teaching and faith development tool for parish study groups and for those who are becoming a Christian or renewing their links with Christianity. The QR code will link you to the website or via [www.pilgrimcourse.org](http://www.pilgrimcourse.org). It would appear that the best way of obtaining the study books is online directly from the publishers, Church House Publishing ([www.chpublishing.co.uk](http://www.chpublishing.co.uk)).



# SYNOD 2023

## First session of the Forty First Synod



### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Right Rev'd Clarence E Bester

**Theme: The God of Transformation**

#### A Year in Review

Since the third session of the Fortieth Synod we have engaged in a Ministry Action Plan that has produced much fruit as expressed in our Diocesan Vision and Mission Statement: 'To WALK with Christ and to WALK with one another.' Unquestionably there have been challenges - the year has been extremely busy with various local, diocesan, national and international activities. As a Diocese, in relation to the goals that we have set for ourselves, we have been extremely blessed with what we have achieved together. Undoubtedly there are areas we still need to work on which I hope to address through this Synod Charge. I do invite you to carefully read the report on our Ministry Action Plan and to give thanks to God for our faithfulness in small matters which has shaped our collaborative ministry as the people of God.

How beautiful to have had the opportunity to visit almost every Parish and Church as we continue to slowly emerge out of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as to attend to many pastoral commitments, training opportunities and the celebration of our lives together. The ongoing intentional conversations with our Parish Leadership Teams have once again re-affirmed our effective communication methods, indicative of our collaborative style of ministry. Our Diocesan Facebook Page

contains many pictures of events relating to the Bishop's Ministry and interaction throughout the Diocese and beyond, which is another way in which we journey together, even though not physically together.

Bishop's Lodge has also become a place of gathering for the Diocese and for some Community events and it is wonderful to see the strengthening of relationships through this. The photographic journey throughout the Diocese and the generosity of welcome to Bishop's Lodge is made possible through the hospitality and generous 'all invited, all welcome' concept graciously offered by Michelle Bester.

#### The God of Transformation

Over the past three years I have developed concepts from my own ministry experience, spiritual and theological reflection and understanding of who God is to me and how God ministers through us as we minister to one another. I have spoken about the God of Surprises, the God of Possibilities and the God of Hope to get us into a frame of mind that, inasmuch as we have a part in all of this, it is all about God.

The ministry that we exercise is not our ministry, but a ministry to which we believe God has called us all. The Church context within which we minister is not our Church, but it is the Church of Jesus Christ. The ongoing mission of the Church, though we are part of that, remains God's mission in God's world to God's

people. The Fifteenth Lambeth Conference theme, entitled 'God's Church for God's World', confirms that it is all about God. We are the Church; we are the World; but we are God's Church in God's World.

When one considers the development of ministry as well as the theological understanding and expression of the Church over many years, we can begin to understand a God who brings about Transformation through the ministry of God's people, especially as we seek to understand the bible in its context and also in our context. Mission and Ministry is at the heart of the gospel as Jesus called, trained and equipped his disciples for ministry and service in and to the world. The pattern of ministry for Jesus is described best in the concept which I hold on to, where we are called to be Visible, Available and Present. In the biblical missionary period we see the concept of disciple-making as a core initiative: it is the ministry of Jesus being present with people that makes all the difference. Undoubtedly there have been moments for Strategic Initiatives or, as I would prefer, Ministry Action Plans, to ensure we remain true to the gospel directive, but making disciples is more than just leading people to Jesus. It is about seeing, understanding and loving the whole and accepting others as those who are uniquely created in the image and likeness of God.

The development of the Church in the early centuries, along with subsequent theological debates, has created an understanding of a church that deals mostly with structural and operational matters. It is difficult to deny that the very essence of who God is, and how God calls us to love and share that love, sometimes seems to be secondary. We can't avoid administrative matters, but these need to serve God's mission so that, within and outside the church, God's transformational power and the good news of the gospel are obviously at work bringing about change.

God continues to transform and calls us to share in that transformation. In fact, we are to be agents of transformation and angels of healing in God's world and God's economy. The reality is that, as agents of the God of Transformation, we need to bring wholeness and empowered service to all as we minister in God's name. We need to be the change that we want to see within our world, society, and church.

It is therefore important to develop

initiatives within our ministry that will bring about renewal and a sense of excitement through our worship and service.

But how do we develop a ministry that will bring transformation, renewal, joy and excitement?

Firstly, worship is not and should not be an ecclesiastical showcase, but an experience - where we as worshippers gather to offer praise and thanksgiving to the almighty God. Leading and participating in worship, in whatever way, should have as a priority the expression of our devotion to God who is our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

Secondly, we need to remain faithful to the God who is faithful to us and our worship must be transforming, renewing and exciting. Though guided by the rubrics within our Prayer Book, there is much space for creativity, participation and exploration within our given framework and, of course, with the necessary permission from the bishop.

There are many characteristics, marks, or signs of a healthy Church that have been developed over time, but I believe that what should be included is the kind of ministry pattern that I described in my first sermon to the Diocese on the day of my enthronement and installation. I referenced that, in as much as we are the gathered community, we also need to be the scattered community so that we find ourselves where the people are and, through our interaction and discipleship initiatives and the sharing of the gospel within their context, be able to lead others into a deeper and more profound relationship with Jesus Christ.

The reality is that we do not need to go further than the communities where we serve, for they are often the ones who need to see, understand and experience the Church through the images of a loving, informing, embracing, forgiving and transforming Church. Unless we are able to offer these images as attributes of our faith, we will further distort the image of the Church, as our reputation hardly holds moral ground for many anymore.

#### Ministry across the Diocese

Following the acceptance of our first (since my time in the Diocese) Strategic Plan at Synod in 2016, I was amazed that there was a motion before Synod to explore the potential amalgamation or closure of the Diocese of Wangaratta. I found this difficult to accept as I had, then, just moved halfway across the world to a place where I

believed God called me to serve. What made it more difficult is that we accepted a five-year strategic plan for our ministry together and the then Strategic Planning and Operational Team (SPOT) worked exceptionally hard to propose a plan to Synod which allowed us to embrace our future together.

Parishes were helped by the Diocese to develop their own strategic plans. Many of these ended up very similar and, in my time as Archdeacon for Ministry Development, many had to be rewritten so it was clear to parishioners just what was to be achieved in their Parish.

Our work within the Diocese I believe is one of Transformation and Change as we allow the God of Transformation to change our hearts and direction so that we can focus on the things at hand and to build our ministry together within the Diocese of Wangaratta. Through those intentional conversations with Parish Leadership Teams, we have seen the establishment of the Ministry Action Planning Committee and the work done over the past few years has enabled us to action so many things.

#### Workable Ministry Arrangements, Challenges & Realities.

We have seen the establishment of the Cooperative Ministry Arrangements in five parts of our Diocese and, happily, two have already reverted to separate arrangements. There is no doubt, with the ever-challenging financial situations in most Parishes and declining numbers of attendees at our services, that this ministry arrangement will have to be set up in more situations. This is not a mechanism of managing decline, but an opportunity to re-establish, re-design, re-develop and re-focus our ministry and appoint a full-time clergy person covering a wider geographical area. The establishment of Common Fund no 4, which has been set up so Parishes can use the income from the sale of redundant property, can also serve as an interim measure to assist us in covering some of our mission and ministry expenses. Sadly, some Parish Councils still see the need to spend more money on maintenance than on ministry. This is not a criticism, but a fact, as the faculties we are expected to sign sometimes make no sense when we hardly have any money to cover our ministry expenses.

*Continued on page 7*



# SYNOD 2023

## First session of the Forty First Synod

Continued from page 6

I hope, where this happens, and where it is difficult to cover ministry expenses, that we will think carefully on how these ministry expenses will be met. Presently the Diocese covers the cost of four days for three Parochial Districts, shares ministry with two Parishes to enable a Full Time Cleric, but I can assure you that this will come to an end within the next 15 months. If we cannot sustain our ministry and do not want to embrace the Cooperative Ministry arrangement, full time

ministry will become difficult within the very near future.

### Challenges & Opportunities within Ministry

Since our last Synod we de-consecrated the Church at Bethanga and, if it were not for the issue of time, we would have de-consecrated another two churches - this will happen in the next few months. There is always a sadness when a Worshipping Community ceases its operation. With the sale of redundant property, the Diocese continues to retain a part of the proceeds which goes towards the Church Extension Fund and I am wanting

to suggest that, for the first five Churches deconsecrated, we use these proceeds of sale to explore planting new congregations or re-planting existing ones.

There is no doubt that there are growing areas within some of our regions and since we have parishes continuing within these districts, there are still opportunities to develop new Ministry Units. I am already in conversation with a Parish and some clergy to consider these possibilities with the appointment of a 'Missionary Priest'. Earlier I said that we cannot just manage decline, we need to facilitate

growth and identify those areas in the wider Diocese where growth can take place. We should not only see the interest of investments in relation to money, but also as opportunities just waiting for us. So instead of just subsidising parishes or sharing ministry with them to maintain the ministry of a full-time Priest, this possibility of a specialised ministry might just invigorate our collaborative ministry in the hope of what God offers to us. It is these kinds of initiatives that excite me and I hope in time that our clergy and people will be excited about this as well. There is the God of Surprises,

the God of Possibilities, the God of Hope, who is the same God of Transformation who calls us to modify the expression of our core beliefs and our long-term behaviours to achieve the desired results. I am often reminded of Proverbs 29:18: 'Where there is no vision, the people will perish'. I am therefore excited to see this new development become a reality and I hope that this will be in place by the beginning of the next financial year.

A full copy of the Bishops charge can be found on the Diocesan website. <https://www.wangaratta-anglican.org.au/news/>



## Matthew McInnes Award presented to Isaac Brown

Each year since 1998 the Matthew McInnes Award has been presented during Synod to recognise outstanding service to the youth of the Diocese of Wangaratta.

The Matthew McInnes Award was established by Revd Ray and Mrs Glenys McInnes to honour their son Matthew who died in a car accident not long before Revd Ray became Dean of the Cathedral following his years as Rector of Benalla. Matthew had been very active in youth ministry in the diocese.

This year, the award was presented to Isaac Brown from the Parish of Cobram for his enthusiasm and dedication within the Parish. Isaac is part of the parish's music team, particularly playing the harp. He is one of the screen operators at their Sunday worship service he is also part of Messy Church and of course very regular at their services. Isaac is currently studying Year 12 at Cobram Anglican Grammar and the son of Geoff and Jan Brown.

PHOTO LEFT: Isaac Brown and Bishop Clarence



## Milestone award for Diocesan stalwart

BY REVD DAVID KERR

During the course of Diocesan Synod this June, Professor Dr Jane Freemantle was the first recipient of the Bishop's Award for services to the Diocese of Wangaratta. This was in recognition of her faithful and energetic participation in so many aspects of diocesan life and governance. Dr Freemantle has served as a Trustee, a Member of the Diocesan Tribunal, Lay Representative of General Synod, Member of the Bishopric Election Committee and Chair, Bishop's Nominee on Anglicare Victoria Parish Partnership Steering Committee as well as the Anglicare Victoria Committee; Clergy Appointments Review Board and member of the Ministry Action Planning

Team, as well as Bishop's Nominee on Provincial Standing Committee. At a more parochial level, Jane has been a Church Warden, Safe Church Officer, Lay Reader & Parish Visitor, most recently in the parish of Mansfield. As I write this, I can't help but reflect on when Jane was one of my preliminary examiners for my ordination to the diaconate in the Diocese of Melbourne; I knew instantly she was a warm, dynamic and committed individual, and an asset to the Anglican Church. It can safely be said that the award is well-deserved and the Diocese is grateful to have had someone like Jane in our midst. She remains an inspiration to many and we wish her well in her future endeavours.

PHOTO RIGHT: Jane Freemantle and Bishop Clarence



## Election Results

### Cleric

### Lay

#### Council of the Diocese

Revd Jerome Francis  
Revd Matthew Healy

Rhonda Holden  
Imogene Gillespie

#### Board of Electors

Revd Maryann Leonard  
Revd Jerome Francis  
Venerable Neil Hicks  
Canon Scott Jessup  
Revd Moira Evers  
Revd Mel Clark

Alan Garside  
Helen Gilbert  
Molly Craig  
Lisa Cooke  
Debra Birrell  
Fran Robertson

#### Board of Nominations

Revd Maryann Leonard  
Venerable Neil Hicks  
Revd Andre DuPlooy

#### Diocesan Tribunal

Venerable Neil Hicks  
Revd Matthew Healy

Lisa Cooke  
Molly Craig

#### General Synod

Very Revd Ken Goodger

Rachel Ellyard

#### Cathedral Canons

Revd Moira Evers  
Canon Scott Jessup

Molly Craig  
Helen Gilbert

# Organ gives voice to women

BY JAMIE KRONBORG

Beechworth's Anglican Christ Church celebrated Women Composer Sunday on March 5 when music director Sandra Williams played two little-known organ works by an early twentieth century French composer.

Sandra performed Mélanie Héléne Bonis' Pastorale in G on the church's heritage-listed William Anderson pipe organ to introduce the 10am morning service and Toccata in G minor to end it, honouring women composers ahead of International Women's Day on March 8.

Volunteers from the United Kingdom's Society of Women Organists and Royal College of Organists worked together in coronavirus pandemic lockdowns in 2020 to create a repertoire list of organ and liturgical compositions by women.

They identified 300 works ranging from a doxology by Kassia, an Eastern Empire composer in what is now Greece and Turkey in the early ninth century, to music by Armenian Karina Arakelyan, born in 1994 and seven Australians.

Inspired by what they found, including many compositions largely unknown today, the society and college launched Women Composer Sunday on March 7, 2021, encouraging organists at regular church and cathedral services across the world to play works from the list, and post recordings of their performances on social media.

Sandra has led music at Christ Church from the organ keyboard for 15 years, continuing a tradition started by Frances Manton who played the colonial-built instrument from 1887, when it was installed, until 1892 or 1893.

Her daughter, also named Frances, followed her, playing the organ for 50 years until her death in 1944.

Mélanie Bonis was born in Paris in 1858 to staunchly Catholic parents. She composed from the age of seven and at 16 met renowned organist César Franck who encouraged her, against her family's wishes, to study at the Paris Conservatoire.

She afterwards began to use Mel as her first name to disguise her identity as a female composer, from which work she was actively discouraged.

Her parents also later refused her proposed marriage to Amédée Hettich, a contemporary poet and music critic, and arranged for her to wed a much older businessman.

A few years later she met Hettich again and the pair had an intense affair, from which she gave birth to a daughter who she was unable to acknowledge publicly for many years.

Mel Bonis created more than 300 works and became secretary of the Société des compositeurs de musique, often interacting with famed composers Gabriel Fauré, Jules Massenet and Camille Saint-Saëns.

The two Mel Bonis pieces played by Sandra were published in 1933, four years before the composer died.

**PHOTO BELOW: PIPING UP:** Christ Church Beechworth music director and organist Sandra Williams with vicar Revd Matthew Healy at the William Anderson-built pipe organ. Photo: Jamie Kronborg



## Diocese of Wangaratta Chrism Mass

BY REVD HELEN MALCOLM

As is our tradition, Holy Tuesday on 4th April this year saw clergy and laity gather at Holy Trinity Cathedral Wangaratta for the blessing of the oils and the reaffirmation of ordination vows by Deacons, Priests and Bishops.

The three types of oils are firstly oil for anointing the sick and dying, next the oil of Catechumens for those preparing for baptism and finally the oil of Chrism for baptism, confirmation, ordination and consecrating a building.

It was good to see representatives from the laity supporting the clergy as they re-affirmed their commitment to ministry according to the rites of the Anglican Church of Australia. It was also an opportunity for lay people to stand and commit themselves to ongoing 'loving service alongside your Bishop and clergy' and to celebrate and give thanks for their own ministries in the various parishes across the Diocese.

Bishop Garry Weatherill from the Diocese of Ballarat was the preacher and Bishop Clarence presided at the eucharist. As always, the service was ably supported by Dr Kieran Crichton at the organ and the Cathedral choir, enabling everyone to make a joyful noise to the Lord (Psalms 100:1 and 98:4) on this solemn occasion. This year there was an added important occasion during the service as Rev'd Eden-Elizabeth Nicholls took her preliminary

vows to be admitted to single consecrated life. This was occurring after a period of discernment and is a commitment to a Rule of Life based on the Rule of St. Benedict. It is a contemplative ministry, praying five offices a day, reading and studying scripture and offering prayers for the world and for anybody who contacts her to ask for prayer for a specific event or life situation. Similar in some ways to living in a religious community, the single consecrated life is followed without living in a community and is recognized by both eastern and western churches as an authentic Christian vocation.

Bishop Clarence and Bishop Garry (who is the Chair of the Advisory Council on Anglican Religious Life) together heard Eden-Elizabeth make her profession and vows. Bishop Clarence anointed her and presented her with a cross, ring and prayer book before the Bishops together offered a blessing for her new life.

We were blessed with a glorious day which enhanced the legendary hospitality offered by Michelle and the Bishop and their helpers at Bishop's Lodge after the service.

Put the date in your 2024 diary – the Tuesday in Holy Week – and plan to come so we can all celebrate our ministry, pray for each other and commit ourselves to ongoing service with Christians from across the Diocese.

## Yarrowonga Parish Fete



BY SUSAN KNIGHT

A glorious day welcomed our 2023 fete on 22nd April. Many volunteers worked hard to set up the tables, stalls and marquees from 6:30am. The gardens and lawns looked so beautifully manicured and set the scene for a wonderful day.

The fete committee worked hard to keep in contact with their allotted stall holders and encourage them prior to the big day. Thanks so much to Penny Thomas, Deb Wright, Carolanne Terry and Jim Judd. It all meshed together so well with few hiccups and kept stalls on target.

Over 700 flyers were delivered to letterboxes and about 100 A4 adverts put in windows of business houses. Food

handlers certificates were presented too. Rev. Elwyn led a small group of available stall holders in prayer in the church just prior to starting our big day of trading - a beautiful start to the very busy few hours.

We had many stall holders to work on the day including the BBQ, Book Room, Cakes and Savories Stall, Craft, Mainly Music Stall and Plants and Produce just to name a few. There was also an Indian food stall which was a huge success and loved by all. Rev Elwyn and Riya cooked meals for us to sell and we hope to make this bigger next year. It was delicious!

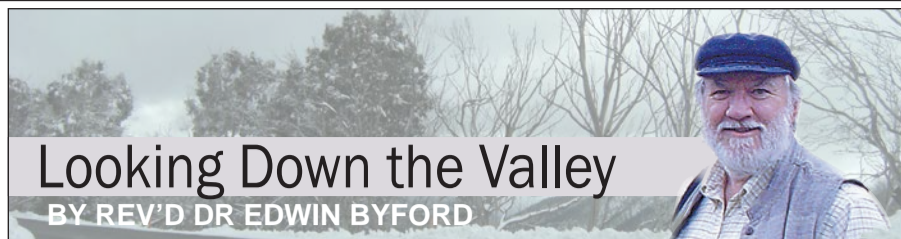
Our Master of Ceremonies this year, Penny Thomas, did a remarkable job planning, presenting and interviewing

people during the day. Not an easy task with the competition from the Griffith Cup in the background.

The 2023 Yarrowonga Anglican Church Fete was such a resounding success yet again. We cannot list everyone who spent days, weeks, and months working towards our big day.

It was a very happy day of co-operation and drawing together our parishioners and Yarrowonga community. We thank the Lord for this day to work together in his name.





## Looking Down the Valley

BY REV'D DR EDWIN BYFORD

I cannot remember a time when evangelistic outreach has not been a central concern of the church. Churches have set up programs for urban and regional outreach and they set up special youth programs for more than a century in Australia. Bringing people to an explicit confession of faith has been a primary aim of the church from the moment that it burst out into public at the feast of Pentecost. The stories of missionaries, ancient and modern, are legion in the life of the church. Faith in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, has inspired countless thousands, probably millions, of people to tell others about the Good News that is to be found in trusting this Jesus. The interesting thing is that this good news is always conveyed by somebody. We heard about Jesus from somebody. Somebody spoke to us, somebody wrote something. In modern times somebody has spoken on radio or television or put some sort of post out there on the Net. Always it is somebody!

In our society the church is a voluntary association. By and large we have only ourselves to reach out with the Good News. In most cases, if we do not do it, it will not be done. The irreducible mission of the church is to preach the Gospel and celebrate the sacraments.

So how is this mission advanced? Most of us, even most clergy, are not going to stand on street corners calling upon passers-by to repent and believe. But it may well surprise us to find out how often it is that we may be able to talk about our faith and commitment.

On a recent Friday at a local pub while I was selling tickets in the community raffle, a local worthy insisted he wanted to talk to me when I had time. We are long time friends and he knows that I am a priest and that I have an academic background in the physical sciences. He wanted to know why I had decided to become a priest and when had it happened that I made the decision. My story had him fascinated, but that is not the point. He wanted to know about belief and why I believed and what it was that triggered that belief. He, and a number of others, insist that they are not religious, but nine times out of ten, when we encounter each other, the conversation is about belief and how that informs what I think about what is happening in and around the world. How my faith informs why I have the political and social affiliations that I do is the stuff of many a conversation.

I am often told that the roof would collapse if they came to church. My response is that is why I have a hard hat available for them. In Broken Hill we had a couple of hard hats hanging in the entrance of St Peter's Church for the purpose.

Most evangelism is personal. Most people want to know about their friends and acquaintances. You may be surprised to find out how many of your friends are intrigued by what you do on Sunday mornings. They would probably be even more intrigued by how what you do on Sunday morning flows into what you do every other day of the week.

It is the case that only a minority of Australians regularly worship in churches. But it is not the case that these are the only people who think about faith and belief. It would seem that there is a considerable cohort of Australians who wonder about faith and belief. For whatever reasons it does not occur to them to come to a church to find out about this wonder. I was surprised by my friend's questions and I suspect that there will be many more questions and conversations. Will he come to an explicit faith and come to church? I do not know, but I will keep offering him the hard hat.

# Courthouse coffee

BY REVD EMILY PAYNE

On the 12th of May, the governing committee for the Courthouse Coffee outreach in Albury met for a final time at St. Mark's North Albury to formally end their work, deal with practicalities such as the disposal of assets, and to remember and give thanks for all that had been accomplished.

The Courthouse Coffee outreach began in 2010 as a partnership with Anglicare; the idea was to provide a warm beverage, a kind presence and a listening ear to people often experiencing very stressful or difficult circumstances. Volunteers came from St. Matthew's, Albury, the parish of Northern Albury and the wider community, with some practical

support and funding from Anglicare. (After some years, Anglicare ceased involvement and the outreach was run entirely by a local committee).

However, Covid disruptions and renovations to the courthouse meant a prolonged pause in activities and when the time came to take stock of resources and volunteers and consider whether to return, the group discerned that this particular outreach has reached its natural end.

One member of the committee, Rowena Ginns, writes: "It has been a busy and most rewarding time, particularly when the Court House was full of anxiety, anger and confusion. It was good to be able to offer something 'ordinary'; a smile, a

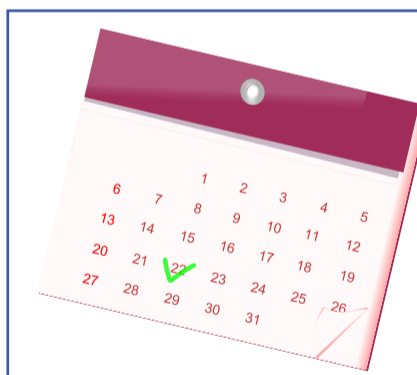
cuppa...no questions asked.

We have had over fifty volunteers working with us during this time: some for a short time, many are still with us and some have been 'promoted to glory;' all valued and cherished.

This organisation has been so worthwhile; our spirit of community and support for the common good has been so special.

And so we thank each other and the good Lord, who always blesses us each and every day."

And so, once formalities were dealt with, all involved were toasted with "a dash of bubbly, and a smile."



**Do you have an Event that you would like to advertise in the Advocate?**

Send it to [registry@wagaratta-anglican.org.au](mailto:registry@wagaratta-anglican.org.au)

# Climate Action: Where are we now? Earth and fire - Part 3

BY ANNE BAUMGARTEN

*He [Jesus] is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

*Colossians 1:17*

Previously we touched on the history of human behaviour's impact on the climate. Humanity's influence began slowly with the Industrial Revolution, gathered momentum after World War 2 and sped up in the last few decades.

To get some idea of where we - as people of faith - want to be in relation to climate change, we need to build a factual description of where we are now. So part 2 suggested a couple of science and evidence-based Australian organisations that provide facts about the current quality of two elements of nature - air and water - and how they are affected by climate change. Similarly, part 3 will suggest organisations that report on climate change in relation to earth and fire. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2023

synthesis report is a useful reference for the facts on where we are now. The World Resources Institute (WRI) notes that the IPCC report (at nearly 8,000 pages) provides the most comprehensive, best available scientific assessment of climate change.

If reading or referencing a report doesn't appeal to you, there is a 3-minute trailer video on the home page of the report on <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/>

Also, the WRI gives a handy summary of the top 10 findings of the IPCC synthesis report on climate change findings. You can find it on their website: <https://www.wri.org/insights/>

### Earth: drought and land use

In Australia, farmers and First Nations people are well aware of the effects of drought and inefficient land use. It is not surprising that groups such as Country Needs

People (and its 44 Indigenous partner organisations), the Farmers Federation and Farmers for Climate Action are vocal about climate change.

There are many credible sources of information on the internet, such as this report on Mt Buffalo land use, posted on the Agriculture Victoria website <https://vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/>

Looking globally, the IPCC mentions that the people least responsible for the Earth's warming will be the ones who suffer most. The World Food Programme projects that almost 350 million people may be food insecure in 2023, more than double the number in 2020. Already we are seeing climate refugees on the move because of the loss of arable land.

Similarly, land clearing is a cause of animal extinctions that will have dire consequences for the natural environment, including humans.

One example is the connection scientists have found between the disappearance of natural habitats and the emergence of pandemics such as Covid.

However, the IPCC report asserts 'there is substantial mitigation and adaptation potential from options in agriculture, forestry and other land use, ... that could be upscaled in the near term across most regions (high confidence).'

### Fire: burning fossil fuels.

Australia's top 3 exports are iron ore and concentrates, coal and natural gas. However, as we know, the burning of fossil fuels is the number one cause of climate change. It is a huge challenge for governments to transition the economy away from dependence on the mining of fossil fuels. But the significant rise in sales of electric vehicles and solar panels indicate private enterprise and the community in Australia are ready for action. We can take heart

that humanity has demonstrated considerable adaptability, flexibility and resilience throughout history.

The story is more straightforward for emergency workers and leaders at the frontline of bushfires. They have no doubt about human-caused climate change and its horrendous consequences. In their list of demands to state/territory governments, Emergency Leaders for Climate Action have said emissions must be reduced significantly. <https://emergencyleadersforclimateaction.org.au/statement/>

We are unable to take in all the factual information about climate change and we may feel powerless to do anything effective. However, as both individuals and a community of faith, there is plenty we can do to bring some healing to the natural environment. The remainder of this series will look to the future and possible action.

# News from the Parish of Mansfield

BY REVD MEL CLARK

On May 14 we were filled with joy to have Bishop Clarence and Dean Sharon Nel with us at St John's Mansfield. Bishop Clarence inspired us with his message about the transforming power of God's love, the magnificent St John's choir sang beautifully and everyone was full to overflowing after a huge morning tea after Mass.

In February Mansfield said

farewell to Jane and Jim Fremantle. The Fremantles have been a part of the Mansfield community for more than twenty years and have certainly left their mark, both in the parish and in the Wangaratta Diocese. Amongst many other things, Jim has been church warden at both St John's Mansfield and St Peter's Jamieson and Jane has been a Lay Reader, Parish Council member, Safe church officer, and co-ordinator of the parish MAP

discussions.

In the many speeches given in their honour at the parish farewell, Jim and Jane were recognised for their immense talents and willingness to offer ministry with generous hearts and intelligence; Jim for his willingness to give anything a go and 'just get things done', and Jane for her attention to detail whilst keeping God's wider mission in mind for the community.

Jane and Jim have moved to Melbourne to a smaller property where they can devote more time to their beloved family. Mansfield misses them already.



# Kilmore Community Garden Harvest Festival

BY CAROLINE BURGE

As written about in the Advocate in 2021, a newly formed Kilmore Community Garden Committee was formed in the local area. The Committee were keen and eager but needed some land to start the project off. They approached many in the community including the Anglican Church, and a new relationship between the church and the community was started.

With excess land at Christ Church Kilmore not being utilised to the full, the Community Garden Committee was offered the use of the land, with the parish supporting the new venture.

In March, the Community Garden Committee held a Harvest Festival with music provided by a local group entertaining visitors; a guest speaker talking of the importance of bee keeping in our gardens; and pancakes freshly cooked, with money

raised going towards the local Suicide Prevention Programme. Stalls with fresh produce, hand knitted craft goods; and fresh flowers were sold to those who came to enjoy the day.

How wonderful for the church to be "in" the community and "part" of the community.

**PHOTO BELOW:** Pancake stall assisted by Warden Caroline and members of the Garden Committee.



# Goulburn Valley Hospice visits Bishop's Lodge

BY GLENYS HOLYMAN

sitting at the tables.

On Thursday 13th April, fifty-seven garden enthusiasts and supporters of GV Hospice Care arrived at Bishop's Lodge in Wangaratta at 12 noon.

Following lunch the group wandered to the Cathedral for a very keen viewing of the grand building. This was an added bonus to our visit.

Bishop Clarence and wife, Michelle had prepared for their arrival by setting tables and chairs with white tablecloths on the lawn and front verandah. It was a delightful setting with the sun shining brightly.

The visit to the Lodge was arranged by the Friends of Hospice committee which is a Fundraising sub-committee of GV Hospice Care (Palliative Care) in Shepparton.

All guests were handed a boxed lunch and glass of refreshment following their viewing of the Lodge and they proceeded to wander around the garden before

What a wonderful venue for the group to visit with perfect hosts.

# WHO ARE WE? *Opinion piece*

BY ANNE BAUMGARTEN

We live in an era of innumerable options, where each of us can choose from a vast feast of beliefs, theologies, values, insights, philosophies, personal objectives, lifestyles and vocations. We can choose from many good works to do and welcoming charities, non-government organisations and social groups to join. Within that world view, those who identify as Christian may decide to keep their beliefs private: between them and God. Others may feel fine about sharing their views on Christianity whenever they are relevant to a person or situation.

Some of the faithful may have a view towards the bigger picture. They wonder where the Church stands at this point in history. How is human understanding of religion/spirituality evolving? Do Christians even need to be defined as a particular entity or demographic in our society? How do we move from what feels like a chaotic but liminal place in the story of the Church to whatever comes next?

Some of us may contend

that the mustard seed of our Christian faith's evolution through the centuries started its germination at the resurrection. In keeping with this metaphor, perhaps the kingdom of God is emerging as a massive, expanding tree to include more inhabitants than we might imagine or consider worthy.

Perhaps birds from all nations have been flocking to the tree. The Hebrew Bible and the Gospels have plenty of verses that seem to support an inclusive, broad perspective. As James Fowler and similar writers have indicated, a universalist, outward-looking view is characteristic of mature faith development.

Sydney Carter thought broadly and alluded to language as a limiting, social construct when he wrote the lyric.

*Come and praise the King of Heaven, by whatever name you know.*

*From Every Star Shall Sing a Carol.*

Some people may have an uneasy feeling that Christianity is being

merged into the fast-flowing river of human experience. It no longer has a clear social definition (other than the fact that many Christians attend church at least a few times a year) and we are no longer a distinctive group that can be identified by "our love for one another" (John 13:35).

Alternatively, if we are called to have a distinct identity in our society, we could benefit by having a simple, shared vision that we can each own and easily recall when we respond to queries about Christianity. That definition will probably be grounded in the Gospels and envisage the Kingdom of God. Perhaps the crafting of this shared vision is an invitation to us all to open our minds, hearts and prayerful souls to the Spirit of Truth and the Gospels to get some guidance.

We have a wealth of spiritual experience and wisdom within the clergy and laity in our Diocese. There are a range of useful methods for gleaning the observations of these fellow travellers, taking into account how each person may wish to be approached and how they want to communicate their views. But the question remains: do we need to define ourselves as a distinct group in society?

# Magdeburg Cathedral may surprise you

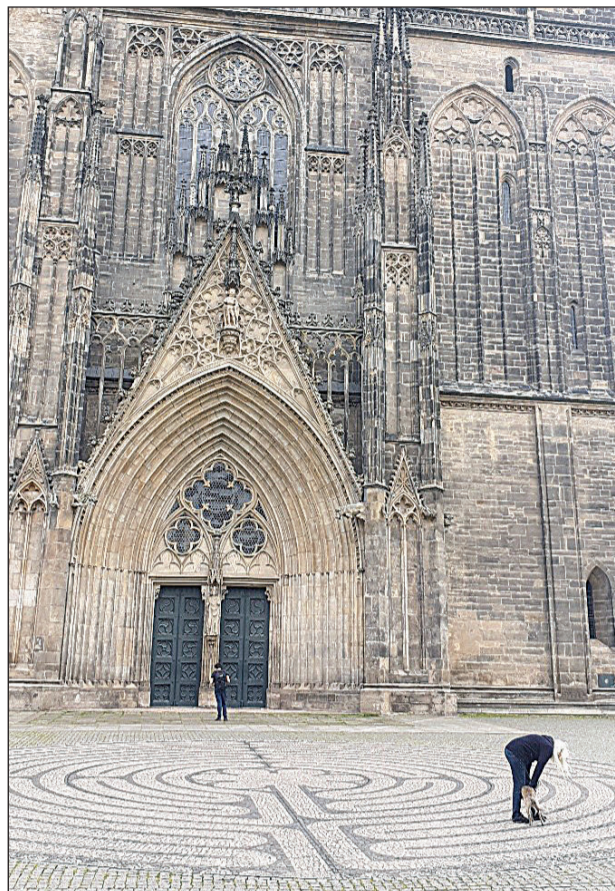
BY ANNE BAUMGARTEN

You may be aware that Magdeburg Cathedral is unique. It is the oldest Gothic cathedral in Germany. The original church, partially excavated, dates back to around 956 when its construction was decreed by Otto, the Holy Roman Emperor. Many of the sculptures have been hacked at, possibly by enthusiastic Reformers. So it is not unusual to see statues and relief sculptures with limbs, noses or even a head missing.

Ten statues of the virgins from Matthew's gospel are thankfully positioned a few metres up out of the way of vandals. The five wise women look rather smug, perhaps a bit tipsy, and the foolish five are quite distraught. It is a confronting scene that may remind some visitors of the weeping angels in Dr Who.

In one corner of the cathedral is a relief wood carving representing Hitler and two German soldiers. It seems repugnant and out of place in a cathedral. However, it conveys a searing message about worldly power and the need for peace. Lit candles at the base of the carving form a cross, reminding us that the Lord will never leave us, even in our times of unfathomable despair or darkness.

At lunchtime, on 6 May 2023, I experienced an extraordinary coincidence when I stepped out of Magdeburg Cathedral. I soon realised there was a labyrinth ahead of me. You may be aware that



labyrinths are wonderful vehicles for meditation, prayer, contemplation or just about anything you want to 'work through' in your life. There is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth.

I was nearly at the centre of my own labyrinth walk when a German woman approached me. Her name was Sabine. She told me it was World Labyrinth Day. Maybe it was scheduled to roughly coincide with the various WW 2 Liberation days in European countries. Globally people at 1 pm local time were walking labyrinths for world peace. It was 1 pm when she spoke with me. Till she explained World Labyrinth Day to me, I had no knowledge of this

special moment. She asked if we could walk together along the path, but by then I was too far gone in my private world to accompany her. Later we talked. She said the labyrinth is an exact replica of the one in Chartres Cathedral. This outdoor one was preferable because people didn't set up chairs and furniture on it as they apparently did at Chartres.

I took the photo below of Sabine and her dog walking the labyrinth. When we exchanged contact details, we discovered a final connection. Sabine's surname was the same as my Danish grandmother's maiden name.

# History of Christ Church Murchison

BY KAY BALL

Christ Church was built in 1884 on the corner of Impey and Watson Streets Murchison. Prior to this, Anglican services were held in the Mechanics Institute, Presbyterian and Methodist churches. An early service held in the Mechanics Institute in 1876 boasted a congregation of 60.

Dedication of the church by Bishop Goe did not take place until 1895, the delay thought to be due to the policy of clearing debt on the building before this formal step. The red brick building is described as rural Gothic revival in style, typical of the era but with an unusual transverse gable-roofed entry porch at the west end. A special feature are the high-quality colourful stained-glass windows, notably the three sanctuary windows in memory of Thomas Prettejohn who died in 1900, that are by renowned stained-glass artist, William Montgomery.

Montgomery produced around 2000 stained glass windows in Melbourne and across rural Victoria and New South Wales during an impressive career spanning nearly 40 years. Other very attractive windows are by Brooks, Robinson & Co. and are in memory of members of the Gregory family; Major Ernest Gregory, his sister Muriel and their mother Mary.

The Dargalong Church, built in 1897, was transported to Murchison in 1930 to become the Sunday School and Meeting Hall and continues to be used as the Church Hall today.

In earlier times the minister lived in the rectory next door in Impey Street, which was built in 1920. Since it was partially destroyed by fire in 1961, the minister has resided in neighbouring towns.

Christ Church has at various times over the years been

part of Parishes that have included Arcadia, Avenel, Nagambie and Rushworth, and more recently Christ Church together with St. Paul's at Rushworth have been attached to Shepparton. A new structure has been formalised as from the 20th November last year, when Bishop Clarence officially declared Murchison and Rushworth churches a stand-alone Parochial District. Rev. Bill Squires is the Locum Priest at present until the permanent Priest, Rev. Andre De Ploy commences in April. Andre has been the Priest in Kilmore since 2019 but prior to that, ministered at Murchison and along with his wife Patti, is a very welcome and popular familiar face who will provide co-operative ministry arrangements across the Parochial Districts of Violet Town, Longwood and Euroa as well as Murchison and Rushworth. Commissioning Service is planned for April 22nd.

City of Greater Shepparton lists Christ Church Murchison in their Heritage Study, and notes it to be 'of local historic, aesthetic and social significance'.



# Central Goulburn moving on after Covid 19

BY DIANE GRANT

Before Covid 19 struck, the three centres of our parish, St Paul's Avenel, St John's Nagambie and Christ Church Seymour would meet a few times a year for a combined service in Seymour and enjoy a bring and share lunch and fellowship.

Since Covid restrictions have lifted, those times have ceased and occasionally Nagambie church has a combined ecumenical Prayer Option Unified for Rain (POUR) prayer and fellowship service followed by a bring and share lunch at one of the three church centres every two months.

Before Covid the parish sometimes enjoyed a bring and share lunch in the Avenel memorial hall supper room. It was cosy and enjoyed by all who came.

Our parish has been holding a combined parish service every so often in Avenel followed by morning tea in the back of the church.

But somehow the fellowship is not the same as it was when we had the whole parish gather in Seymour for such an activity.

However, this year, some of the parish folk have had lunch at the Railway Hotel in Seymour, lunch at the restored Mangalore Railway Hotel. Not all the pensioners of the parish can afford this luxury, or drive far, and they say they miss the combined Seymour service and shared lunch. But the parish has had to move on since Covid and this is one of the casualties of it. Is this a sign of the times?

But on Wednesday, June 14 some of the Parish ventured on a cold early winter's day

over to St John's Anglican Church in Mansfield for a combined Wednesday morning service led by Reverend Melissa Clark.

The lovely old church looked welcoming in the mild

sunshine and autumn leaves blanketed the grounds.

A few of St John's flock attended the service and welcomed the 10 MU visitors and four parish folk from Nagambie and Seymour.

Reverend Melissa then joined the visitors from Central Goulburn for a delicious lunch provided by the Delatite Hotel.

It was a chance for members of the parish to enjoy some

fellowship with their fellow parishioners.

The trip home in the mist seemed to be quicker than when we drove there going over the hills via Euroa and Merton.



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# People and Parishes



*Pictured following the last service of Revd Helen Malcolm as locum at Christ Church, Murchison is John Ball, Anne Finlay, Don Leslie, Rev. Helen Malcolm and Norma Leslie.*



*Having fun in the sun at St Jude's, Eldorado is Sue Hall with children who came together during the school holidays.*



*Jim Fremantle, Stuart Bett, Jane Fremantle, and Jan White at the farewell of the Freemantles from the Parish of Mansfield.*



*Parishioners from the Parish of Wodonga in Bethanga at the deconsecration of Holy Trinity. Photo by Michelle Bester.*



*Parish of St Augustine's Shepparton Synod reps Di Feldtmann, Maureen Cormican, Mary Pearson with Revd Jerome Francis at Synod.*



*Revd Elwyn Enos, Bishop Clarence, Michelle Bester and Riya Enos at the induction of Revd Elwyn, Parish of Yarrawonga.*



*Clergy on the front steps of Holy Trinity Cathedral following the Chrism mass.*