



THE ADVOCATE

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

The Anglican Diocese of Wangaratta | www.wangaratta-anglican.org.au

Season of Creation

Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;

Isaiah 32:14-18

Environmental & Sustainability Gill Baker & David Mitchell Memorial Trust award

By Suzie Don-Leonard

Gill Baker and David Mitchell were committed Diocesan advocates for the environment and left a legacy of encouraging people to be custodians of the environment. A Memorial Trust in memory of Gill and David was set up in the Anglican Diocese of Wangaratta after their deaths 3 years ago.

The Diocese of Wangaratta in partnership with family members Russell Baker and Glenda Mitchell,

Bishop Clarence Bester and Suzie Don Leonard from the Diocese of Wangaratta set up a Trust Fund with an Environmental and Sustainability Focus. An annual memorial award was launched at "Seasons of Creation" in 2024. Parishes in the Anglican Diocese of Wangaratta were invited to submit entries outlining Parish Environmental and Sustainability projects by the 30 June. Submissions were received from 3 Parishes: Thurgoona Parish (St. John's Thurgoona), The Alpine Parish (St. Paul's Myrtleford) and

Central Goulburn Parish (Christ Church Seymour).

The Trustees met in August, to consider the inaugural recipient of the Memorial Award against the following 4 criteria:

1. Environmental Benefits: How the project addressed environmental issues &/or improved sustainability (e.g amount of solar energy, water usage saved, conservation and biodiversity enhancement).
2. Community Involvement and Social Impact: How the

project involved and benefited local communities (including parishioners), raised awareness and promoted public engagement with environmental issues.

3. Return on Investment: The resources (e.g. cost and time) required to complete the project in relation to the environmental benefit and community involvement.

4. Scalability &/or Replicability: Whether the project concept can be expanded, adapted, or replicated in other communities or contexts.

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Bishop Clarence writes...

Dear Clergy, People and Friends of the Diocese

Spring has sprung:

The good thing about a seasonal Newsletter for our Diocese is that we can link a seasonal change to the reality of what is happening all around us with anticipation for what lies before us.

When we met as a Diocese on 30 August for our Season of Creation Service, which was the first in the Anglican Communion that we know of to have happened, I had returned to work just eleven days previously, after being off-sick for 40 days. I have written to those on our Diocesan communication lists giving thanks to God for thoughts and prayers during a difficult time.

Someone remarked after a service recently that it was good to see me back on my feet, but also mentioned that I do not have my 'spark' back to which I fully agree. In the Winter edition of the Advocate, I remarked: "Rest and good sleep are needed for this process of restoration and healing" which is something I have tried to do during my own 40 days and restarting slowly after 18 August, though it would seem as if 'tons of bricks' fell heavily on me as I was inundated with so many things. Of course, there would be certain things that would demand my attention, but I must respect the decisions and actions taken while I was away and it is only fair that I take time to get up to speed with everything.

As spring has sprung and we are witnessing the beautiful blossoming of trees and flowers with the greening of the earth through this picturesque wonder of God's creation, listening to the sounds of birds as new life abounds, so will new things happen for us. We need to remain faithful as we continue to worship God throughout the 'Cathedral' (world) of God's Creation, even as we meet in our Churches and in the community to spread the good news of God's love for all of God's people.

HOPE 25 and where to from here?

It was wonderful to hear the stories at Synod of what has been happening around Parishes within our Diocese and about the different initiatives that would bring hope to others in an uncertain world. Some of the stories reminded me of an earlier presentation at Synod a few years ago as we developed our Ministry Action Planning and Parishes were presenting video material of their ministries and activities.

We were never able to add those presentations to the Diocesan Website, but I know that, as a Diocese, we have always kept that HOPE alive

within our Parishes, even in the face of great challenges. I am hoping that, through our Ministry Action Planning (MAP), we will continue to actively engage through Mission and Outreach within our faith community as well as the wider community.

Our MAP group will gear up for combined Parish Units interaction to assist us with the implementation of our Growing Your Church (GYC) program on a local level. We have consistently asked that Ministry Planning and Development be an item on our Parish Council Agendas so that we can engage in continuous discussion and action to make the many initiatives a reality. Of course, we are aware of the difficulty with declining congregations and, through my Synod Charge in May, I have given guidance of how we may deal with this, a resolution that Bishop-In-Council will consider at the end of October.

It is important for us to remember that, in as much as administrative (temporal) matters are important, we also need to look at the aspect of spirituality and our missional imperative as God's Church and not continue with business as usual, but rather with 'business unusual'. We have heard so often that we cannot expect different results if we continue to do the same thing.

From HOPE to JOY

I can already reveal that the Anglican Church of Australia will focus on the theme of JOY for the Lent Prayer Book in 2026. Bishops have already sent in their contributions for scriptural and prayerful reflection and I hope that we as a Diocese will embrace this fully.

To this end, we hope that we will develop temporary ministry clusters during Lent 2026 where we hope to have pulpit exchanges between parishes, where at least five clergy persons will cover a theme on JOY at 5 different Churches during Lent. More information will be shared before the end of November as we work out the arrangements for this in the meantime.

Bishop's Home Mission Fund (BHMF):

I started this fund with the hope to assist and support parishes and ministries local and possibly abroad with a cash injection for a limited time. It was launched by my asking every Parish to at least give \$500 as a start and then, during winter, to support a local parish 'soup' appeal and to contribute the collection to the same fund. I am still to get a full report, but support for this has been rather slow. I was hoping that this would be the one year (from Synod 2025 to Synod 2026) where we will synergize as a Diocese to establish something



that will be of good benefit to our collective ministry and outreach. As mentioned on previous occasions, we hope that, during the month of November, each parish will either host a lunch or dinner during the month of stewardship and then contribute the surplus to the Home Mission Fund.

We have big plans for 2026 leading up to our 125th anniversary in March 2027 which will be shared in due course. I do however want to thank all those who have given and in anticipation for all who will still contribute.

Anglicare

Sadly, and mostly due to funding, ANGLICARE Victoria has withdrawn from the Parish Partnership program in the Diocese of Wangaratta with effect 1 January 2026. Loaves and Fishes Christian Caring and Emergency Relief will be covered by the 9 Church denominations that are all members, but I do not have any details how, when and where that will happen. Our buildings will therefore be vacant and, as rental income is an important source for us and the Cathedral, we hope to have the premises occupied soon after.

At this time, I am not sure if we will have any continuous representation on the Anglicare Victoria Council but will need to navigate pathways of how we as a Diocese might be able to support the few existing Parish initiatives. This is certainly an area where the BHMF can assist in future.

Every blessing,

Clarence E Bester

CONTACT US

EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING CONTRIBUTIONS

Diocese of Wangaratta
PO Box 457, Wangaratta VIC 3677
registry@wangaratta-anglican.org.au
Tel: (03) 5721 3484

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DETAILS

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EDITORIAL TEAM

The Reverend Helen Malcolm - Proof reader
Ms Fiona van Bree - Design and Production

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The 3 applications received were:
1. Mission District of St John's Thurgoona: St John's Opportunity Shop, Thurgoona
Goals: (a) to reduce land fill by recycling and reusing clothing and other items by setting up an Op shop (b) to provide support to people struggling financially (c) to engage with the local community in a meaningful and caring manner. It was sustainable and could be replicated by other parishes who could also benefit financially from such a project

2. Alpine Anglican Parish: "Ngarrinba Kurrabbha" Nature/Bush Tucker Community Garden, Myrtleford

Goals: (a) Partnership with key indigenous, environmental and community groups to build a native Bush Tucker Community Garden with local native plants labelled in both English and the local native language. (b) Create a positive connection with First Nations people local to the Alpine area in the spirit of peace, reconciliation and deep listening to each other and the country through relationships, understanding and compassion. (c) to make a neglected area into a beautiful space on the church grounds open to the public to walk through, with seats for rest and reflection and water features to attract native insects and birds; it will also have indigenous artwork and sculptures to highlight the above themes. Information will be provided on how first nations people used the plants for food, medicine and making household products for thousands of years.

The application received written letters of support from many members of parish council and multiple parish centres.

3. Central Goulburn Parish: Rectory Garden, Seymour

Goals: The parish priest and his wife, after moving from Euroa, made every effort to clean up rectory and church gardens, to build beautiful spaces (at their own cost), to provide sustainable water wise gardens, nurture fruit trees, build veggie gardens and create outdoor spaces at the rectory gardens for reflection and relaxation. Water tanks, irrigation and landscaping using recycled materials and solar lighting has made it attractive to members of the faith community,

neighbours, people passing by, parishioners and members of the Park Run community.

Outcome: All three submissions demonstrated positive contributions to the environment and sustainability. However, only one winner was possible, and it was agreed that the Alpine Parish best fitted the selection criteria and was the winner of the 2025 Gill Baker and David Mitchell Environment and Sustainability Memorial Award of \$2,000.

As the other 2 parish applications helped to get the Memorial Award off the ground and provided tangible examples of how to apply the principles of environment sustainability, it was agreed to show the trust's gratitude by awarding each of them a Bunnings voucher of \$100 as a one-off acknowledgement of their contribution to this inaugural round.

All 3 applicants were thanked for assisting in getting the award started and the Winner, Alpine Parish, was congratulated. Alpine Parish will now also identify a member from their parish to serve for one year on the Board of Trustees (as a voting Trustee) until the next award is made

in 2026.

The award was announced at the 2025 Seasons of Creation service in Purbrick Hall on 30th September for clergy and people from across the Diocese. A beautiful liturgy celebrating creation was compiled by Bishop Clarence and Archdeacon Matthew Healy - the hymns were sung with gusto in that confined space and nearly raised the roof. Two guest speakers addressed the gathering: Helen Van Riet spoke about protecting our land and shared examples from her native garden, linking it to Christian custodianship and was followed by Eshan Perera (visitor from Sri Lanka) who spoke on "Caring for Creation - A Christian call to address Climate Change". The service and award presentation were followed by an indoor BBQ to escape the cold outside.

Photo below: Alan Garside, Alma Adams (Alpine Parish winners), Alan Baker (Trustee), Cannon Moira Evers (Winner Alpine Parish), Chris Baker (Trustee), Glenda Mitchell (Trustee) Bishop Clarence Bester (Trustee). Wendy James, Greg Aplin, Cannon Maryanne Leonard & Jill Aplin.



Stamps for ABM

By Rev'd Norm Hart

In Wangaratta recently a donation of stamps was made to ABM - they were very unusual and beyond my experience. Nevertheless I soon discovered that these stamps have an unusual connection to Royalty.

Quite a few kings and queens have been collectors, but king Farouk of Egypt liked to create his own rarities. On his order, every stamp produced in Egypt had to have the first two sheets turned diagonally so that the perforations wouldn't match. He kept some for himself, swapped and sold the rest. When his kingdom was seized, they took his stamp collection too and these ended up on the

market. These 16 stamps are a remnant of that bizarre request. They have been sent to stamp Auctioneers, "Abacus" to be sold later this month, we need two people with deep pockets who both want to own these!

Keep saving those stamps, coins, banknote,

postcards etc. - we can sell them to raise money for the missions. Bring them to us in Euroa, 8 Bury St, or take them to the Diocesan offices in Wangaratta. Rev'd Norm is always happy to value and sell items for other members of the church - don't keep the faith, share it.



Remembering Bishop John Parkes

By Venerable Canon Scott Jessup

'Scott John'

At the other end of the phone – Bishop John Parkes, the 10th Bishop of Wangaratta – our Father in God.

Our Bishop John had a Presidential Presence – whether at the other end of the phone line, or in person, or, most fully, as President of the Mass or President of Diocesan Synod. Bishop John had a commanding Presidential, larger-than-life presence. What formed that presence was partly his voice – its timbre, its resonance, its volume; partly physical – his height and stature; partly his mannerisms. But underlying all this and that which gave his Presidential Presence authority and demanded respect and obedience – was a heart of love – Bishop John's love for God, love for his family and love for God's people – a love for the Gospel and the gospel values of love, justice, dignity, inclusion – especially love for those on the margins.

He came to our Diocese at a decisive moment – at a time when real changes needed to be made. Bishop John came explicitly supporting the ordination of women to the Office and Ministry of Priest, which was a stance that had been vigorously opposed in Wangaratta for the decade and a half since it had been permitted in 1992. Bishop John showed that sacramental Anglicanism was not inconsistent with women being in the three orders of ordained ministry. That our Diocese now has so many women in the ranks of clergy is, in no small measure, due to the ministry of Bishop John. During his episcopate, the atmosphere of the Diocese changed for the better – we became more outward looking and collegiality improved among clergy.

His arrival in the Diocese however was, in every sense, a baptism of fire. In his words, he 'scarcely got his knees under the desk' when

Black Saturday scorched the Diocese at both ends. And he reflected later that the intensity of the work and ministry around Black Saturday imbedded him deeply into the community. He was certainly much loved by the clergy and people of this Diocese. Because he cared.

Yesterday, a priest from this Diocese shared a story with me of the time when they were a Lay Chaplain and, just before the Mass was to begin, they said to Bishop John: 'When will I stop feeling so sick and nervous?' Bishop John said 'If you are not feeling it, it is time to give it up. Those feelings show that you care'. Wise words to someone starting out in ministry.

Bishop John had wonderful rapport with children and families. As a young child began running up and down the aisle during the Mass, or as a baby began to cry – Bishop John would declare 'Well its not bothering me – so it shouldn't be bothering you' – immediately putting families at ease. He would often give 'high fives' to kids during the recessional and it was 'high fives' all round at the West Door after Mass. Kids would wait for it – positioning themselves at the end of the isle to catch one of Bishop John's 'high fives'.

A frustration for him, especially towards the end of his episcopacy, was that he couldn't spend the time that he wanted in parishes – but he was the bishop with the right skill set at the right time to steer our diocese – for the reasons I have mentioned – and also in the area of the schools – leading them into what is now Anglihschools and seeing them flourish.

He was the driving force behind our Synod's approval of a liturgy for the blessing of persons in a civil marriage under Australian law.

In the area of aged care and amid massive changes in the Aged Care industry and funding environment it became increasing clear that the Diocese could not continue as an aged care provider – and he steered us through to an outcome where good care continued. Bishop John left the Diocese on a much better financial footing – with financial reserves considerably healthier than when he arrived.

Bishop John had very deep evangelistic motivations. He wanted people to come to an informed faith. But more than that, he saw how



faith was sustained by the aesthetic. He loved music and loved the rich liturgical music of our tradition, realising its unique power to draw people into deeper faith and evangelize through beauty and reverence. Probably he was most comfortable with Sung Evensong and a good, sound sermon. And it was a joy to see him, when he retired, join the ranks of our Cathedral Evensong Choir.

He was concerned that the preaching of the Diocesan clergy was sound. He was well read and possessed a great theological depth. He had a brilliant mind. In any theological discussion with Bishop John, it was the Systematic Theologians that he would quote, always quoting Karl Barth, a favourite of his, whom he regarded as the greatest theologian of the 20th century.

Bishop John – our Father in God – our bishop for 11 years – much loved by the clergy and people of this Diocese. He leaves us with his example of a life well lived – lived in love and joy – one committed to our Lord and his Church – showing us the extravagant love of God in action. He wanted us to encounter anew the foolish generosity of God – for our God is a spendthrift Lover, he would say.

I conclude with words that Bishop John would repeatedly say to us clergy who were parish priests: 'Remember, it's not rocket science – just love the people of your parish and they will love you'.

Clergy Professional Development Day

By Ven. Mel Clark

Our Clergy Professional Development day was quite a treat as Rev'd. Keith Mascord visited to share his story and give us an insight into his latest book 'An Honest Faith – the possible friendship of Athens and Jerusalem'.

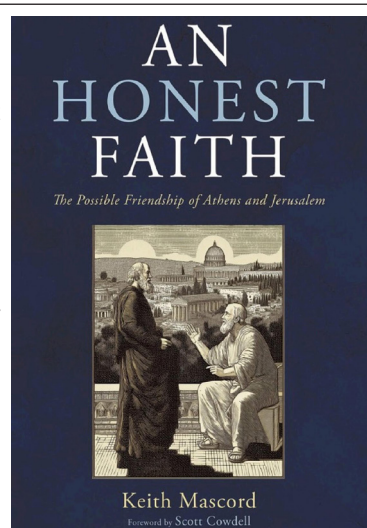
Rev'd. Keith told the gathered clergy about his early ministry education

at Moore College and work within the conservative evangelical arm of the Anglican church and how his growing understanding of the world and science altered his literal reading of scripture and the ministry into which he was called.

In his book, Rev'd Keith places theology and Christian faith alongside philosophy and science and discovers that this more open

reading is much more available to questioning and discernment, especially when it comes to issues around gender and sexuality. It is an honest account of faith deconstruction and then reformation in the spirit of inclusiveness and love.

Each chapter of the book invites the reader to reflect and discern their own understanding of scripture and religion in the context of the modern world and be inspired by history's great philosophical minds.



Spirited Women in Ministry Seminar

By Rev'd Lesley Lewis

The Diocese of Wangaratta hosted a very successful conference for Spirited Women in Mission and Ministry held on Saturday July 26, 2025.

With a program designed and delivered by women for women, the day was a celebration of the diverse contributions made by women to the life and wellbeing of faith communities.

The day began with a reflection on the calling of Mary and Martha to contemplative presence in the Gospel of Luke 10: 38-42 by Rev'd Lesley Lewis.

The keynote speakers were sensational with Professor Robyn Heckenberg and Professor Robin Ray.

Professor Robyn Heckenberg spoke on Aboriginal Ontology, including spirituality and ways of understanding our being. Robyn discussed how women have contributed to the preservation of creation through their connection with country and with each other as a sacred responsibility.

Professor Robin Ray spoke on a range of spiritual role models and mentors who have inspired and influenced her journey of faith highlighting Mary, Elizabeth and Lydia as examples of Spirited women in scripture. As a nurse, Robyn also mentioned the influential life of Florence Nightingale, best known for revolutionising nursing but who was also a talented and published theologian.

The Rev'd Cathy Cardin facilitated an inspirational conversation with Heidi Graham and Isobel Black regarding their roles as youth leaders in faith at Cathedral College Wangaratta and All Saints Anglican School Shepparton. It was a delight to see and hear the excitement and enthusiasm of these two Spirited young Women in Mission and Ministry.

The afternoon breakout sessions offered participants the choice to attend one of four distinctly different presentations including Diversity in Ministry led by Rev'd Canon Maryann Leonard, Spirituality & Meditation led by Rev'd Canon Moira Evers, Who am I with God led by Rev'd Catherine Dawson, and Inwardly Nurtured to be Outwardly Focused by Dr. Robin Ray.

The planning committee wishes to thank all who contributed to the success of the day, with a major shout out in thanks and appreciation to John Leonard for purchasing and delivering the catering supplies, along with Rev'd Scott Jessup, Rev'd Jerome Francis, Rev'd Alan Kelb, and Mark Cardin who, in a reversal of traditional roles, prepared and served lunch.



Clergy Retreat 2025

By Rev'd ROberta Hamilton

The Bishops and Clergy from Riverina and Wangaratta Dioceses met together for a retreat early in September. We went to Bright which was convenient for everyone and, despite Bright being at the centre of police investigations, we had a peaceful stay in the beautiful surrounds.

Our retreat director was Dr Cath Connelly from the Abbey on Raymond Island. Dr Connelly is an experienced spiritual director and she enabled a very deep reflective space for contemplation. Dr Connelly spoke about four Celtic Saints and led us to ask questions about who we were before God and, for each of us, where we might find the place of resurrection. We were also challenged by the notion of stepping out in faith and how we might be in right relationship with the sacred.

The silence was a great blessing as we considered these questions. We had time for much inner work. As clergy who are very busy and never come to the end of the 'to do list', the opportunity to spend a chunk of time doing nothing but placing ourselves before God is

very valuable.

As priests serving God's people, we were reminded of what Frederick Beuchner said

about vocation: 'The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.' This retreat enabled us to find again our deep gladness.

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Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Benalla presents

SPRING SING!

An afternoon of choral music
October 26th from 1pm

For enquiries email melissaclark3@hotmail.com
Holy Trinity Church, 77 Arundel Street, Benalla Entrance is free!

Cobram Anglican Grammar

Trades Centre Nears Completion

We are incredibly proud to share that our Trades Centre has reached the Practical Completion stage, a significant moment in a project that has been more than three years in the making.

Final inspections and touch-ups are underway, with handover from Crow Constructions to the school set to take place in the week starting 24 August.

If all goes to plan, our students will walk through the doors and begin learning in this brilliant new facility at the start of Term 4.

The near completion of this \$3.4m project is the culmination of thorough strategic planning, in-depth industry research, collaboration and perseverance from all involved. From receiving the design concepts from AngliSchools CEO, The Reverend Peter Laurence OAM in 2022 to securing crucial grant funding, the journey has brought together the skills, expertise and support of AngliSchools, the VISBGA, Tomahawk Property, Crow Constructions and a host of skilled contractors. Every stage has been driven by a shared commitment to delivering something truly special for our students and our community.

We would like to acknowledge the Commonwealth Government for its role in providing a grant for this project through its capital grants program.

It is our vision that the Trades Centre will leave an enduring legacy in our local region. Over time, we believe it will become a place where generations of young people will develop the vital skills needed for skilled trades and future-focused industries. Currently Cobram Anglican Grammar School is the only secondary school

in Victoria with industry-standard robotics, technology normally reserved for university students. The centre will also include state of the art laser cutters, water jet cutters, CNC machines and 3D printers. The centre will open doors for current Cobram students to career pathways that are vital to Australia's future. The possibilities for learning, innovation and growth in this space are truly exciting.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has played a part in this achievement, and we cannot wait to see the first classes in action.



Significant Milestones for Timbertop Campus Students

On August 22nd Bishop Clarence baptised eight and confirmed fifteen young people in the St John the Baptist Chapel at Timbertop. The

families of the baptised and confirmed students were in attendance, along with the principal of Geelong Grammar Ms Rebecca Cody, the head of Timbertop Campus Mr Ross Hopkins and the chapel leader Mr Sandy Mackinnon. The choir of the campus was also on hand to celebrate with song, offering a beautiful rendition of 'Down to the River' for the congregation.

Bishop Clarence reflected with the congregation on the importance of place and space and shared some thoughts about Bishop John Parkes' love of the Timbertop campus and chapel. He also encouraged the candidates to always look to Jesus as an example throughout their lives and in their interactions in the world.



Trinity Anglican College - Thurgoona

Fathers' Day Breakfast

A big thank you was in order to those who joined the Fathers' Day Breakfast at Trinity Anglican College, Thurgoona, on the morning of Friday 7 September 2025 to celebrate Father's Day!

11 students, we served up more than 450 egg and bacon rolls.

A special shoutout to Bugg's Brew coffee van for the much-needed caffeine, and to our fantastic Year 12s who pitched in to make the morning run smoothly. It was the perfect start to the day – great food, games to play, plenty of smiles, and lots of laughter.

With the help of our wonderful Year



All Saints Anglican School - Shepparton

R U OK? Day - Equipped to Serve

Our Year 8 students have been putting our motto into action in some wonderful ways! Nimrah, Chloe R, Anderson, Alex, Lalia and Nash rolled up their sleeves to make delicious slices in support of a St Augustine's Church event. Meanwhile, Chloe N, Lola, Lila and Isabell have shown incredible dedication, giving up

every lunch break for the past two weeks to create beautiful R U OK? Day bracelets for our community. We're so proud of their generosity and teamwork – shining examples of Justice, Excellence, Faith, Respect, Integrity and Inclusion in action. The Vicar of St Augustine's, Shepparton, Rev Jerome Francis, commented on this project, saying "We appreciate all you do for us at St Augustine's and for the wider community of Shepparton. Your dedication and support make a real difference in our lives and in the life of our town. Thank you!"



Cathedral College Wangaratta Year Nine Students Step Up to Support Local Shelter

By Ms Eliza Pascall

A group of compassionate and proactive Year Nine students have taken a heartwarming initiative to support the Wangaratta Night Shelter. With the backing of our Parents & Friends Association, these students have been dedicating their Wednesday afternoons to baking homemade quiches and cookies for those in need. Their efforts not only provide nourishment but also bring comfort and kindness to members of our local community experiencing hardship. We are incredibly proud of the following students for their generosity and leadership: Lily Radnor, Imogen English, Isabella Colson, Hugo Rodda, Atticus Thompson, Lizzy Healy, Nelitha Abeykoon, Darcy Murray, Jack Carmichael & Easton Fullwood. As the Year Nine Coordinator, I am proud of the positive example they are setting for their peers. Their actions remind us all that many small actions can make a big difference.



Interregnum at Kilmore

By Caroline Burge

As any parish in the Diocese knows, having an Interregnum isn't always easy. Despite knowing we can do quite a lot of the ministry, worship services and administration ourselves, we tend to rely on our Parish Priest for leadership and direction and for their love and support for us.

The Parish of Kilmore, Broadford, Tallarook and Pyalong has now been vacant for nearly four months following the resignation of David Kerr, whose farewell from the Parish was at the end of May. During the last few months, the Parish has been blessed to have Rev'd Helen Malcolm come each week as the Sunday locum and the Ven Mel Clark as the Archdeacon overseeing the pastoral side of the Parish and chairing Parish Council meetings.

At the August Parish Council meeting our Archdeacon joined Parish Council for a meeting at Kilmore. She brought Parish Council up to



date with requirements for Safe Church, Parish Profile and Parish Strategic Plan amongst other Parish concerns. Mel took the time to follow this up with an inspection of the Rectory and also the Parish Op Shop. While the Rectory is vacant, jobs have been easily completed to improve the heating and cooling in the house; new electricity

points; fresh curtains; new washing machine etc. It is so important for our clergy to have a comfortable house to call home for their time in the Parish.

Please pray for us as we go through the process of getting a new Priest for our Parish.

Opera at Beechworth

Opera Scholars Australia returned to Beechworth to perform 'Mostly Mozart' in Christ Church on Sunday 16 August 2025. The Concert was directed by Alexander Lewis and supported by OSA and Opera in the Alps' founding directors Margot and Graeme Wall, and talented members of Opera Scholars Australia's Graduate. The program consisted of operatic works by Mozart, Donizetti, Verdi, Rossini, Bizet, Offenbach, Lehár, Schubert and Schumann accompanied by Phillipa Safey on piano. 'Mozart's music is revered for its perfect balance of beauty, structure, and emotional depth,' says Al. 'His melodies speak directly to the soul, capturing the full range of human experience with clarity and grace.

His works also provide the ideal platform for young singers to develop their technical and artistic skills.' The concert packed the church

with over 130 in attendance. The overall performance was described as 'sublime and outstanding.'



Season of Creation – Becoming Creative This Spring

By Beryl Bonfitto

Three months/Thirteen weeks/ninety-one days. Three major projects – for example Home/Work/Community.

Thirteen special overhauls – like a real estate checklist.

Ninety-one boxes to tick – to fill, to label, to

stack, to store or sell, donate, give away or to learn, to share and grow.

It seems like a lot to do and so little time. Why do we procrastinate? What do we aim to achieve? Is it physical, mental, emotional or spiritual STUFF? How do we decide?

Start today – one task (box). This week – one overhaul. This month – one project. Outline

The Plan. Let's begin to cross the creek/divide: I won't/can't - to I will/I did. To reflect - What have I done?

I have CREATED – a new space, a new feeling, a new appreciation, a new joy, a new friendship, a new path to enjoy life and take a walk on the 'wild side', perhaps to see the rivers rise to meet the wattles glittering through the bush and to listen to the laughter of the Kookaburras reminding us all of Mother Nature's perseverance to create something wonderful every season.

More boxes. More blessings to all. Happy creating from St. Augustine's Shepparton.

Raise the Roof at Eldorado

By Jamie Kronborg

Many people rugged up for art, wine and cheese at St Jude's Anglican Eldorado last evening to add to the congregation's wonderful fundraising efforts for church roof repairs. Generous donors have given almost \$9000 for renovations to the 'lid' of the historic church, built in 1870, in a campaign supported by the Wangaratta Chronicle. Newly re-elected Independent Member for Indi Helen Haines MP opened the exhibition, including works by King Valley artist Anita Laurence, and Anglican Bishop of Wangaratta Clarence Bester said a blessing. Nomads Garden vigneron Ben and Ellie Schulz Dahlenberg also offered tastings of their fine, local wines and Milawa Cheese Company supported the celebration, together with other generous donors. The roof campaign

has been led by John Bell and others who were recognised for their work with special medals commissioned by hosts Deacon Sue Hall and church warden Jenny Anderson and presented by Dr Haines.

Photo below: L-R: Bishop Clarence, Jenny Anderson (Church Warden), Helen Haines MP, John Bell, Rev Sue Hall



Little Sugar Gliders: St John's launches new Playgroup

A Happy Parent.

At St John's Thurgoona Friday mornings have taken on a new life with the launch of a warm and welcoming playgroup for local families. The initiative, called the Little Sugar Gliders, is the vision of Reverend Canon Maryann Leonard, Vicar of St John's and a longtime early years educator.

"When I first arrived, I was asked to find ways of reaching out into the community." Rev'd Maryann explained. "I discovered there were no Friday playgroups available, and many others were already full. So together with parishioners, we decided to create one here."

The group, now in its second term, offers an intimate, family-friendly space where children can play, learn and grow, while parents and carers build connections of their own. With around six families already enrolled, sessions are small enough to foster strong relationships and a cozy welcoming atmosphere.

As both an educator and wellbeing practitioner, Rev'd Maryann has shaped the program to align with the National Early Years Learning Framework, preparing children for school in

gentle, age-appropriate ways. "We include activities that develop motor and social skills" she said. "But it's also about children learning how to be with others - sharing, communicating and building friendships."

Faith also finds a natural place in the program. As part of the Christian playgroup Network, Little Sugar Gliders sometimes includes a Bible story or simple activities inspired by Scripture, alongside other familiar storybooks and creative play.

For Rev'd Maryann the greatest joy comes from families themselves. "I love families, I love children. Watching them grow - not just in skills, but emotionally and socially, is such a privilege" she said. "The smiles on their faces make it all worthwhile."

Looking ahead, St John's hopes to expand the playgroup with more space and possibly an additional day to meet the demand. But, for now, the focus remains on keeping the group welcoming, supportive and open to all.

"This playgroup is exactly what we were looking for" said one parent, who attends weekly with her 4 year old. "It's helping prepare our daughter for



school and giving her new friends along the way.

Rev'd Maryann encourages other parishes to consider starting their own playgroups. "It may seem daunting with all the checks and processes, but it is so worth it" she said. The joy it brings to children and families is something you can't measure.

Night Shelter in Benalla

The Anglican Parish of Benalla has been involved with the Benalla Homelessness Response Group since its inception three years

ago, but this year was able to take a big step forward in its ability to help with the Welcome Place Night Shelter getting up and running.

The parish was one of three churches in town providing a place for shelter during the winter months. The Parish Centre in Benalla was used for two nights each week as a welcome and open for those who needed a place to sleep.

Food was made on site for dinner, as well as pre-prepared food for breakfast and snacks.

It was a great first year of the Night Shelter and what a difference something like this can make to people's lives, for them to be seen, validated and cared for. The parish looks forward to being involved into the future with such a worthwhile project.

Thank you Rev'd Helen Malcolm

By Caroline Burge

The Parish of Kilmore, with Broadford, Pyalong and Tallarook is indebted to the Rev'd Helen Malcolm for being the Sunday locum over the three coldest months of the year, in one of the coldest parishes in the Diocese. Winter in Killmore is an 'acquired taste' and not for the faint hearted, but Helen travelled most weeks to ensure that a weekly Eucharist was held in the parish during the interregnum.

With wonderful sermons and a calming presence, Helen's ministry from the beginning of June to the end of August was appreciated by all. The Parish and Helen worked well together and it is always good to see things

done differently, to ponder the explanation and the impact on our faith practices.

Helen's last Sunday in the parish was on Sunday August 31st with one service in the

Parish. St Matthew's day was celebrated a few weeks early to coincide with Helen's farewell and parishioners all joined together at St Matthew's, Broadford with the Eucharist followed by morning tea in Gavan Hall.



Chaplaincy at St John's Village

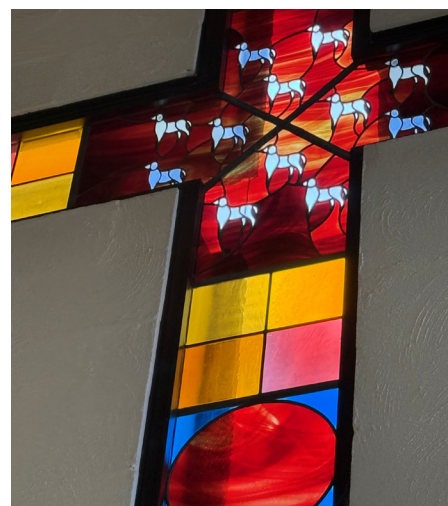
By Canon Moira Evers

On Thursday March 6 the Chaplaincy at St John's Village Wangaratta was officially restored in the chapel of St Mary and St John, with the licensing of Canon Moira Evers as Chaplain.

The Anglican Diocese of Wangaratta established

St John's Village with a vision of providing a community of care with Christ at its centre. Years pass and circumstances change, however, the desire to retain a spiritual connection at St John's Village led to discussions with the current managers of the Village, "Respect," who were delighted that the beautiful chapel could be re-dedicated for the purpose for which it was established.

Each week Mass is celebrated within the chapel and now that the Chaplain's department has been revived, residents can enjoy spiritual and pastoral care, knowing that they are loved by God and upheld by the prayers of the Diocese.



Confirmation at St George's, Numurkah

By Rob Elliott

On a fine St Bartholomew's Day, 24th August, the Parish of Numurkah-Nathalia was pleased to welcome Bishop Clarence to St George's Church, Numurkah soon after his return to duties. The occasion was a Confirmation service for three of the young people in our congregation.

Gatteya, Charlotte and Xavier were presented by their sponsors to the Bishop for confirmation and warmly welcomed into our parish family as communicant members. During the service Bishop Clarence was assisted by Rev'd Gunnar Rippon and servers Elaine German and Heather Stammers.

Following the service the congregation moved to the Hamon Parish Centre where a delicious lunch, prepared by the St George's ladies, was provided. The food and the chance to mingle and socialise were thoroughly enjoyed by all those present. At the conclusion of the lunch the three confirmees cut the Confirmation cake, which was shared amongst those present.



Photo above: Charlotte, Xavier and Gatt cut the confirmation cake.

Farewell to Rev'd Gunnar and Margaret Rippon

By Rob Elliott

On 7 September the Parish of Numurkah-Nathalia farewelled Revd Canon Gunnar Rippon and Margaret. Rev'd Gunnar is finally able to cease formal parish duties as he retires to Perth to be nearer family. The final service in the parish, at St George's Numurkah, was a Sung Eucharist as has been the custom for many years.

Rev'd Gunnar first came to Numurkah as a locum for several months in 2019 and both he and Margaret endeared themselves to the parish. We were thrilled when he was appointed as Locum Priest in Residence some two and a half years ago. He is certainly a very dedicated priest, presenting challenging sermons and encouraging the congregation to look outwards. Both he and Margaret have motivated the parish to focus on outreach and mission both locally and to the wider community. Amongst other endeavours, a well-attended Chatty Café

has been commenced in Numurkah and the parish has supported the Mission to Seamen in Melbourne with donations of both money and hand knitted beanies. A food donation basket is present at each service at St George's and the items donated are distributed to those in need through agencies within the Numurkah township.

Rev'd Gunnar has led study sessions which were thoughtful and challenging and Margaret has enchanted us with her artistic displays in St George's church at special times in the church's year.

A lunch following the final Eucharist allowed parishioners to say their final goodbyes. Lou Hamon, churchwarden, thanked them both for their loving care of the parish and presented them with a monetary gift. They certainly did not need anything more that had to be packed for the journey to Western Australia!

It is with a sense of sadness that we say farewell to them, wishing them many years of good health and happy retirement in Perth.

Photo below: Rev'd Gunnar and Margaret Rippon with Lou Hamon, churchwarden



Lay Preaching Course & Book Club Proposal

By Revd Mel Clark

One of the challenges of being in a rural diocese is attracting priests to vacant parishes, particularly if the parishes are able to offer part time ministry only.

Therefore as a diocese, to ensure our sustainability, we need to rely on team ministry and lay ministry a lot more than in urban areas, which is why it is important to ensure that our lay leaders are well trained and encouraging of others who may be interested in stepping up. However, these courses can be just as important for people who are just dipping their toe in and curious about their faith and wishing to explore for their own sake as well. In the coming year there will be two different opportunities to be involved in

learning and training.

The first will be a Lay Preaching Course to be held in November and it's for anyone interested in the process of researching, preparing, writing and presenting sermons in their parish contexts.

There will be two sessions with leaders from our diocese and one session that will incorporate an online session with Trinity Theological College which will offer helpful preaching suggestions for next year's lectionary readings.

The sessions are: Saturdays - November 8th, 15th, and 22nd from 10am until 3pm.

The second learning and training opportunity will be a diocesan book club. A book will be selected for everyone to purchase and read and then we will gather, either in person or by zoom, to discuss it.

The book club will be an easy way into discussions about faith and a safe place to explore and ask questions – both for new Christians and for those of us who've been in congregations for years. At this stage we are gauging interest and will work out dates when we know if people are keen.

Please get in touch if you have any queries about these learning options. Rev Mel Clark melissaclark3@hotmail.com or 0411 722 718



Photo above: Rev'd Alan and Jayne Jarrad on holiday in Alberta Canada had a chance to meet the Archbishop of Calgary and also the Dean of Calgary after confirmation with the Sunday Eucharist at the Calgary Cathedral.

Memorial Service for Bishop John Parkes 21-07-2025

SERMON by Bishop Jeffrey Driver
– edited with permission

I first encountered Anthony John Parkes nearly 40 years ago at a social evening that my wife and I, as a member of the Vocations Discernment Panel for the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, hosted.

John, arriving a bit late from Sydney, came in, a larger-than-life character, somewhat like a Peacock entering a chook house.

But John was like that. One way or another, he could fill a space and, from today's Gospel: In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. I go to prepare a place for you. And you know the way to the place where I am going.

John was an expansive character. Yes, physically expansive - but also a much profounder expansiveness - the expansiveness of the Gospel. John deeply believed in the "many dwelling places" of God's love. John was resistant to a narrowing, production line Gospel, to cardboard boxed proclamation, to franchise church, churning out ready-to microwave salvation, good to go and one size fits all.

In our John 14 image, the rooms, the dwelling places, are bespoke. They are a place prepared. Not just

prepared, but prepared "for you". Especially prepared. There is no duplicate decor here!

No matter where we stand on some of the church's dividing issues, what we recognise in our friend John today, is a man who discomfited us with the reminder that the Church should always make a space for each and every one to belong.

"And you know the way"? Well Thomas thinks that's a bit over the top. And Philip is far from persuaded.

"We do not know the way! How can we know the way? Just show us the Father and we shall be satisfied".

The quest for certainty. They want it spelled out and clear.

Jesus does not oblige them with any such domesticated comfort.

Jesus gives them relationship. This is the knowing they need. In this sort of knowing -- the knowing of intimate relationship, they know the Father.

Knowing was important to John Parkes. John had a very good mind. He read. He reflected and he loved the occasional debate. When it came to the things of God, John was wary of all-too-easy knowing, of slick and tidy explanations that

left little space for the shades of grey, nuance and mystery.

For John, God was encountered, apprehended, not just comprehended.

For John, doing theology did include the disciplines of the mind, but also the wonder of music, of glorious voices lifted in choir, of sacred spaces and architecture, simple liturgy devoutly led and a fly-line on a lake with the sun just setting.

For John, in all these things there was glorious presence.

I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. If you know me ... you know the Father.

John, today you remind us once more that, at the heart of the Christian journey, is the gift of relationship, with all its uncertainties, even frustration and pain.

John could certainly fill a space - this cathedral, a fishing boat, our lives. But today there is a very large emptiness. We gather and he is not here.

Even though we have known for a time that this day would come, we are like those disciples confronted with Jesus' words about leaving them. We are somewhat at a loss.

Marg, Nell, James, Tanu, young Peter.

Today we try to share with you that big empty space that is John. We grieve with you.

Not turning this man you loved into some sort of saint. He was not a saint; he was a man. A man who caught an expansive vision of the love of God and struggled through his life to live into that love.

A man who knew frailty and self-doubt as close companions at times, but who had the capacity to inspire faith and confidence in others. A man who could be stubborn at times, but whose faithful perseverance under God could remarkably build, repair, and heal.

John. A man. A husband. Father. Grandfather.

In those conversations confined to a fishing boat, John and I talked occasionally about the pressure our vocations put upon our families. Just sometimes, we thought, we might have got the balance right. Often, we recognised, we didn't. But what I know is that John deeply loved his family - and that love is here today.

Anthony John Parkes.

In my Father's House there are many rooms, places for you to dwell.

And I go to prepare a place for you. Son of Lofty and Margaret. An English man abroad, who found he belonged in Australia. Husband. Father and grandfather. Friend. Lawyer. Deacon. Priest. Bishop. Singer of praise. Maker of violins. Smoker of salami. Caster of flies. A man whose faith was in a God of disturbingly expansive love. And now, to that faith. To that hope. To a place prepared - we commend with love, with thanksgiving, our dear friend John.

70 Years on

The Big Shift - When the rising waters of the enlarged Lake Hume meant that Tallangatta had to 'go west' to its new site at Bolga, the original 'Church of England', built in 1898, was relocated to its present site on the corner of Queen Elizabeth Drive and Towong Street. The laying the foundation stone of the new Church was laid by the then Governor of Victoria, Sir Dallas Brooks, on September 25th 1955, with the Anglicans of 'Old Tallangatta' hauled their pews out of the church and carried them down the valley to the approximate spot among the raw soil at the new location, then sat on them to watch the ceremony. The Reverend R.G. Tavare, Parish Priest, re-laid the original church's Foundation Stone, set in place by Archdeacon Henry Langley on March 8th 1898. The small, silver-plated trowel used

in the ceremony still enjoys pride of place in the church. Months later the present Anglican Church of Christ the King was completed and the old site abandoned. So, on Sunday, 31 August 2025, Tallangatta Anglicans were joined by friends from Thurgoona, Tallangatta Uniting Church and elsewhere to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of laying the foundation stone of the new church, which, with a new rectory, became part of the growing collection of buildings in Bolga (New Tallangatta) in the mid 1950s. No anniversary celebration is complete without a 'cutting of the cake' - our parish's 'most senior' member, Joyce Giltrap, did the honours, with capable support from Jill Caspar.

Photo right: Joyce Giltrap and Jill Caspar cut the 70th anniversary cake

