



THE ADVOCATE

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

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

The God of Celebration

**This is the day that the Lord
has made, let us rejoice and
be glad in it.**

Psalm 118.24

SYNOD 2026

First Session of the Forty-Second Synod

A Report from Synod

By Revd Jerome Francis

Anglicans Presentation: The Rev'd Peter Laurence OAM, CEO Anglicans

AngliSchools (formerly Anglican Schools Commission) shared an overview of its ministry and educational work across Western Australia and the Diocese of Wangaratta, beginning with an acknowledgment of the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which the schools, parishes and ministries are located and reaffirming a commitment to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

Anglicans now operates sixteen schools across Australia, including four within the Diocese of Wangaratta: Trinity Anglican College Thurgood, Cathedral College Wangaratta, Cobram Anglican Grammar School and All Saints Anglican School Shepparton. Together these schools serve almost 19,000 students and employ more than 2,600 staff.

A major focus of the presentation was the recently launched Strategy 2030, which sets the direction for AngliSchools through the remainder of the decade. The strategy is built around a bold vision:

"To be Australia's leading provider of quality,

inclusive, fee-accessible Anglican schools, united in faith and learning, living our Anglican identity."

The speakers emphasised that Anglican identity is at the heart of every school. The schools seek to be more than excellent educational institutions with Anglican roots; they aim to actively live and express Anglican faith and values throughout school life.

Strategy 2030 is guided by five key priorities:

1. Anglican Identity – ensuring faith remains central to school life.
2. Flourishing Communities – building healthy, caring and supportive school communities.
3. Stewardship and Sustainability – responsibly managing resources and planning for the future.
4. Optimisation and Innovation – continually improving practices and embracing new opportunities.
5. Governance and Compliance – maintaining high standards of accountability and good governance.

The Commission has also adopted four shared values across all schools:

- Faith
- Inclusion
- Respect
- Excellence

Together these form the acronym FIRE, supported by the theme:

"A fire within, a light for others."

Anglicans dual purpose was reiterated: to strengthen existing schools while responsibly

establishing new Anglican schools where opportunities and resources permit.

Particular attention was given to All Saints Anglican School Shepparton, the Commission's first new school established outside Western Australia. Opened in 2024, the school has grown rapidly to almost 600 students and around 80 staff within its first few years. Plans are underway for the school to expand through to Year 12 by 2029.

Principal Jim Laussen spoke about the school's strong commitment to Anglican identity through weekly chapel services and faith formation. He noted that students from diverse religious backgrounds, including Christian, Sikh, Muslim and Hindu families, have embraced chapel as a valued part of school life.

A significant example of this engagement is the school's focus on the theme of peace during the current term. Inspired by the Japanese tradition of folding paper cranes as symbols of peace, students, staff and families have already created more than 11,000 paper cranes. The project has become a powerful expression of community, hope and shared purpose.

The presentation highlighted the important partnership between AngliSchools and the Diocese of Wangaratta, demonstrating how education, faith and community engagement work together to nurture young people and contribute to the mission of the Church.

Continued on page 6

Bishop Clarence writes...

Dear Clergy, People and Friends of the Diocese

10, 10 & 10

Who would have thought that a 10-week period of Long Service Leave followed by a 10-week period of connecting, re-connecting and catching up on a 10-week absence, would turn out to be a nightmare for the next 10 weeks. This all on the backdrop of a Clergy Conference, a Synod and taking care of the ordinary affairs of the Diocese, combined with taking charge of the ministry at the Cathedral for a further 10 weeks.

The Buzz Word / Number (10)

The 10-week concept was also highlighted in my Synod Charge for both 2025 and 2026. The challenge in 2025 is that I asked the smaller congregations to work towards a minimum of 10 people, \$10K towards the ministry expenses (way less than the actual value) and to cover the usual expenses associated with the running costs of a building. After a year, what happened was resistance to the challenge and total ignorance and questions being asked as to the determination of this formula. This had been explained at Synod 2025; Archdeacons have been engaged through Parish discussions about the same, as well as letters and articles about the challenges facing us. At Synod 2026, I have added another 10, which is 10 months for us now to embrace the challenge and work towards obtaining our goals as we will enter a 10-month celebration of our 125th year as a Diocese with effect October 2026.

So why the confusion

Challenges present opportunities for us to work towards change, or we can embrace the inevitable, especially when we wait for the last person to turn the lights off, or when there is no one else left to mow the grass. This has been my own focus as the Archdeacon for Ministry Development and even as the Bishop, trying to re-organize ministry structure units in order for them to be sustainable and financially viable, with the hope of moving from a survival to a thriving mode. In this edition of the Advocate, we have two articles regarding two of the four Churches that have been deconsecrated between Synod 2025 and 2026, now a total of 10 Churches during my Episcopacy, and 30 Churches since the inauguration of the Diocese in 1902. (See the Bishop's Synod Charge 2026 for more details). It is my hope, together with The Rev'd Dr Edwin Byford, to put a publication

together for our 125th anniversary service next year that will 're-publish' most of the articles, sermons and challenges that have been shared over the past 10 years dealing with this subject. If there is any confusion, it is only because of the refusal or unwillingness to read, follow and share all the information that has been so freely available over the past few years.

Ministry Development

This has always been my focus and one of my tasks is to ensure the ongoing ministry within our Diocese as well as to ensure that each Pastoral Charge is looked after by a cleric with the support of good Lay Leaders. Until two years ago and for a good period, we had no vacancies within the Diocese, even though we worked towards cooperating ministries stretching the workload of a few clergy who looked after very big centers. Two of these clergy, Dean Neil Hicks and Rev'd Richard Pennington will both be retiring at the end of August. These five to six ministry unit Parishes will be hard to fill unless we navigate a new plan of action which we have already begun. An article in this edition of The Advocate 'Challenges from the Charge' describes one proposed model which will be further developed over the next few months. Another article, regarding St John's Thurgoona, tells of a success story with a small congregation facing closure and taking on the challenges of re-defining, re-designing, re-organizing and re-establishing their ministry. In a few weeks, I will confirm nine people, more than the number of people (8) when the congregation was replanted as a Mission District almost 3 years ago. We now have evidence of how this ministry model can work and look forward to announcing these kinds of visionary actions into the future.

Continuing the 10, 10, 10 Option

Over the past year, we have established a Bishop's Home Mission Fund to help us achieve these ministry development initiatives, especially by supporting some of our smaller Churches. In addition to the mission support given to struggling Parishes already, this fund (explained through many letters and articles in The Advocate) is there to further such support way into the future. We started this with a request from every Pastoral Charge to contribute \$500, followed by a Winter Soup Appeal in 2025 and stewardship giving in November last year. Some Parishes took on the challenge while others did not. On the fifth Sunday during Lent this year, we encouraged our Parishes to hold



a special function and monies raised through a special morning tea or other activity, but once again the support has been disappointing. At Synod, through my Charge at the end of May, I have set a target of raising \$125K for our 125th Anniversary Service on 13 March 2027 and can only hope that the \$42K raised so far will be a good contribution to the shortfall. I have once again asked that, for each of my Pastoral Visits to parishes, a contribution of at least \$125 be made and that every Parish will give 10 x 125 (\$1250) on 3 October when we officially launch our celebration. In addition, we have organized a few fundraising events to help us reach the target, one of them being the Diocesan Trivia night held recently. We live in hope.

Evensong & Naming of Building

On Thursday, 6 August on the Feast of the Transfiguration which would have been the birthday of Bishop John Parkes, we will have a special evensong at 4.30pm at Holy Trinity Cathedral in John's honour as well as naming number 3 The Close as John Parkes House at a special ceremony. Details will be available soon, but I ask you to add the date to your diaries.

+Clarence

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Winter SOULstice Trivia Night Warms Hearts and Minds

By Rev Jane Trigg

There was plenty of warmth to be found in Purbrick Hall at Holy Trinity Cathedral on Friday 19 June, as almost 70 people gathered for the inaugural Winter SOULstice Trivia Night.

With good food, generous helpings of fellowship and no shortage of laughter, the evening raised more than \$1,000 for the Bishop's Home Mission Fund.

People of all ages joined in the fun, with some making the journey from more than an hour away to take part. Teams wrestled with questions both profound and perplexing, trying to decide whether famous quotations belonged to Shakespeare or the Scriptures, identifying



hymn tunes played on the violin by MJ, and testing their memories in a round affectionately titled "Know Your ABCs".

One of the highlights of the evening was the ecclesiastical fashion parade, with Canon Moira taking to the catwalk with grace and good humour as participants attempted to identify an assortment of church garments and vestments. It seems Anglican trivia can be every bit as entertaining as sport and popular culture.

There was a generous provision of prizes and raffle items, much to the delight of the many

winners. And perhaps the greatest prize was the opportunity simply to be together. Amid much laughter and friendly competition, the evening was a joyful reminder that community is built not only in worship, but also around shared meals, cups of tea and the occasional impossible trivia question!

Heartfelt thanks go to everyone who attended, volunteered and helped make the Winter SOULstice Trivia Night such a success. The organisers are already hearing one question more often than any other: "When's the next one?"

Challenges from the Charge

By SIMONE KERWIN
Credit - Wangaratta Chronicle

The next year promises to be one of celebration for the Anglican Diocese of Wangaratta, as it marks 125 years since the enthronement of its first bishop, Bishop Thomas Armstrong.

In keeping with those plans, current Bishop of Wangaratta Clarence Bester took 'The God of Celebration' as the theme of his recent synod charge, which outlined a 10-month celebratory plan for the diocese. This includes boosting funds for ministry development, working to increase congregation numbers and supporting the ongoing creation of co-operative ministry arrangements, to stand the diocese in good stead for the future.

Bishop Clarence said anniversary celebrations would be launched in October this year, recalling the Melbourne Diocese's 'New Dioceses Act' which was passed in 1901. There would be further commemorations around 24 February - the anniversary of Bishop Armstrong's consecration - before the official anniversary on 13 March. Celebrations will then conclude at synod in 2027, which it's hoped will be held

close to 18 August, when the first synod was conducted in Wangaratta in 1902.

"Life is a celebration, because God has given us life and continues to sustain us throughout our lives," the Bishop said in his synod charge on 29 May. "We are to celebrate life, even in the face of adversity and challenges."

Challenges can be numerous in the modern world, particularly for religious institutions dealing with dwindling congregations, difficulties in attracting clergy and issues around property arrangements. Four churches have been deconsecrated in the Wangaratta diocese since the last synod gathering and He said "with more vicarages than are needed, it seems that we have now become property managers and renters of buildings that have more expenses than income".

In facing these obstacles, the Bishop said the diocese must engage in 'business unusual'. "We have heard it said so many times that we cannot do the same things and expect different results". So parishes in the diocese are being asked to follow a 10-10-10 rule in the lead-up to next year's 125th celebrations. Over a 10 month period from synod until March's anniversary, churches are being asked to maintain an attendance of at least 10 people and an income of \$10,000 per year towards the cost of ministry and running of buildings.

In Wangaratta itself, where Bishop Clarence is currently overseeing Holy Trinity Cathedral and Wangaratta West and the Warbys parishes

while dean/priest-in-charge, the Very Reverend Neil Hicks, is on leave in the lead-up to his retirement in August, a two year target has been set for fully establishing a co-operative ministry. The Bishop said this arrangement had not yet resulted in fully-integrated parishes, but the two parish councils had expressed a desire to continue with the process. "We are going to give each one the opportunity to develop and strengthen themselves, to look at what 'greater Wangaratta' could be in two years," the Bishop said. "We want to encourage all parishes to work towards something; if they have not reached the target, we will sit down with them."

Bishop Clarence said the aim was to develop an 'every member ministry', with lay people as important as clergy in keeping churches going. "It is possible, and I use the example of Thurgoona, where we have had success with this" he said. "I'm feeling positive, because I know it's going to work when we all work together and, by the 125th anniversary, we will have some kind of plan in action for 2027."

"I do not want to be the last Bishop of Wangaratta and I want us to work together for the common good, to build God's kingdom in this place and to bring about the renewal, revitalisation, reorganisation, re-establishing and re-birthing of our ministry and ministry structures.

"As we move towards the 125th celebration of our diocese, celebrating the God of Celebration and each other, let us embrace the future which is in God's hands and to which God calls all of us to make a difference."

James William Reeves

Born 1939, Died 2026

Jim Reeves came to Australia in 1949 as a child migrant. He was "deported," along with his two younger brothers (John, seven and Geoffrey, five), as he tells it, by the British government. They spent six years in the Lady Northcote Farm at Bacchus Marsh. At 18 years of age, he worked as a pest control operator in Ringwood before undertaking theological study. "You could say that I went from 'Let us spray' to 'Let us pray,'" Jim observed with characteristic wit.

Jim, trained at St Columb's Hall in Wangaratta, where he received his Licentiate of Theology, and was made a Deacon in 1964 and priested in 1965 (21st December), by the then Bishop of Wangaratta, Theodore Bruce McCall.

Jim served two curacies. The first at St Mary's Redcliffe over 1965-1966 and then at St Augustine's

Shepparton over 1967-1968. He was then appointed Rector of Violet Town / Dookie between 1969-1971, followed by St Paul's Myrtleford from 1971-1974. Between 1974 and 1975 Jim took a period of leave from active ministry. And then in 1975-76 returned to active ministry as priest in charge of the parish of Corryong; and as Rector of St Stephen's Rutherglen between 1976 and 1979. Over the period 1977 to 1981 he also held the position of Bishop's Chaplain to Bishop Max Thomas. He was rector of Holy Trinity Nathalia between 1979-1981. Jim then moved to the Diocese of North Queensland where he was assistant priest in the parish of Heatley between 1983 and 1984, returning to Wangaratta to become priest in charge of the parish of Marysville in 1984. In 1985 Jim moved to the Diocese of Gippsland, to take



up the position of chaplain to Wron Wron prison between 1985 and 1989. He was then rector of Yarram between 1985 and 1989, followed by Heyfield from 1989 to 1995, during which time he also served as chaplain to Sale prison between 1990-1993. During the period 1990-1995 Jim was rural dean of the Sale Deanery before becoming rector of St Georges Wonthaggi between 1995 and 1997. Jim returned to Wangaratta diocese to become rector of the parish of Nagambie in 1997; and finally retired from full time ministry in 1999, gaining permission to officiate in both Wangaratta and Gippsland dioceses.

Jim was what was called in previous days a country parson, serving the church in rural Victoria as assistant curate, priest in charge, rector, chaplain, rural dean. And through

all this, I might add, ably assisted by Margaret his first wife and then later by Del, who we all know and love. Jim overcame a difficult early life to take up a vocation from God to priesthood. A vocation that we are very glad indeed that he did. Jim wanted me to highlight the fact that, even though there were the inevitable ups and downs of personal and priestly life, the main gift for him was the joy of serving in his role of priest.

Thank you, Jim, for all that you have given to the church and to us.

Taken from notes by Rev'd Fr Jeffrey Berger, spoken at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville. 21/12/2025

Photo above: Easter Day 2026, the last time Jim attended church, with Del and Christine.



Synod 2026 in session

Synod 2026 Election Results

Cleric	Lay
Council of the Diocese	
Revd Moira Evers Revd Jane Trigg	Kristy Thompson Molly Craig
Board of Electors	
Ven Canon Scott Jessup Ven Melissa Clark Revd Jerome Francis Ven Matthew Healy Revd Moira Evers Revd Lesley Lewis	Stuart Bett Heather Stammers Helen Gilbert Molly Craig Peter Cutcliff Susan Carpenter
Board of Nominators	
Ven Melissa Clark Ven Canon Scott Jessup Rev Jerome Francis	
Diocesan Tribunal	
Ven Canon Scott Jessup Ven Matthew Healy	Stuart Bett Lisa Cooke
General Synod	
Ven Matthew Healy	Stuart Bett

RIP Reverend Charles Helms

By Revd Norman Hart

The Rev'd Charles Henry Helms died recently in his 97th year. Charles lived his early life on the family farm near Avenel. Like many people called to ministry he faced the difficulty of choosing between serving God or working the family farm for his parents. When his parents sold the farm and retired to Euroa, Charles was free to serve God.

He was accepted as a candidate for ministry and began his studies at St Columb's Hall, Wangaratta. He was ordained as a Deacon in 1962 and Priest in 1963. His first position in the church was as Assistant Priest at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Wangaratta. He was then called to serve the church primarily as a teacher, preparing men for ministry, first at St Columb's Hall Wangaratta followed by 6 years at Newton College, Dogura, TPNG. A short sojourn in Wangaratta was followed by 11 years at St John's Seminary, Kitwe, Zambia.

Returning to Australia, Rev'd Charles was the Dean of All Saints on Thursday Island in 1993, before taking up a position as Assistant Curate in Footscray for 5 years.

The last 26 years he resided in Warracknabeal in the Diocese of Ballarat.



Charles was a faithful agent of the Anglican Board of Mission. His spiritual life was sustained by many years as a member of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd. He was an avid collector of art and loved to travel to distant and unusual places. His home in Warracknabeal was a wonderful jumble of his life experiences - Russian Icons, prints, oils, watercolours, framed and in drawers, different styles and periods all mixed in together. He had a wonderful sense of humour and a joy in serving God; he loved the church and its liturgy.

Charles kept in touch with his family and many

friends and was often on the road visiting them. His passing may seem like a loss but, in God's economy, nothing is ever lost. Charles touched the lives of so many people who, in their turn, changed lives of more folk than can be counted. Charles' life is like the stone dropped into a pond in which the ripples of his influence travel for generations to come.

He was a joy to know. Farewell good and faithful servant, may you Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory, Amen

Clergy Conference

By Revd Richard Pennington

If you google "best places" in Victoria to go in Autumn to view the magnificent and vibrant autumn foliage transforming country towns into a breathtaking vision, universally one of the premier destinations will be Bright in northeastern Victoria. Not only is Bright a leading tourist destination, it is also where the Bishop and Clergy of the Wangaratta Diocese joined for a four-day Clergy Conference in late April this year. Possibly some would think that this may be a good excuse to get away from the pressures of parishes for four days of fun and recreation. Well certainly there was a little time, particularly after the working day and during meals, to relax and enjoy each other's company. Many of us don't get to see our clergy brothers and sisters on any sort of regular basis, so this was a great opportunity to come together and "hang out" in a more relaxed and convivial atmosphere. But there is more to a clergy conference than fun and frivolity.

Being the beginning of our next 5-year cycle within the life of the Diocese, questions concerning where our Diocese is going in the next 5 years, our future direction and, more importantly, discerning what God wants of us in our changing world.

Our discussion sessions sat under the title "Dreaming the Dream for Wangaratta Diocese." We considered questions concerning; What does it mean to be Anglican and remain faithful to our Anglican traditions? How can we better serve and connect with our communities in a way that reflects Christ's love? What kind of Diocese is God calling us to become in this season? Looking ahead five years, what do we hope to be known for? How can we work more closely together across the Diocese? And Navigating the future of Ministry in Wangaratta Diocese.

Those Synod reps from parishes will recognise many of these topics as they were posed to laity representatives during the Diocesan Synod at the end of May. We also considered in our discussion sessions

clergy wellbeing, and how to balance work, life, family and parish, to ensure that the health and welfare of our clergy is taken seriously as we move into the next 5 years.

Throughout the year the clergy of our Diocese get together twice, both being four day residential "retreats." The one, held later in the year, is a true retreat often held in silence.

This one, held in the first half of the year, is the Clergy Conference, where the pace is more strenuous and matters and direction of the Diocese are discussed. Each day there is also a morning and evening prayer service, a Eucharist service, and an opportunity to share and connect with our sisters and brothers of our Diocesan clergy.





Photo above: The Rev'd Peter Laurence OAM and Bishop Clarence

A Report from Synod

Continued from front page

Amendment to the Constitution/Acts of the Diocese

Synod approved an amendment to the Acts of the Diocese relating to membership of the Bishop-in-Council. Elected members may now be re-elected for a second consecutive term, allowing a maximum period of service of six years. This means members who served for the last three years can continue for three more years. This change is intended to provide greater continuity and stability in the governance and leadership of the Diocese while still ensuring regular opportunities for renewal of membership.

Motion 29: Women's Ministry in the Diocese - Carried

The motion on Women's Ministry in the Diocese was moved by Rev'd Canon Maryann Leonard and was agreed to by Synod. In presenting the motion, Rev'd Maryann highlighted the significant contribution of women to the life, ministry and mission of the Diocese, giving particular recognition to the Anglican Mothers' Union of Australia (AMUA), acknowledging its long history of faithful service and ongoing ministry within the Diocese and across the wider Church.

Members were encouraged to support the work of the Mothers' Union through participation in local and diocesan events and by promoting its ministry within parishes. Maryann also encouraged all members of the Diocese to become actively involved in diocesan women's events during 2027 as the Diocese continues to strengthen its mission and ministry.

Synod affirmed the central role of women's ministry, both lay and ordained, in the mission of the Church and expressed its commitment to

seeing this ministry continue to flourish in the years ahead.

The Anglican Mothers' Union will celebrate its 150th Anniversary later this year in Durban, South Africa, marking a significant milestone in the life of this international movement and giving thanks for a century and a half of Christian witness, service and prayer.

Motion 30: Lay Training Programs and Initiatives - Carried

The motion on Lay Training Programs and Initiatives was moved by The Venerable Melissa Clark, Director of Vocations, and was carried by Synod.

Archdeacon Mel spoke passionately about the importance of equipping and encouraging lay people for ministry across the Diocese. She acknowledged the many faithful lay leaders who are already serving in parishes and communities and highlighted the valuable contribution they make to the mission of the Church.

She spoke of the Diocese's ongoing commitment to learning and formation, including its connection with the University of Melbourne and opportunities available for theological study and personal growth. She also shared her enthusiasm for accessible forms of learning, including the monthly online book club that she facilitates via Zoom, which continues to provide opportunities for discussion, reflection and spiritual growth among participants.

The motion recognised the challenges faced by the Diocese in attracting new clergy and affirmed the importance of developing lay leadership alongside ordained ministry. Synod endorsed the various training programs and learning initiatives currently being offered and planned and encouraged members of all parishes to participate in these opportunities wherever possible.

The motion reflected a growing commitment within the Diocese to nurture discipleship, leadership and lifelong learning among both clergy and lay people, as together they seek to strengthen the Church's mission in the years ahead.



Photo above: Bishop Clarence delivering his charge



Photo above: Ven Mel Clark during her presentation. Below: Members of Synod at the Synod dinner.



What a difference two years makes!

By Revd Maryann Leonard

Bishop Clarence had a vision to re-open St John's Church in Thurgoona. Using his phrase 'The God of Possibilities' once again the doors of the church opened. Bishop Clarence realised that Thurgoona is one of Australia's biggest growth corridors for new estates and housing, as well as the construction of multiple Life Style Resorts. At the end of 2026, the estimated population will be fifty thousand people.

After being licensed by the Bishop, there was no time to waste. But prayers were constant, the Lord's plans must be listened to and acted on! From a humble but determined eight members, they formed our first congregation. From there we have grown steadily over the two years. At present we have fifty two registered parishioners, which includes fourteen children.

With the help of faith filled servants of God, the parishioners, we have together grown our Ministry and Mission. In 2024, the parishioners created our Mission & Action Plan covering a period of two years.

Blessings so Far

Weekly Prayer Group, Weekly Bible Study, Lenten Studies, Shrove Tuesday: Pancakes for the wider community with a short explanation behind the celebration. Stations of the Cross, Soup and Bread nights during Lent, Messy Church (beginning July) Altar Guild, Lay Ministry Training and Bishop Authorisation (We have currently four in training), Singing Group, Estia Residential Care Services in Thurgoona, AMUA Branch, Confirmations, Building Baptism awareness, Concerts for the Community, Community Lunches, Monthly Markets/



Outreach, The purchase and use of technology in the church, Social Media, Website & email communication, Stunning Signage, Bingo for the wider community, a Craft Group, Playgroup (Under the auspice of The Christian Playgroup Network) Bunnings Cake Stalls and a Debutante Ball.

Exciting News!

We are in the process of waiting for our final permit from Albury City Council to build a new building to be a Community Centre and Op Shop. All monies were raised by the parishioners within twelve months.

The Cottage, where we hold our meetings, lunches, Bingo and Playgroup, is now too small, even for morning tea after church. The plans are in to extend this building as well.

Our playgroup is one with Christian expressions. Twenty regular enrolments on a Friday. Ages range from 0-5 years old. Mums and carers come from as far as Alexandra, Wodonga, Holbrook to attend because of the welcoming atmosphere and Christian ethos. Not all are Christians, but they have embraced the connection. We are thinking of having another day of Playgroup.

St John's Anglican Church Thurgoona

BINGO

Every Saturday Arvo
Eyes Down 1Pm
288 Table Top Rd
Thurgoona
Great Fun Prizes

20 Games Played
1 card \$5 - 6 cards (full book) \$20
Liners Played as well
Lucky number prize
Raffle - \$50 wish card \$1 per ticket
Kids catered for with an adult
Free Afternoon Tea
Contact Maryann 0439066553
For more information

Baptism at Christ Church Kilmore

What an amazing baptism we had at Christ Church, Kilmore on Sunday 26th of April. It is always wonderful to have an adult baptism, and what a joy it was to witness Carla Northmore being baptised. The parish has watched Carla grow in her faith, and this was culminated with her baptism. With her 'support team' of family, friends and parishioners, Carla was baptised in a huge font (large animal trough - don't worry, it was new!) and witnessed by a full church. The trough was so symbolic, with Jesus being born in a manger (an animal food trough) so nothing new there! Three large jugs of water were poured over her - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Following the pouring of the water, Carla was clothed into a white gown and presented to the congregation to a huge acclamation.

God's blessings to Carla as she continues on this wonderful journey of faith. Her Confirmation by Bishop Clarence will take place at Christ Church, Kilmore on Sunday 28th June.

Photo right: Revd Cathy and Carla with parents and Godparents.



Farewell to Very Revd Neil & Sue Hicks

By Margaret Gibson

What sort of farewell was it? Happy, sad, solemn and everything in between! Parishioners from the Parochial District of Wangaratta West and the Warbys, which includes St Paul's Glenrowan, St George's Taminick and St Michael's Wangaratta, all gathered on Sunday 19th April for Neil's final service as our parish priest, a joy filled service, Neil supported by the lovely Sue as his Lay Minister.

Rev'd Neil came to us from Yarrawonga in mid 2018, as both our Parish Priest and Archdeacon assisting Bishop Clarence. He hit the road running - he was busy from the day of his Induction and did not slow down! After several years in this role, Rev'd Neil was appointed Dean of the Cathedral Parish, therefore becoming Vicar in both parishes. This guaranteed he did not have a chance to slow down! Neil is not only a great parish administrator and parish

priest, he has formidable musical skills, playing the piano at both the Cathedral and St Michael's when necessary.

Friends and family came from near and far, son Callum and his wife Lauren and baby Hamish, first grandchild for Neil and Sue, long time friend Bishop Garry Weatherill, brother Duncan from Neil's home town of Tongala.

A grand sit down lunch in St Michael's hall followed the service, catered by Remel185 of Whorouly and very ably supported by local parishioners serving the food.

Vicar's Warden Sue Wheeler thanked Neil and Sue for all that they have been to us in the parish, for their support and care to each and everyone, and presented them with a beautiful book of photographs of all centres, events and parishioners and a voucher for a special luxury weekend break in Canberra. Parishioners from St Paul's Glenrowan presented Neil and Sue with a quilt made by them which featured an image of one of the stained glass windows in their church. Neil responded, thanking parishioners for their support for him and Sue. A celebration cake was duly cut and distributed as dessert.

Retirement plans to live in Canberra are

underway - Canberra being the home of Calum, Lauren and baby Hamish. We wish them all God's blessings for a long, peaceful and joy filled life as they settle to a "what will we do today?" life! I can't imagine that Canberra diocese won't utilise Neil for Sunday services and - wherever he is for an occasional service, they are in for a real treat!



Thanksgiving service at St James

By Revd Cathy Carden

As has become their custom on the 5th Sunday of the month, the 3 centres of the Anglican Parish of Northern Albury gathered together at St James' Lavington on the 31st May. The focus for this combined service, which fell on Trinity Sunday, was 'Thanksgiving'. Over the past few months they've had cause to consider the amazing work done across the parish over decades, building up not just buildings, but a community of believers in this part of our Diocese.

During the service there was the opportunity for everyone to write about specific things or people for which they are thankful on cardboard



'leaves' and these leaves were placed on a 'Thanksgiving Tree'.

At the morning tea after the service, a special thank you was given to Nancye Waldron who has given decades of service to raising money

and supporting the Guild.

Whilst Bishop Clarence was unable to be at the service, his recorded video message of thanks and encouragement for the parish was greatly appreciated.

PLEASE REPORT CONCERNS
CALL 1800 135 246

The Anglican Diocese of Wangaratta does not tolerate abuse, harassment, racism or other misconduct. If any person has concerns about the behaviour of a church worker, past or present, they can contact Kooyoora Ltd.

We are deeply distressed that there have been occasions when abuse and misconduct have occurred in our community. Kooyoora Ltd is independent of the diocese and receives and manages complaints about abuse and misconduct by church workers.

The Diocese is committed to doing all that is possible to ensure that abuse does not occur. All complaints of abuse are taken very seriously and we do all we can to lessen harm. We offer respect, pastoral care and ongoing long-term support to anyone who makes a complaint.

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Deconsecration of Holy Trinity Nathalia

On the 9th of May 2026 Holy Trinity Church in Nathalia was deconsecrated and closed.

The people from Nathalia, Numurkah and surrounding areas gathered with Bishop Clarence and clergy for a moving service honouring nearly 140 years of worship in the building.

Rev'd Jerome Francis preached a sermon based on Acts 16, reminding the congregation of the preciousness of a gospel message that is not held within walls, but within the hearts of those who follow Jesus, thus giving hope, to all who attended, that worship goes on in Nathalia, albeit in a different way.

The congregation of more than 60 people celebrated with a generous morning tea after the service.

HISTORY of Holy Trinity, Nathalia

In the early days church services were held in State schools and halls around the district; the first services being held in January 1882 in the State Schools of Nathalia and Narioka, although travelling ministers had visited the district from as early as 1874.

From 1884 onwards a variety of fundraising activities took place, including concerts and cake fairs which supplemented the building fund. This resulted in the new church being built during 1887 on land donated by Mr Edward Pearce, although the flood prone location was some concern. These concerns proved well founded when the 'opening service' of Holy



Trinity had to be held in Humberstone's Hall as 'the Broken Creek was in such high flood that it was impossible to get within one hundred yards of the church.' The first service in the church was on 19th November 1887. The construction of the church was of brick with an iron roof and the interior completed with a wooden ceiling at

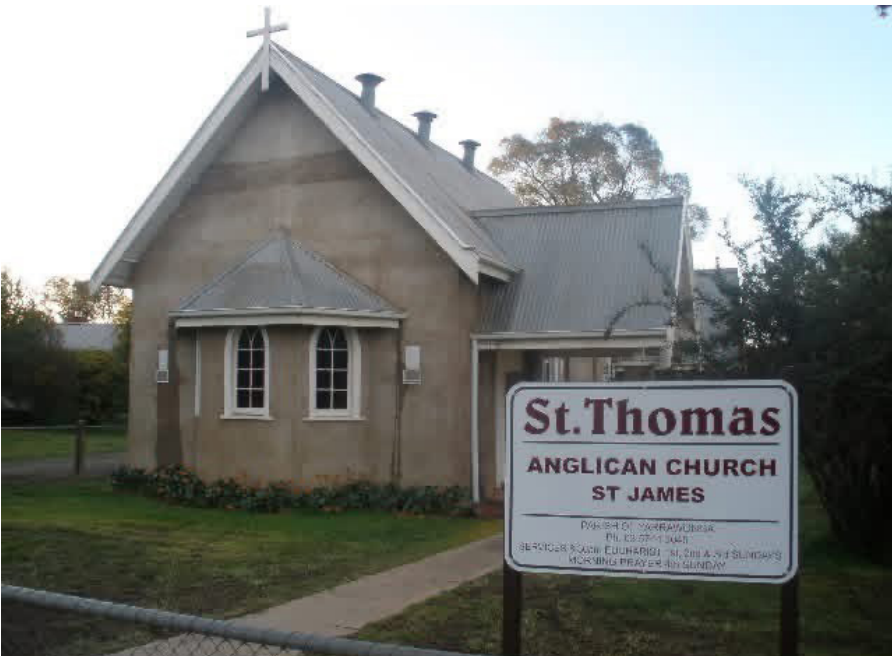
a cost £425.

Over the years there were many active church groups: Ladies Guild, Strawberry Festival Committee, Holy Trinity Choir, Mothers' Union, Men's Society and Tennis Club, which all added to the social and spiritual life of the parish.

Deconsecration of St Thomas' Church

By Ven Canon Scott Jessup

On Saturday the 23rd of May, a congregation of over 50 assembled at St Thomas' at St James for the final service in their church. The closure was instigated by the local congregation due to low attendance. It was a sad day, yet we were reminded by Bishop Clarence that the Church is more than a building – the Church is the people. The Area Dean of the Hume, the Rev'd Canon Moira Evers, used the BBC Series, 'Call the Midwife', as a springboard for her sermon, in which she talked about how we are called to bring birth to new things and that will inevitably be messy and painful, but we have a divine 'midwife' in the Holy Spirit who urges us on. The people of God in St James will continue to worship nearby in Yarrowonga or Benalla.



Walking the Gippsland Camino 2026

By Revd Cathy Turnbull

Along with Assistant Priest Rev Cathy Turnbull, parishioners (Carla, Joy and Sharon) from the Parish of Kilmore spent three days walking the Gippsland Camino in April. Rev Cathy reported that it was an amazing time together of prayer, reflection, community, joy, thankfulness and, yes, pain and endurance, as well as being a meaningful preparation for Carla who was to be baptised the following week.

The days started with Morning Prayer on the beach before joining the trail. The scenery along the way was beautiful, from the rolling hills of South Gippsland farmland to tall gums and fern gullies. Rail cuttings had exposed huge boulders and small ferns grew along the steep sides. Some cuttings were lined with pine trees and the pine needles carpeted the ground, deadening sound and creating a place of meditative peace and a sense of the silent presence of the divine.

Fellow pilgrims provided great company along the way, with interesting conversations and shared experiences of walking. Friendly chats were in abundance with local folk, both human



and canine, for whom the rail trail is their backyard.

Café stops in at least two towns along the way were most welcome and the opportunity to visit or walk around churches, both near the trail and at our destination points, added to the pilgrim experience.

The greeting the four received at the end of day three was most welcome and the foot massage at St David's Meeniyan, the end point of their pilgrimage, much appreciated.

The walk was physically demanding and pain became part of the journey, but it was an amazing spiritual experience. The Parish has thoughts about setting up something similar in the southern area of the Diocese using the Great Victorian Bike Trail when it is fully reopened after the fires.

Photo above: Bishop of Gippsland Bp Richard Treloar and retired priest Rev Janet joining Rev Cathy and Carla on the walk.

Sabbatical Arrangements and Blessings

Three years ago our Diocesan Budget included an amount providing clergy from elsewhere an opportunity to take a Sabbatical in Northeast Victoria and especially around Wangaratta. Even though many people expressed interest, it was only Dean Sharon Nel from the Diocese of Pretoria and her husband Piet who embraced the opportunity for rest, reflection and interaction with the Diocese. Sharon and Piet were placed at 9A The Close which was the perfect location for any cleric and family to be part of this initiative and also to be associated with Holy Trinity Cathedral and part of a pattern of ministry which included regular prayer and reflection times as well as to be part of Sunday and Wednesday services.

This year, following a service where I preached at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of my former Diocese in South Africa, the Diocese of False Bay, I met up with Rev'd Wilfred and Debbie Meyer and challenged them to consider a sabbatical in Wangaratta as he was one of those interested before. To my surprise, Wilfred and Debbie responded

positively and following the normal rigorous immigration process even for a visitor's visa, I collected them from the airport at midnight on 21 June.

What made this possible is that the Deanery was available for use and we could house them there for the period of their sabbatical. Wilfred's main participation is only to share his reflections at divine services on Wednesdays and Sundays as and when required. This is helpful to me as I have been taking care of all ministries and activities at the Cathedral which would be reduced to a more administrative role.

As sabbatical equals rest, we will ensure that Wilfred and Debbie enjoy the Diocese and region and we hope that generous hospitality will be offered to them throughout the Diocese. It is also envisaged that we will develop a link relationship with the Diocese of False Bay from where Wilfred and Debbie come and that Wilfred's experience as a previous Link Officer between the Diocese of York (Archdeaconry of Whitby) and the Diocese of False Bay will bring this to fruition.



Photo above: Rev'd Wilfred and Debbie Meyer

The Journey from Op Shop Customer to newly Confirmed Anglican

By Caroline Burge

How do people begin a journey of faith? Some are raised in Christian families, others are influenced by friends or long-standing church traditions. For Carla, it all began with a visit to her local Anglican Parish Op Shop in Kilmore. A regular Op-Shopper with a passion for recycling and giving pre-loved items a second chance, Carla knew the Op Shop volunteers supported important work in her community. One day, she asked one of the volunteers a simple question about Christ Church, Kilmore. She was warmly invited to attend a Sunday service to see what it's all about and she accepted.

When Carla first walked through our church doors that Sunday in February, she arrived with curiosity and anticipation, wondering what it was all about. Carla later reflected that she felt completely accepted despite having had very little previous exposure to church life. During that first service, Carla was invited to receive a blessing from Rev Cathy Turnbull. Carla has since described her "hook, line and sinker moment", a powerful experience that awakened something within her and inspired her to explore faith more deeply.

Within weeks, Carla immersed herself in parish life. She attended every Lenten study, eagerly asked questions and embraced extra reading suggested by Rev. Cathy. Having never been much of a reader, Carla now proudly owns her very first bookshelf. She also participated fully in Holy Week: a candlelight Tenebrae, making palm crosses, a Taizé service, meditation sessions, Foot Washing on Maundy Thursday and the Chrism Mass at Wangaratta Cathedral. Every experience strengthened her understanding and often led to even more questions!

After Easter, Rev. Cathy led Carla and two other parish members on the Gippsland Camino Pilgrimage. Carla said 'walking alongside those who began as strangers, very quickly became

something so much more and was incredibly special (the strangers certainly didn't stay strangers for long at all).'

Carla was baptised at Christ Church, Kilmore, on 26 April in a water trough, a memorable and joyful occasion. She then continued preparing for her Confirmation, which took place on Bishop Clarence's first available visit to our Kilmore parish on 28 June. Reflecting on her journey, Carla says her 'heart has been overflowing from day one.' She is deeply grateful for the prayers, encouragement and kindness of her parish community, and especially thanks Rev. Cathy Turnbull for her wonderful teaching, compassionate guidance and loving care.

From a chance conversation in our Op Shop to Baptism and Confirmation within just a few months, Carla's story is a reminder that God often works in extraordinary ways through the simplest of invitations. The outreach offered by our church Op Shops should never be underestimated.

Thanks be to God!

Photo below: The congregation with Bishop Clarence, Rev Cathy Turnbull and Carla



Training and Formation 2026

Diocesan Quiet Days

'Teach us to pray' – contemplative prayer

Saturday 4th July, 10am-3pm Holy Trinity Church, Yackandandah

Saturday 1st August, 10am-3pm St Paul's Euroa

'Morning has broken' – reflective walk and time in nature

Wednesday 2nd September, 8am-12noon Chiltern, Mt Pilot National Park

Day of Mark

7th of November, 9am at the Registry.

A morning of learning with Trinity College Theological School followed by an afternoon of reading Mark together.

For more details contact: Ven Scott Jessup 0418 254 158 Or Ven Mel Clark 0411 722 718

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SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER 2026

HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL, WANGARATTA

➤ **9.30AM UNTIL 3PM** ➤



*Sausage
Sizzle!*

**FIRST 125
SAUSAGES ARE FREE**



**OTHER FOOD,
GOODS AND
SOFT DRINK
AND WATER**



**ON SALE FROM
PARISH STALLS**

**BLESSING OF
ANIMALS AND PLANTS
BY CLERGY**



MUSIC



**TOURS OF
THE CATHEDRAL**



— + — *All Welcome!* — + —

CELEBRATING OUR PAST



INSPIRING OUR FUTURE