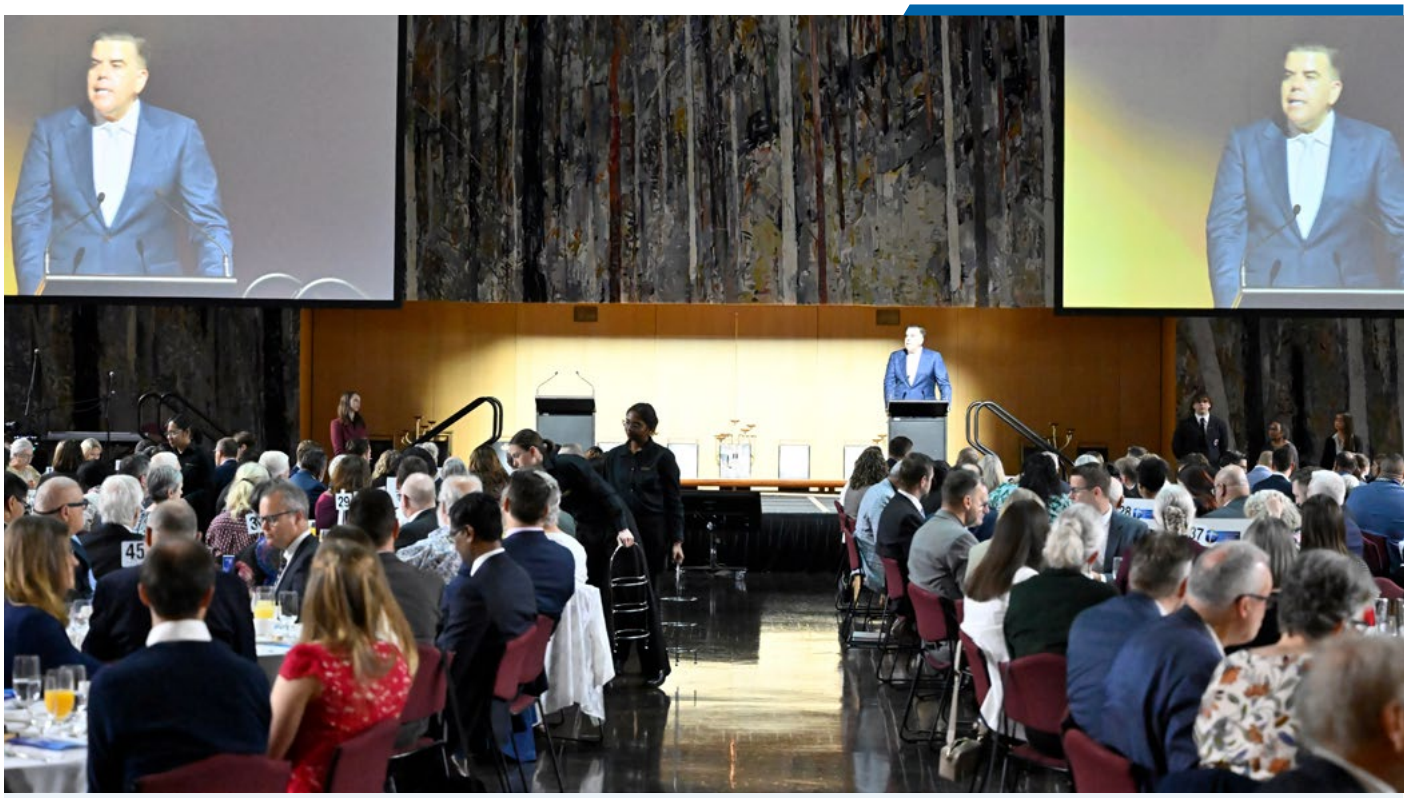
November 2026 Vol. 43 | No. 10

Anglican News

a magazine for the Anglican Community across the Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn



page 08

Leaders pray for peace and unity at National Prayer Breakfast

Prayers for our nation's elected leaders, and for the peace, unity and hope found in Jesus, took on special significance at this year's Australian National Prayer Breakfast on 26 October, just one week after the tragic attack on Indi MP Dr Helen Haines.



MISSION & MINISTRY NEWS

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New internship program aims to raise up ministry leaders



PARISH & COMMUNITY NEWS

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St Matthew's Wanniassa celebrates 50 years



EDUCATION NEWS

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Students bring Beauty and the Beast to life

Bishop Vanessa's Reflection

The Lord can do big things through small centres.

This is what I discovered as I prepared to visit the historic church of St Mary's Gegedzerick (near Berridale) at the end of September to rededicate the church building after its refurbishment.

Anglican ministry began on this land before the church was built. The first recorded service was conducted at the homestead of Mr. Richard Brooks in 1843 by the Rev'd E. G. Pryce, whose great great grandson is a retired priest in our Diocese.

Bishop Broughton visited the Brooks homestead with Rev'd Pryce for a service on Sunday 16 February 1845 and agreed to a chapel being built a short distance up the hill from the homestead. Thanks to the generosity of Mr Brooks, land was set aside for the church and building began in 1849. It was completed in 1860 with its official opening occurring on 28 October 1860.

Successive generations have worshipped there and maintained the building, while the message of hope and salvation in Christ has been faithfully proclaimed.

As we know, the church is far more than a building. It is the community of faith, who gather together to worship the Lord. Even in a building like St Mary's, with its simple layout and view across the Southern Monaro, we are caused to lift our eyes from the everyday of life to look to Jesus in praise and wonder at all he has done for us and is doing through us. And, he is able to do far more than we could ever imagine with our lives, things that are transformative and have an eternal value.

The church of St Mary's has a story of God doing big things through at least one person who worshipped in this small centre. This person was used by God to transform the lives of thousands in Australia, China and India.

Her name was Mary Andrews, and her ashes are scattered in St Mary's cemetery.

Born in 1915 Mary spent her early childhood on a nearby station and attended this church. From a young child she was a follower of Jesus and eagerly read her Bible to know more.

As a teenager, Mary sensed God calling her to be a missionary in China.

She studied theology in Sydney and joined the Church Missionary Society, before sailing to China in 1938 even though China and Japan were at war.

Although on her own, she was comforted by the knowledge that she was *"in the centre of the circle and will of God"*.

In 1944 as the war progressed, she escaped to India, caring for destitute women and children, sharing the love of Christ and teaching the Bible before returning to China in 1947 where she continued teaching the Bible and English and ran a church. However, with the People's Liberation Army increasing control and surveillance of Christians she returned to Australia.

In 1951 Mary became the head of Deaconess House, an Anglican theological college for women. She trained women for ministry for two decades before her retirement and was an early advocate for women's ordination.

In 1980 she received an AM for her service to religion in China and Australia; and Deaconess House was renamed Mary Andrews College in her honour after her death in 1996.

Mary inspired generations to know God and to use their gifts to grow his kingdom – a legacy that continues today and one that is reaping eternal benefits.

That story started with a young girl who worshipped in the small centre at Gegedzerick. The Lord blessed the ministry of that church, which expanded beyond the Southern Monaro to grow God's kingdom in China, India and many other parts of Australia and the world through those she trained.

Who are the people in our parishes like Mary Andrews, through whom God might transform lives for eternity? Who can we be encouraging to study the Bible and step up in ministry experience?

God is building his kingdom. Who can we be inviting to be future leaders of God's people in his mission for our diocese, nation and the world?

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DIOCESE NEWS

Updates, announcements and stories shaping the life, leadership and direction of the Diocese



Bishop Mark Short reflects on one year as Primate

Renewed interest in faith brings encouragement, as the national church looks to the work ahead.

Bishop Mark Short has thanked parishioners and clergy around the country for supporting him and his wife, Monica, in his first year as Primate, as 1 November marked the anniversary of his appointment.

> *"Monica and I are grateful for the fellowship, support, encouragement and prayers from many brothers and sisters around Australia and in the wider communion,"* he said.
>
> *"We look forward to seeing what under God we all may be able to do together over the next couple of years."*

Encouragements

Bishop Mark said his first year in the role had left him encouraged by what God is doing in Australia and around the world.

> *"We are seeing a renewed interest in faith in many parts of Australia, with new churches being planted.*
>
> *"The same is happening in many parts of the worldwide Anglican communion, including in places like Malaysia, Taiwan and the Philippines."*



General Synod 2026

Evidence from the Church of England shows a younger generation of converts are attracted to "full-fat faith", rather than watered-down versions of Christianity, he said.

> *"In a time of geopolitical uncertainty and cost-of-living pressures, people are looking for a God they can rely on, and are finding him in the person of Jesus."*
>
> *"After the challenging Covid years, many churches are starting to experience growth again. We are seeing people coming to faith for the first time, and there is also a growing demand for Christian schooling in the Anglican tradition."*

The work ahead

Efforts are underway to build resources and collaboration for church planting and evangelism through the Anglican Communion's Vision36 initiative.

Bishop Short said in Australia, there is also a focus on supporting churches in our rural and regional areas, where many Dioceses are under financial strain.

> *"Over the coming years there is a lot more work for the national church to do to enable ministry in rural areas,"* he said.
> *"This was identified as a priority at our last General Synod."*

General Synod has also approved funding for a full-time National Indigenous Bishop to work alongside the Primate.

Another important area of work for the national church is its continuing efforts to ensure churches and church institutions are safe places.

Bishop Mark noted it was almost a decade since the release of the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

> *"The church has made vital progress in the last decade when it comes to safe ministry to children and redress for survivors. Considerable work has also been done to ensure our churches are safe places for victims and survivors of family violence."*
>
> *"Nonetheless, we must never become complacent about making sure our churches are places of safety. We are heavily investing in safe ministry, because safe ministry is good ministry."*

Bishop Mark urged parishioners to continue to pray for the Anglican Church in Australia and worldwide – for faithful witness, sustainability and evangelism.



Primate Bishop Mark & Archbishop Sarah Mullally, March 2026



A celebration will be held to recognise Camp Pelican's contribution over the decades. Summer Camp Pelican, 2017.

New taskforce to drive fresh approach to children's and youth ministry

The Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn is beginning a new chapter in its support of children's and youth ministry, after a landmark report called for a fresh approach.

Bishop-in-Council will establish a new Youth Ministry Taskforce, within the Bishop's office, to develop a framework, strategy and governance arrangements that support the Diocese's goal of having an active children's and youth ministry in every parish.

The 2026 Synod voted to dissolve the Diocese's youth agency, Synergy Youth, and discontinue the long-running Camp Pelican program, after an extensive review commissioned by Bishop-in-Council at the request of Synergy found new approaches were needed.

Synod acknowledged the grief that some parishioners across the Diocese will feel at the closure of Camp Pelican, which has been foundational in the faith formation of lay and ordained leaders over the decades.

A celebration will be held to recognise Camp Pelican's contribution.

The Diocese has also commissioned a history of Synergy Diocesan Youth and Children's Ministry from 1979 to 2026.

A timely review

These significant developments are based on the recommendations of the Synergy and Youth Ministry Review report, which was tabled at the 2026 Synod.

Bishop Mark commended the report and thanked Dr David Fagg for his work in leading the review, as well as everyone who contributed through interviews, workshops and feedback.

> *"May God give us the wisdom to engage thoughtfully and hopefully with the review and its recommendations, for the sake of Christ's mission to new and emerging generations,"* he said.

The review found that parishes had lost confidence that existing structures enabled the Diocese to take effective action on youth ministry.

> *"There is a common recognition that Synergy has been expected to do too much, in the context of high levels of theological diversity, with an unclear purpose or strategy, across a large geographical area, and with too little money,"* the report stated.

Camp Pelican had likewise experienced declining support from the parishes.

Looking ahead

One key finding of the review was the need for strategic work to develop and support youth and children's ministry leaders.

> *"While there are skilled and experienced youth ministry people in the Diocese, they are skewed in their distribution, or need extra support. In particular, leadership development supports are lacking, and many churches have lost any hope of ministering to young people, especially in rural areas. The lack of capacity is becoming entrenched because financial support for training is not targeted, and collaboration is rare,"* the report stated.

The review noted that paid youth ministry staff were scarce, and concentrated in the larger evangelical churches.

> *"Although paid staff is not a silver bullet for youth ministry, and is not the only factor, paid staff do create time and energy to be directed to that ministry area, which is essential for it to flourish,"* the report stated.

Bishop-in-Council will appoint a Youth Ministry Taskforce in the coming months to establish a framework and strategy to drive this important work.



Summer Camp Pelican, 2017



Bishop Mark with Attorney General Michelle Rowland MP



(L-R) MC Amanda Copp, St Mark's lecturer Dr Amy Erickson, keynote speaker Amy Brown and St Mark's Director Dr Jacqueline Service.



Clergy and staff from across the Diocese joined the prayer breakfast.

Leaders pray for peace and unity at National Prayer Breakfast

Prayers for our nation's elected leaders took on special significance at this year's Australian National Prayer Breakfast on 26 October, coming just one week after the tragic attack on Indi MP Dr Helen Haines.

Politicians from across the political divide gathered alongside Christian leaders and members of the wider community for the 37th annual Prayer Breakfast, praying for peace and unity in our nation.

Many expressed grief at the attack on Dr Haines and prayed for her healing.

Among the politicians who addressed the gathering of about 570 people in the Great Hall of Parliament House were Speaker of the House of Representatives Milton Dick MP, Attorney General Hon Michelle Rowland MP, Opposition Leader Angus Taylor MP, and co-Chairs of the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship David Smith MP and Henry Pike MP.







This year's keynote speaker was Amy Brown, a former Department Secretary in the NSW Government, who currently serves as a Board Member of Mission Australia and Chair of City Bible Forum. She is also a student at St Mark's National Theological Centre.

Ms Brown shared her personal story of experiencing God's grace and refining in hard times.

> *"I learned that God doesn't waste the hard things about our story. I came out the other side seeing everything differently."*

Ms Brown reminded attendees of God's promises to deliver those who look to him for help, quoting Psalm 118:

"When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord;
he brought me into a spacious place.
The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?
It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in humans.
It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.
The Lord is my strength and my defence
he has become my salvation."

The Reverend Josh Kuswadi, Senior Minister at St Matthew's Anglican Church in Wanniassa, was among the many Anglican clergy who took part in the Prayer Breakfast.

> *"As someone new to Canberra it was very encouraging sitting with friends from church, seeing many from other churches across Canberra, and meeting many more Christians concerned for our nation,"* he said.
>
> *"Some personal delights were hearing from and reconnecting with the keynote speaker Amy Brown, who I knew from youth group days, and praying with an MP I knew from my time in Darwin."*

The morning finished with attendees rising to sing Blessed Assurance, led by soul-gospel band, Majesty Rising.



Photo credit: Auspic, Department of Parliamentary Services (cover and pages 8-9)

Clergy Updates

Licensed Clergy

- **The Reverend Martin Christensen** concluded his time as Locum in Cooma on 19 October 2026.
- **The Reverend Joshua Kuswadi** has been elected by his peers and licensed as Area Dean of South Canberra, effective from 13 October 2026.

Archdeacon Collation

- **The Venerable Paul Davey** will be collated as Archdeacon of Goulburn and the Southern Tablelands at St Nicholas' North Goulburn from 2-4pm on Sunday 6 December 2026.

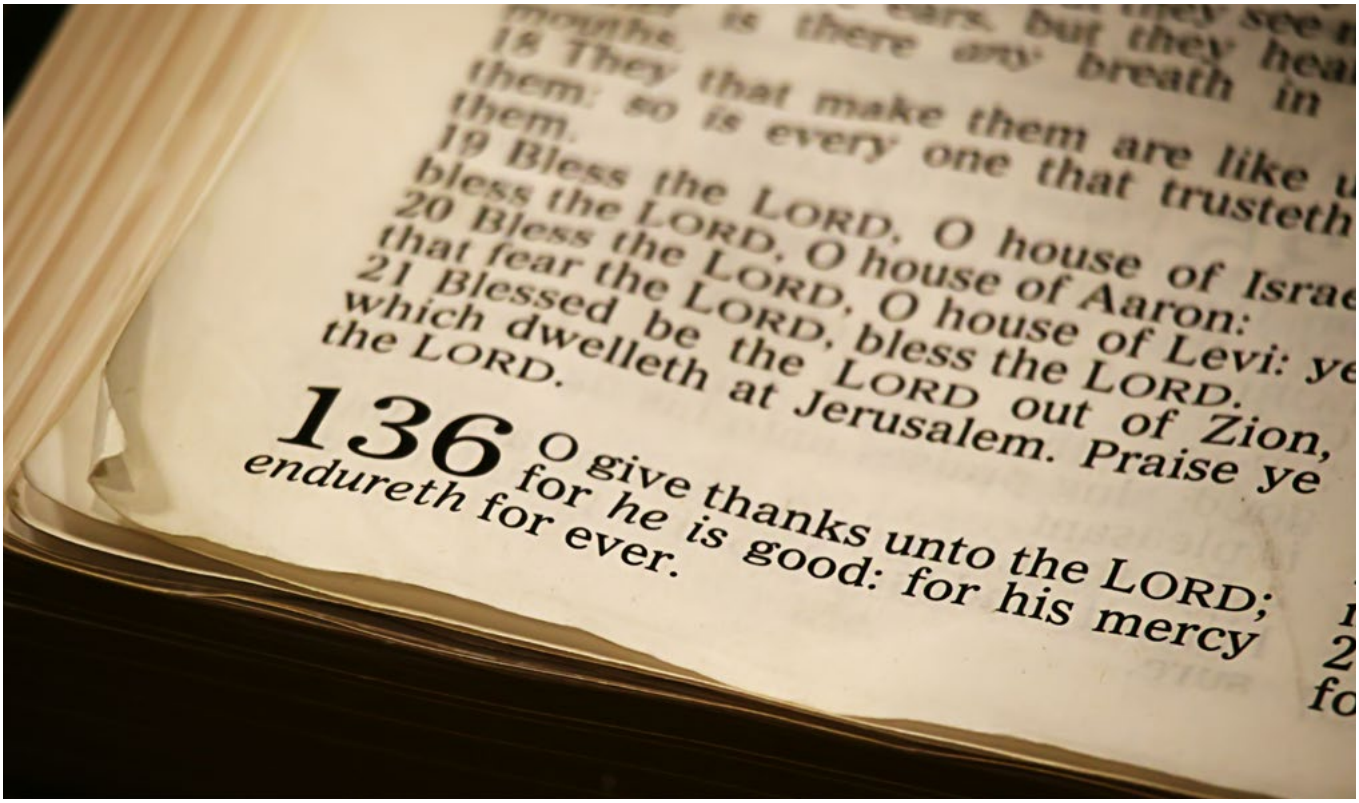
Induction

- **The Reverend Michael Oborn** will be inducted as Priest-in-Charge of Cooma on 12 December 2026 at 11.00am.

Priest Ordination

Bishop Mark and Bishop Vanessa advise that, God willing, the following candidates will be ordained to the Priesthood on 28 November 2026 at 11.00am at St Saviour's Cathedral, Goulburn:

- **The Reverend Timothy Lowth**
- **The Reverend Michael Oborn**
- **The Reverend Sascha Peard**
- **The Reverend Michael Shaw**
- **The Reverend Duncan Sherman**



AIDF
Anglican Investment & Development Fund

New Community Saver Plus+
Doubles Support for Parish and Ministry Partners

AIDF's latest investment account boosts annual donations while continuing to provide competitive returns for investors.

The Anglican Investment & Development Fund (AIDF) has launched Community Saver Plus+, a new investment account designed to increase support for parishes, diocesan agencies and ministry partners.

Building on the long-standing success of the Community Saver Account, the new product currently offers investors a competitive return of 4.50% p.a., while AIDF donates a bonus 1.00% p.a. to the investor's chosen parish, diocesan agency or entity, double the previous donation rate.

This year, AIDF donated $54,000 through Community Saver accounts, taking total contributions to more than $560,000 over the past decade. Community Saver Plus+ also helps AIDF access lower-cost funding, enabling more affordable loans to diocesan organisations. The account is now available to eligible associates, with existing Community Saver investors invited to switch and increase their support.

Community Saver Plus+
4.50% p.a.

Investor Return
+ 1.00% p.a.

Donated by AIDF to your nominated parish, ministry or diocesan entity

Indicative rate only and subject to change. Community Saver Plus+ is available to eligible associates only.

aidf.com.au

Grow your savings.
Double your support.

MISSION & MINISTRY NEWS

Stories of ministry, mission and outreach taking place across our communities, agencies and organisations



Tuggeranong, where Renew Anglican Church meets.

New internship program aims to raise up ministry leaders

Three distinct training pathways for school leavers, ministry apprentices and retirees are on offer at Renew Anglican Church.

Renew Anglican Church in Canberra's South is excited to be offering a new structured internship program from 2027, giving church members the opportunity to explore gospel ministry.

Lead pastor, The Reverend Steve Boxwell, said part of Renew's vision is to form more theologically-trained leaders than it needs.

> *"It's on our hearts as a church to become a net exporter of leaders for both the Diocese and the global mission field. We have many people in our church who are gifted and capable and may simply need a nudge to consider whether they could go into pastoral ministry.*

Our program offers a concrete step in the process for a person seeking to establish suitability for a lifetime of dedicated ministry leadership, as well as time for the church to consider that person's suitability."

The Reverend Anna Boxwell, an assistant minister at Renew who is also responsible for Ministry Leadership Development and Formation at St Mark's National Theological Centre in Canberra, said there was an urgent need for more theologically trained leaders across the diocese.

"We simply don't have enough people serving in ministry in our churches. In rural areas, 40% of parishes are without a rector – that's a crisis."

"We want to give people the opportunity to have a go – to serve, make mistakes, receive feedback and grow, and see whether they are a good fit for ordained ministry. The internship will help people grow in character, theological conviction and practical competence while serving within the life of the church."

Renew is currently looking to fill its first internship places for 2027, with three pathways available:

1. Gospel Foundations Gap Year

A one-year, structured discipleship and service year for a school leaver or young adult. The goal is maturity, ministry exposure and vocational discernment, not immediate readiness for vocational church leadership.

2. Ministry Apprenticeship with Theological Study

A two-year, substantially full-time apprenticeship for an emerging leader seriously testing a call to vocational ministry. It combines broad ministry responsibility, close supervision and possibly study through St Mark's.

3. Encore Ministry Fellowship

A one-year, part-time formation pathway for a new retiree who wants to redeploy professional experience, Christian maturity and greater availability into purposeful ministry without beginning a conventional ministry career.

Reverend Steve Boxwell said it was an exciting time for people to be stepping up in ministry.

"Right now, many churches across the Diocese are seeing people come to church for the first time ever. We need people to help us welcome and support them because there is more interest than our present structures have space for."

Stipends for the new roles will be funded through a combination of a two-year Pelican Foundation grant, member giving through Renew's church budget and possible support raising. The church will also look to support participants with course fees for theological study at St Mark's.



Some members of Renew Anglican Church at a weekend away.

God at work at Amberfield retirement village

A new monthly Christian gathering is encouraging residents at this Canberra retirement village.



The Reverend Brian Carter has found plenty of work to do at his new home.

God is doing something wonderful at the LDK Amberfield retirement village in Weston Creek, where residents have established a monthly Christian gathering.

Retired priest, Brian Carter, moved with his wife Carolyn to the village at the end of 2025, and was asked to help provide a Christian ministry on site.

> *"When the Resident Service Manager found out I'd been a preacher and pastor, she clapped her hands and said, 'Aha! We've got work for you'."* Rev'd Carter recalls.
>
> *"The request sat with me for a while, as I considered when, where and how to start. Then one lonely evening when I was going for my usual walk to the horse yards, I felt prompted to change direction and head for the Amberfield villas.*
>
> *"There, on their balconies admiring the sunset, I encountered some friendly residents who turned out to be active Christians and members of local Anglican parishes. They were keen to join with me in a new Christian venture. I made my way home astonished at this fortuitous encounter, thinking, 'What is the Lord up to?'."*

The emerging group advertised an exploratory meeting to consider the best way forward, and fifteen people attended. They decided on a non-denominational and informal monthly Christian gathering with the ambitions of growing in knowledge of Christ, and Christian community.

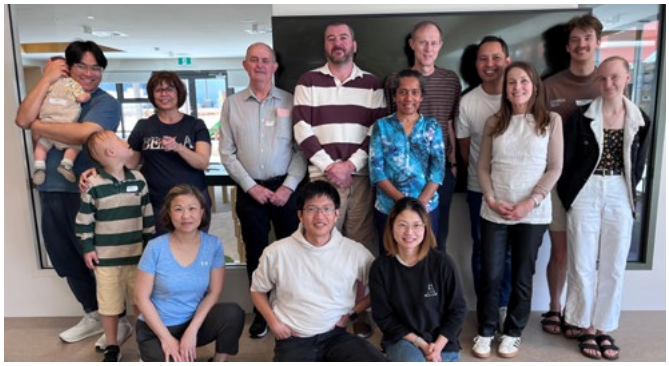
A settled routine has since developed – the planning team meets to decide on a monthly theme and assign roles; then, on the last Friday of each month, about twenty people gather in one of the Amberfield public halls for about half an hour.

The gatherings are advertised in the Amberfield Activities Calendar. Each gathering includes singing, prayer, Bible reading, a homily and occasionally a personal testimony.

After the formal part of the gathering the group spend an hour or so at the in-house café to talk together, get to know one another, and make new friends.

Rev'd Carter is currently preparing a homily for November on 'Coming Home'.

> *"As we have aged, we here at LDK Amberfield have had life circumstances come upon us, so that we have needed to leave our homes of many years and come to a new home.*
>
> *"This is now our best chance of survival. We miss our old homes and the life we had there. But we are grateful for the **L**ove, **D**ecency and **K**indness that has met us at LDK Amberfield.*
>
> *"However, this new home is penultimate. Christ and his apostles tell us of our ultimate home, where our Heavenly Father has a big house. Here we are foreigners and exiles. Our citizenship is in heaven. Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."*





Launch team grows for Light in the Valley

Preparations for the new Light in the Valley Anglican Church in Canberra's Molonglo Valley are gathering pace, with a team of 25 adults meeting monthly to plan for the launch in March 2027.

The Reverend Ronaldo Sanchez, who is leading the church plant along with his wife Meghan, said he has been greatly encouraged by the launch team God has assembled.

> *"We began with a small group of interested families meeting in our lounge room at the beginning of the year, but have now outgrown that space,"* Rev'd Sanchez said.

The team's monthly planning meetings have since moved to the Early Learning School at Stromlo Forest Anglican College, where church services will be held from 7 March.

The church plant is being launched out of St Peter's in Weston, with the team including individuals and families from St Peter's and other churches. The plant has also received support from St Matthew's Wanniassa, Renew, St John's Reid and Lanyon Valley Anglican churches.

The Molonglo Valley currently has around 18,000 residents, and will grow to over 50,000 by 2040. Over 50 different nationalities are represented in the valley, where 40% of residents were born overseas.

> *"Our team is really seeking to grow our love for the people of the Molonglo,"* Rev'd Sanchez said. *"We dream of a day when a migrant might say, 'Now I know why I really came to Australia. It was to meet Jesus.'"*

At their last meeting, the team considered how the church could become an established presence in the community – from regular community barbecues, to visibility at community events. The team also practiced sharing their personal testimonies.

> *"It's so encouraging to hear stories from members of our launch team of how Jesus has brought hope and meaning to their lives,"* Rev'd Sanchez said. *"We are looking forward to gathering regularly as a church family, and sharing that hope with our neighbours."*

The Rev'd Sanchez said he was grateful for the support of the City to City Australia church planting network, which has provided personal mentoring and training resources for the team.

Light in the Valley's first public church service will be held on 7 March.

Interested in joining?

Visit **lightinthevalley.church**



Is God calling you to Public Issues Ministry?

Written by The Reverend Peter Malone, Chair of the Public Issues Commission

The Public Issues Commission seeks new voices to help shape informed, respectful engagement across the Diocese.

Since its inception in 2016, the Public Issues Commission (PIC) has served the Diocese through the development of a range of policies, resources and initiatives. These have included the creation of a Diocesan Climate Action Plan, raising awareness of issues such as First Nations truth-telling, refugee settlement and advocacy, and racism, as well as promoting women in ministry, which contributed to the establishment of the Women in Leadership Commission.

The Public Issues Commission Ordinance 2016 identifies the Commission's first function as:

> *"to facilitate awareness within the Diocese and the community of Public Issues and to stimulate informed debate and discussion of Public Issues amongst the members of this Church."*

The ordinance defines Public Issues as:

> *"Social, economic, political and environmental issues that impact on life in Australia and on Australians' relations with the wider world."*

At this point in Australia's social, economic, political and environmental life, there is a growing sense of division within our communities. Social disadvantage, economic inequality, political fragmentation and significant environmental change are all contributing to a decline in social cohesion. This is often compounded by a reduced willingness to listen to the perspectives of those who hold different views from our own.

The effects of this division are increasingly evident across Australian society, including within our parish communities. In this context, informed debate and respectful engagement are more important than ever.

As a result, the Commission is proposing that its next major priority be:

Promoting social cohesion through respectful engagement in our society and Church.

One way this priority could be explored is through four related areas of focus:

1. Christian responsibilities within our democratic political system
2. First Nations reconciliation and truth-telling
3. Diocesan unity
4. Safeguarding the integrity of creation

However, the Commission's ability to undertake this work depends on the people willing to contribute their time, skills and experience.

As the Public Issues Commission reported to Synod in 2025:

> *"The capacity to address priorities depends entirely on the energy and expertise of Commission members. Where possible, the Commission seeks to form voluntary working groups to draw in volunteers capable of advancing its work on particular matters."*

The PIC's future work will be shaped by diocesan members, both lay and ordained, who feel called to participate in this ministry.

The Reverend Peter Malone, Chair of the Public Issues Commission, is encouraging members of the Diocese to prayerfully consider whether they may be able to contribute.

> *"Is this a ministry you sense God may like you to become involved with?"*

Want to learn more?

Those interested in learning more or discussing involvement with the Commission are invited to contact The Reverend Peter Malone on 0438 461 333 or via email at pmalone5515@gmail.com.





Overrated? Not a chance. What happens when 62 teenagers get real

Written by The Reverend Tim Purser, Associate Minister, St Matthew's Anglican Church

Camp Overrated 2026 at Tathra challenged young people to explore what genuine faith, relationships, care and joy look like through the Book of James.

The bus pulled out of St Matt's at 9:30 on Monday morning, and for the first hour it looked like any other youth camp departure. There were pillows, hoodies and a few nervous glances, but excitement filled the air as 62 young people headed off for Camp Overrated.

The camp's name is a joke, of course. But it carries a quiet challenge. The world is full of things that promise a lot and deliver very little.
So what is actually real?



Real Faith

That was the question the week set out to answer, and the answer came through the Book of James where campers explored Real Joy, Real Faith, Real Love and Real Talk.

The speaker for the week, The Reverend Paul Avis, opened with a game of "Is it Really Cake?" Plenty of things look genuine and turn out to be something else entirely.

That led into James 1's surprising claim that hard times can be a source of joy. The talk gave three reasons: hard times can grow you, they should send you to God for help, and they cannot take away what God has already given you. For teenagers navigating exams, friendships, family pressures and the constant noise of social media, it was a timely challenge.

The second talk began with a single word: "Hypocrite!" James 2 asks whether faith without deeds is real faith. The message was that real faith is grounded in God's sacrificial love for us and, in response, calls us to show that same sacrificial love to others.

The talk on real love dealt with fake love first, the kind that values people for what they can offer. James warns against giving the best seats to the impressive and the leftovers to everyone else. Real love, campers heard, values people for who they are, shows mercy rather than judgement, and doesn't give up on people.

The final talk focused on words. James calls the tongue a small thing that can set a whole forest ablaze. The challenge was to listen first, remember that words can be weapons, and use them to build people up rather than tear them down.

Each talk was followed by small discussion groups where campers wrestled with the passage they had heard. Questions were authentic, lively and thoughtful, and groups became safe places where young people could encourage and pray for one another.

The mornings were rounded out by quiet times of scripture, prayer and reflection. Campers worked through Paul's letter to the Ephesians, spending time alone with God and reflecting on what the Holy Spirit had been teaching them.

Real Relationships

Through scripture they met the real Jesus, who offers real relationship and real life.

Campers also developed real relationships through free time and organised activities. Minute to Win It games helped break the ice, while beach activities strengthened new friendships. Chill Night gave campers an opportunity to share how Jesus had been at work in their lives, and many opened up about their faith journeys.

Mini golf, canoeing, swimming and spikeball competitions deepened friendships throughout the week. All of it culminated in Skit Night, where leaders and campers entertained one another with plenty of laughter. Together they travelled 50 years into the future to save humanity from an AI supercomputer called Mother Ducky. For one evening, nobody was worried about being impressive.

Real Care

Care for others was evident throughout the camp. Neurodivergent campers were supported through quieter activity options, dyslexia-friendly booklets and access to a dedicated quiet space.

Campers also looked after one another through practical acts of service, helping with cleaning and mealtime duties. Leaders provided pastoral care throughout the week, but one of the highlights was watching young people show genuine care and maturity towards each other.

Real Joy

The bus that returned home wasn't quite the same bus that left.

The campers had spent a week sharing conversations, laughter, scripture and prayer, but the real change was harder to measure.

The Ephesians reading that closed the camp put it best: God *"is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine"*. Camp Overrated didn't promise a life without challenges. Instead, it pointed young people towards something sturdier: joy that holds up under pressure, faith that is lived out, love that doesn't keep score, words that build others up, and relationships marked by genuine care.

It might not be overrated after all.

Defence chaplains honoured ahead of Remembrance Day

A new video featuring Retired General David Hurley captures the vital role of Defence chaplains.



General Hurley in the video by Defence Anglicans.

Former Defence Force Chief, Retired General David Hurley, has highlighted the personal support he received from Defence chaplains during times of stress, in a video shared with churches ahead of Remembrance Day for Defence Sunday on November 8 Sunday – the Sunday before Remembrance Day.

> *"Throughout my career, chaplains were tremendously helpful to me personally, particularly under matters of great stress, when they would come in, often unsought, to offer a word of prayer,"* said General Hurley in the video produced by Defence Anglicans.
>
> *"In the chaos of operations, people begin to ask deeper questions – who they are, what they believe and what they stand for. A chaplain's presence is a quiet reminder that they're not alone. They are not forgotten by God."*

General Hurley also served as Governor-General of Australia between 2019 and 2024.

Bishop Mark Short, Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, commended the vital work of Defence Anglican chaplains in Australia's Navy, Army and Air Force, and thanked The Right Reverend Grant Dibden for his faithful service in the role of Bishop to the Australian Defence Force since 2020.

> *"Chaplains are a tangible reminder to people in our Defence Force that they are not alone – compelled by the love of Christ, chaplains are with Defence personnel on the ground, sharing the griefs and joys of military life, and helping people identify their source of hope."*

Bishop Mark acknowledged the sacrifices of Defence personnel and their families throughout the nation's history and continuing to this day.

> *"In an international environment that is increasingly challenging, we pray that the God of peace would strengthen and encourage our Defence personnel, their families and the chaplains who serve alongside them,"* he said.
>
> *We remember the sacrifices of those who have paid the ultimate price while serving our nation, and ask that God would make all people zealous for peace, while we wait for that day when all wars will cease."*

Retired General David Hurley is Patron of Anglican Military – Outreach Service (AMOS) Foundation, which helps fund Defence Anglican chaplains.

To find out more about Defence Anglicans and watch the video, go to defenceanglicans.org.au.



Vision36 is for each and every disciple

Written by The Reverend Jonathan Holt, Chair of the Exploratory Ministry Unit (EMU)

The Vision36 goal to plant or restore a million churches across the Anglican Communion by 2036 can sound daunting, until it's broken down to the fundamentals.

A helpful core idea behind the Vision36 project is the principle of

every disciple helping another to grow.

So much of what goes on in churches is person to person. It is one disciple helping another to grow.

We see it when one disciple, who is serving at Sunday school, helps the children to grow in their faith; in their understanding; in their love; in ways to serve.

We see it when one disciple, who is welcoming people to church, helps someone else, who is new to this role of welcoming, to grow in knowing how to serve. We see it when one disciple, who is a Deacon, sits alongside someone in grief or trouble, reassuring them of God's love and presence.

We do it in hundreds of simple and profound ways across the ministries of our churches. But note how the Vision36 project is calling for every disciple to help another grow.

Just as every part of the body does its bit to help the whole body grow to maturity, so we long to see every disciple active and involved, in whatever way is appropriate to their capacity and stage of growth.

This is the engine room for planting and revitalisation. Every renewed parish and every new parish is powered by the small, faithful work of one disciple helping another to grow. Just as Jesus worked with twelve disciples as the engine room to power the gospel going to the ends of the earth, so each time we rejoice in a vibrant parish or a newly planted congregation, we do so knowing it has come from this seemingly simple, but potent foundation of one disciple helping another to grow.

This part of Vision36 invites us to first pause and thank God for the disciples who played their part in how we have grown. We notice the disciple, whom God placed in our lives, at a certain time, to spur us on to love and good deeds. We have only grown as we were helped to do so by another disciple.

And having noticed how God has used small, intentional acts of other disciples to help us grow, we are encouraged to take our place in joining the work of helping another disciple to grow.





Learning to listen

Written by Reverend Martin Davies, retired priest living in Canberra

Rediscovering the spiritual gift of silence in a world full of noise.

The diocesan clergy silent retreat article (Anglican News 43.8, September 2026) opened with a familiar reaction: "Oh no, not a Silent Retreat!" It prompted me to wonder how that response might become less common.

Noise is a constant feature of life for many of us. Whether it is the hum of air-conditioning, background music, machinery, conversation, or the endless stream of words and information that surrounds us, silence can feel unfamiliar, uncomfortable, or even unwelcome. Yet many people long for it. Often, we simply need guidance and encouragement to discover what silence has to offer.

In the fourth and fifth centuries, many Christians sought silence in the deserts of Egypt, Palestine and Syria. They became known as the Desert Fathers and Mothers. Their stories continue to offer wisdom today.

One story tells of a distinguished guest visiting a monastery. The monks urged the abbot to offer a word of encouragement. He replied, *"If he isn't edified by my silence, he won't be edified by my words."* Another tells of a brother asking his teacher for a word of instruction, only to be told, *"Go, sit in your cell, and the cell will teach you everything."* In a similar spirit, Saint Francis of Assisi is often remembered for saying, *"Preach the gospel, and if necessary, use words."*

We instinctively recognise that silence comes in many forms: awkward silence, uneasy silence, solemn silence, or the silence that follows a moment of deep significance. In the spiritual life, outward silence plays an essential role in fostering inner quiet. We need to turn down both our external noise and our internal chatter.

Learning to feel at home in silence takes practice. We cannot truly listen for God if our surroundings are noisy and distracting, or if our own thoughts leave room for no voice except our own.

Most of us can recall moments that naturally invite silence, where words seem inadequate. Standing beneath a vast night sky is one example. The silence such moments evoke is not an end in itself; it allows awe and wonder to settle deeply within us. From that silence, a response of gratitude, reflection or praise may emerge.

Creating conditions where silence is possible is a first step in receiving what God may be saying to us. Silence simply gives God the opportunity to speak without competing with our continual conversation.

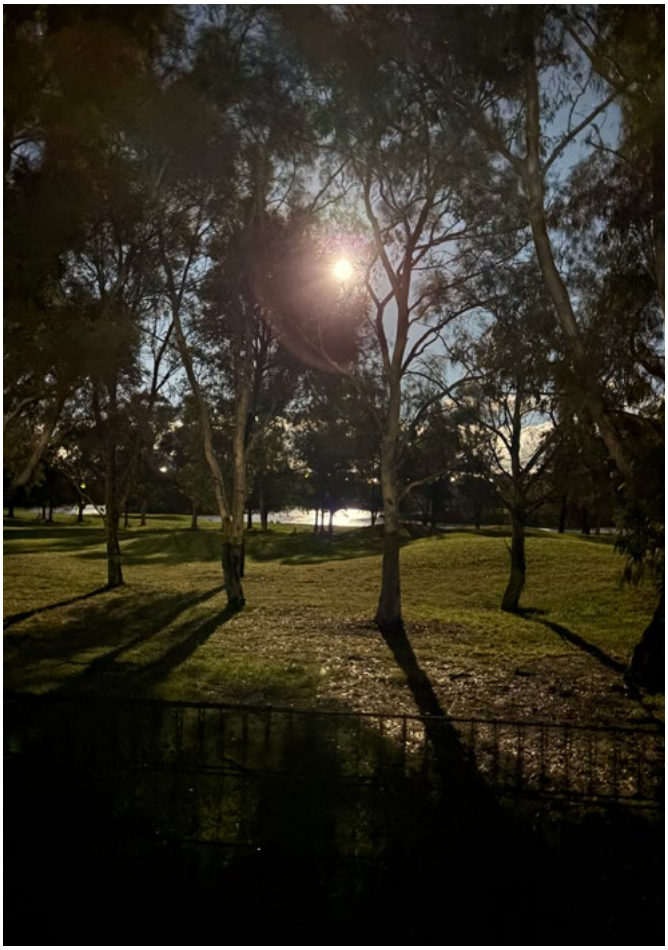
Liturgical prayer also reminds us of the beauty of silence. A monastic antiphon used at Christmas begins:

While gentle silence enveloped all things,
and the night in its swift course was now half gone,
your all-powerful word leaped from heaven…

Australian Cistercian monk Michael Casey captures a similar theme in his hymn:

Word out of silence, with the Father dwelling,
Full of his Godhead, splendid with his glory,
Reached into chaos, mortal ages telling
News of his goodness.

Silence can also heighten our awareness of others. Meals at retreats are sometimes shared in silence. Without words, we become more attentive to one another's needs, gestures and presence. Outer attentiveness gradually shapes our inward attitudes, helping our actions and intentions work together in greater harmony.



Things you might like to try

Share a meal in silence.
Whether with family, a home group or friends, put aside conversation, television, music and social media. Notice the needs of others, and whether silence feels natural or uncomfortable. Reflect on why.

Practise restraint in speech.
If you are usually quick to speak, allow others the opportunity to contribute first. Offer the hospitality of your silence so that quieter voices can be heard. Consider what is lost by speaking less, and what might be gained.



PARISH & COMMUNITY NEWS

Celebrating parish life, community initiatives and local stories from across the Diocese



Parishioners at Christ Church Cobargo

Lay people of Bermagui-Cobargo share their hopes for a rector

With three church sites, a thriving op-shop and scripture classes in the local primary school, opportunities abound at this parish in a growing part of the NSW South Coast.

The enthusiastic lay people of the Anglican Parish of Cobargo, Bermagui and Quaama have been working hard to keep the church doors open across the parish's three sites, while they pray for a rector to lead them.

Nancy, Gail and Caroline spoke with Anglican News about their hopes for a rector who would lead the parish in its mission to make Christ known in the growing coastal community.



(L-R) Parishioners Caroline, Gail and Nancy



Church site grounds

> *"There are a growing number of young families moving into Bermagui, and there are more than 100 children at the public primary school,"* Nancy said. *"We would love to welcome a rector and their family to our church, who can help us connect with the young families in our region."*

Like most members of the church, Nancy, Gail and Caroline volunteer at the parish Op Shop, The OK Shed. The Shed has recently increased its operating days in order to fund an almost-full-time rector (5 days a week).

> *"The greatest need is for a kind and loving minister who can teach the Bible faithfully, who will nurture the love of God into the wider community,"* Nancy said.

The church has been without a locum since December 2025. Nevertheless, the parish has continued to run services at all three sites – including at the town hall at Quaama, after the St Saviour's church building was lost in the devastating 2019-20 bushfires.

> *"We have a small team of people who are willing to give a homily when rostered, speaking firstly at Bermagui at 8:30am, then travelling to Cobargo or Quaama for a 10:30am service,"* Nancy said. *"Our people are very committed – we see a job that needs doing and we do it."*

One church couple run regular Scripture lessons at the primary school in Cobargo. The church is also grateful for the support of The Reverend Tim Narraway from Narooma, who enables Communion by Extension at least once a month.

> *"We have also been blessed to have some services led by the Reverend Capt Stuart and Katherine Haynes when they have been available,"* Nancy said.
>
> *"Church is very important to all of us,"* Gail said, *"If it wasn't here, I'd feel very bereft."*
>
> *"There is a great sense of belonging among the people here,"* Caroline said. *"There is genuine interest in one another."*

The church has welcomed several newcomers in recent years, who have become a valuable part of the parish. Nancy, Gail and Caroline say they hope to welcome many more in the years to come.



Parishioners



Photograph by St Peter's Cathedral

A stitch in the church's story



Jennifer Lawrence

After learning the centuries-old craft from her late brother, vestment maker Jennifer Lawrence continues a family legacy of helping clergy and congregations encounter the beauty of worship.

When people gather for worship on a Sunday, few stop to think about the hands that stitched the vestments worn by clergy at the altar.

Yet behind every carefully embroidered stole, chasuble or altar hanging are hours of patient work, generations of accumulated knowledge, and often a story of faith.

For Brisbane-based Jennifer Lawrence, owner of Emmanuel Church Vestments, those stories are woven into every piece she creates.

Her journey into vestment-making was not something she planned. Although the craft had been part of her family's history for generations, she never expected one day to be carrying that legacy forward herself.

That legacy began with her great-uncle, John Hogan, a Sydney tailor and renowned vestment maker who taught many of the skills later passed on to Jennifer's brother. A gifted historian, artist and librarian, he spent decades making vestments for churches while pursuing a vocation that eventually led him to ordained ministry in the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

To Jennifer, however, he was much more than an accomplished craftsman.

> *"He was an amazing man of multiple talents, intellect, my mentor, my friend as well as my brother,"* she said.

For years she admired his work from a distance while raising a family and building a life of her own. Everything changed in 2015 when her brother was diagnosed with cancer.

Jennifer moved to Brisbane to be closer to him and became one of his carers. During those years, as they navigated illness together, he began teaching her the craft that had been such a significant part of his own life.

> *"We would sit, we would work, listen to the Bible on CD, listen to Christian radio and just get on with commissions,"* she recalled.

What began as practical instruction became something deeper. Side by side, brother and sister spent countless hours cutting fabric, sewing seams and discussing the meaning behind the garments they were creating.

Those conversations helped rekindle Jennifer's own appreciation for the richness of Christian tradition.

> *"With my brother for five full years making vestments, beautiful fabric, what they're for and the meaning of them, it really gave me my love back for all of that area of Christianity,"* she said.

Today, Jennifer continues that work alone, overseeing every stage of each commission. From the first enquiry through to the finished garment, every vestment is carefully designed and handmade.

The fabrics themselves often come from specialist suppliers in the United Kingdom and Europe. Many of the brocades and other woven fabrics she uses are made from natural fibres, making them particularly well suited to the Australian climate. Some are extraordinarily intricate and valuable.

> *"Every time I had to cut into the fabric, I got anxiety sweats,"* Jennifer laughed. *"It's worth so much money."*

Yet for her, the beauty of a vestment is not found simply in fine materials or detailed embroidery.

Instead, she sees vestments as a visible reminder that worship is something sacred.

> *"They focus the congregation that something special is happening here,"* she said. *"It's all about coming into the presence of Christ and representing him."*



That understanding shapes her approach to every piece she makes.

Sometimes she works quietly in prayer. At other times she listens to Christian radio or history lectures while sewing. Whatever the soundtrack, the work demands patience.

> *"Nothing can be rushed,"* she said. *"The second you try to rush something, you can mess it up."*

Over the years, Jennifer has come to realise that the garments leaving her studio often become part of moments that matter deeply in the life of the Church: ordinations, feast days, baptisms, funerals and countless ordinary Sunday services.

One of her favourite memories came years after selling an early vestment through her Etsy store. While scrolling through social media, she discovered it being worn by someone entirely different. The garment had been passed on and was now part of another chapter in another person's ministry. For Jennifer, that moment captured what she loves most about the work.

> *"It's such a blessing to know that I've been this tiny little bit of their story, a tiny little bit of the journey,"* she said.

In an age when so much is produced quickly and discarded just as fast, vestments are made to endure. They are cared for, handed on and worn through generations of worship.

Perhaps that is why Jennifer sees her work as something more than a business.

Each stitch connects past and present. Each garment carries forward a tradition that has shaped the Church for centuries. And each commission is an opportunity to play a small part in someone else's walk of faith.

> *"It isn't just a job,"* she said. *"For me, it's really about being part of that story."*

Thinking About New Vestments?

www.emmanuelchurchvestments.com

Jennifer welcomes enquiries through the contact form on the Emmanuel Church Vestments website and is happy to discuss commissions by phone, text, video call or in person.

Please note that Vestments are handcrafted and made to order, so it's best to plan ahead for ordinations and other special occasions. Orders are completed in the order they are received and cannot be rushed.



St Matthew's Wanniassa celebrates 50 years

Written by The Reverend Joshua Kuswadi, Rector, St Matthew's Wanniassa

People from across the generations joined the celebrations of all that God has done through St Matthew's Wanniassa over the last half-century.

Give thanks to God for his faithfulness to his people at St Matt's over the past 50 years!
On Saturday 24 October a Community Open Day welcomed many people to join our party, and it was all free. There was live music, face painting, kids' activities, BBQ lunch, showbags, old photo albums and interviews with previous rectors and long-term members.

People who were part of the church's founding in 1976 were there. Others retold the story of cleaning bricks from an old government building to build Stage 1 of the building. Previous rectors and their wives, Rick and Janene Lewers, and Trevor and Ruth Edwards were interviewed. People who have moved on to other churches dropped in to see the completed Stage 3 building renovations (2024). Newcomers to Canberra looking for a church came by.

Most excitingly, people with no connection to a Christian community saw the advertising on social media and roadside corflutes and came along to enjoy their Saturday.









The next day was our Jubilee Celebration Service – a combined church service for young and old with many previous members too. Judith and John Mason (the founding minister) recounted how the Tuggeranong Valley was nicknamed, "Nappy Valley".

John told how the church grew through baptisms of newborns in the community and has always been committed to the Apostle Paul's ministry philosophy to *"preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake"* – 2 Corinthians 4:5. Allie and Ian Powell (the previous rector) were also present and Ian led prayers of thanks to God for the past 50 years.

As the church looks forward in prayerful anticipation, we were challenged from Hebrews 12:1-3 to fix our eyes on Jesus:

> *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."*

Please give thanks to God for his faithfulness, and pray we grow in our longing to see more people know, follow and proclaim Jesus as Lord in Canberra and the world.





Abercrombie House: Abercrombie House, Bathurst, was a highlight of the Anglican Historical Society's 2026 annual excursion.

To Bathurst and beyond

Written by Charles Body

Anglican Historical Society members explore churches, history and resilience across the Diocese of Bathurst

The Anglican Historical Society's annual excursion for 2026 took members to the Diocese of Bathurst on the weekend of 17-18 October.

The first stop on Saturday was the village of Tuena at the northern extremity of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, where The Reverend Sally Cullen spoke about the history of the small wooden church built during the town's gold-mining era. From there, the group travelled along the winding Abercrombie River road into the Diocese of Bathurst and on to Abercrombie House.

Abercrombie House is a grand nineteenth-century building which would not be out of place on an English country estate. Built in the 1870s by the Stewart family, it was largely abandoned from the 1920s until Rex Morgan purchased it in 1969 and began an extensive restoration. Today it remains the family home of his son, Christopher Morgan, while also welcoming visitors.

After lunch and a tour of the house, participants checked into their accommodation before joining former Bishop Richard Hurford for a tour of All Saints' Cathedral in Bathurst.



All Saints' Cathedral Bathurst: All Saints' Cathedral, Bathurst, welcomed visitors from the Anglican Historical Society during its 2026 annual excursion.



St Peter's Rockley: St Peter's Church, Rockley, one of several historic churches visited during the Anglican Historical Society's 2026 excursion to the Diocese of Bathurst.



St Aidan's: The beautiful timber-lined interior of St Aidan's, Black Springs, a church saved and sustained through the determination of the local community.

On Sunday, after Eucharist at the cathedral, the group travelled east to Holy Trinity, Kelso. Opened in 1835, it was the first church west of the Blue Mountains. The adjoining cemetery is even older, dating from 1826.

The next stop was St Peter's, Rockley, a beautiful brick church opened in 1867 but now destined for sale as part of efforts to address diocesan debt.

From Rockley it was a short drive to Black Springs and St Aidan's Church. This simple but beautiful church was closed in 2017 to help reduce diocesan debt. However, local residents, supported by Bishop Richard Hurford and generous benefactors, successfully worked for its return to the community. It now operates as a community church and remains a vital part of life in Black Springs.

The excursion concluded with afternoon tea at the home of The Reverend Andrew Sempell and his wife Rosemary.

The challenges facing the Diocese of Bathurst are well known and significant. Yet throughout the weekend participants encountered communities marked by deep faith, commitment and resilience.

From the grandeur of All Saints' Cathedral to the simplicity of St Aidan's, the people of the diocese offered a reminder that the Church is more than buildings and structures.

Their dedication gives confidence that Anglican witness in Bathurst will continue for many years to come.

Irish troubadours bring songs of hope to Canberra



Internationally acclaimed folk duo The Sweet Sorrows will perform at St Barnabas, Charnwood, on 12 November, bringing a blend of music, storytelling and faith-shaped themes to the Canberra community.

Based in County Wexford, Ireland, The Sweet Sorrows are veteran singer-songwriters Sammy and Kylie Horner. Known for their rich harmonies, humour and engaging performances, the pair share songs exploring justice, peace, community, history, love and hope. Their music has taken them across Europe and beyond, including recent performances in Myanmar and Ukraine.

The concert begins at **7pm** at **Hope Ginninderra Anglican Parish, St Barnabas, Charnwood**. A Malaysian food truck dinner will also be available **from 5.30pm**, offering an opportunity for fellowship before the performance.

Tickets are $20, family tickets (three or more people) are $50, and children under 12 are free.

More Information

Scan the QR code to book your tickets and dinner.

For more information, contact Jeannie at Jeanniey1949@gmail.com

Young bellringers answer the call at St Saviour's

Written by Christopher O'Mahony, St Saviour's Cathedral

School holiday workshop connects a new generation with a centuries-old tradition.

The sound of church bells echoed across Goulburn during the October school holidays as young people from across south-eastern Australia gathered at St Saviour's Cathedral to learn the art of bellringing.

From 6 to 8 October, around 15 young people took part in a series of training workshops designed to develop their skills and encourage a new generation of ringers.

The event was organised by 18-year-old Gabriel Moss, who discovered bellringing three years ago and hasn't looked back.

> *"At present there's a national program to bring new young recruits into this fascinating hobby, and it's our turn to host,"* Gabriel said.
>
> *"My own journey into bellringing started about three years ago, and everything the brochure promised has literally come true.*
>
> *I've rung bells in Goulburn, Canberra, Yass, Albury, Sydney, Melbourne, New Zealand, London and even Belgium. Within those three years, I've expanded my friendship group worldwide, which I could never have imagined."*

Working alongside the Australia & New Zealand Association of Bellringers (ANZAB), Gabriel helped bring together young ringers from Goulburn, Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and Yass to build skills and form connections.



The workshops also challenged common assumptions about the pastime.

> *"When some people think about bellringing, they imagine Quasimodo with his hunchback, or old blokes in waistcoats and braces,"* Gabriel said. *"Nothing could be further from the truth."*

Among the participants were seven young people from Goulburn who have recently taken up bellringing. For some, it complements other interests and pursuits. Year 9 student Mick sees it as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Award, while fellow students Tom and Henry, both musicians, enjoy applying their musical skills in a different setting.



Others have been drawn in through family connections or the challenge of ringing bells weighing up to a tonne.

Church bellringing has a history stretching back more than 350 years and has been practised at St Saviour's Cathedral since 1988. Today it continues to offer young people a unique combination of teamwork, skill development, service and friendship.

Later this year, Goulburn's young ringers will put their skills to the test when they compete in the NSW Youth Striking Competition, showcasing the growing strength of the tradition among the next generation.



Interested in bellringing?

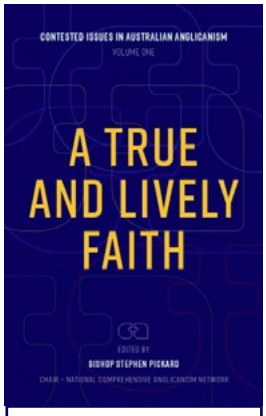
Within the Canberra-Goulburn Diocese, four churches continue the centuries-old tradition of change ringing:

- St Saviour's Cathedral, Goulburn
- St Paul's, Manuka
- St Clement's, Yass
- St John's, Wagga Wagga

Bellringers have sometimes been described as an "external choir", their bells ringing out beyond the church walls and calling to the wider community.

If you're interested in learning to ring, or would simply like to find out more about this fascinating ministry, get in touch with one of the churches listed.

New book explores contested issues in Australian Anglicanism



Scan to purchase

A True and Lively Faith: Contested Issues in Australian Anglicanism, Volume 1, edited by Bishop Stephen Pickard, brings together ten essays exploring Anglican fundamentals, Scripture, mission and culture, gender, doctrine and church politics.

Contributors from across Australia reflect on the Church's mission in a changing world and encourage thoughtful theological engagement and faithful dialogue.

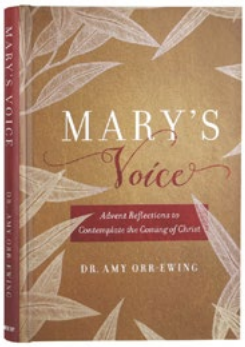
The book will be launched at **Holy Covenant, Jamison, on Sunday 29 November** at **4pm** by Mr Clive Rodger, Chair of the Board of Embracing Ministries, followed by Evening Prayer and refreshments.

Produced by the National Comprehensive Anglicanism Network, the book is available through coventrypress.com.au.

Christmas books for each age and stage

With Christmas around the corner, who could you encourage with a well-chosen book? The following titles offer a range of gift options for family and friends, children in your kids' ministry, and those curious about why Christmas matters.

An advent devotion for adults…

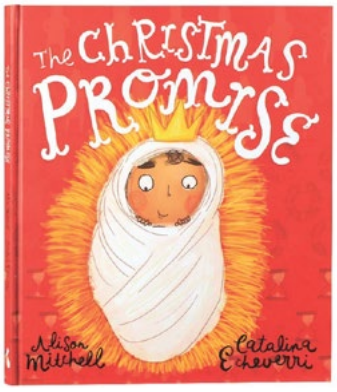


Mary's Voice: Advent Reflections to Contemplate the Coming of Christ

Amy Orr-Ewing, 2023

This unique Advent devotional from British theologian Amy Orr-Ewing invites us to hear the familiar Christmas story from an untold perspective: that of an ordinary, young, poor, oppressed woman who was chosen to play a significant and breakthrough role in the redemption of the world. It is no mistake that a woman gets to be a part of all this, and that her voice, her questions, her fears, and her actions matter.

Picture books for young children…



The Christmas Promise

Alison Mitchell, 2014, Ages 3-6

A captivating retelling of the Christmas story showing how God kept His promise to send a new King. Superb illustrations by Catalina Echeverri and faithful, Bible-centred storytelling by Alison Mitchell combine to make this a book that both parents and children will love.



Song of the Stars

Sally Lloyd-Jones, 2011, Ages 4-7

Song of the Stars, written by bestselling author Sally Lloyd-Jones, takes children on the journey of Advent and the anticipation of Jesus' arrival. All of creation comes together in this poetic and majestic telling of the Christmas story.



The Christmas Story: Brick by Brick Book

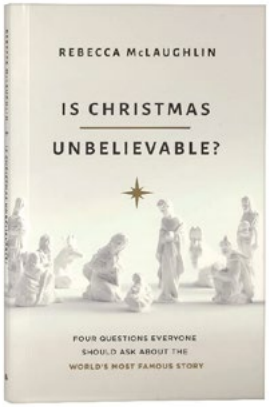
Rachael Hood, 2024

Published by The Good Book Company, this book is a rhyming retelling of the Christmas story for Lego-loving kids. Ideal to giveaway to families visiting your church this Christmas.

Videos, lessons and parent take-home packs are also available as part of a three-week Sunday school series for churches. For more information go to faithinkids.org/resources/church/the-christmas-story-brick-by-brick



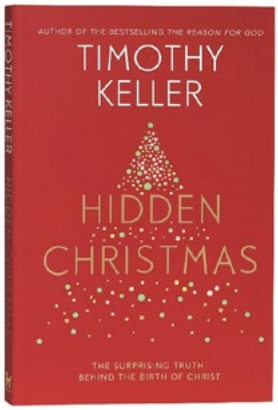
Books for outreach…



Is Christmas Unbelievable?: Four Questions Everyone Should Ask About the World's Most Famous Story

Rebecca McLaughlin, 2021, 64 pages

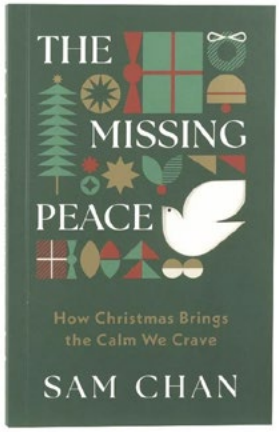
In this concise book, respected apologist Rebecca McLaughlin outlines the evidence that Jesus was a real person, explaining the reliability of the Bible's accounts of his life and why believing in a virgin birth is not as ridiculous as it might sound. This book shows that there is a rational basis for the belief that the world's most famous story is fact, not fantasy-and how those events in history can infuse our lives today with meaning and joy.



Hidden Christmas

Timothy Keller, 2018, 160 pages

The New Testament begins not with a dramatic narrative or lofty poetry but with a genealogy. Provocatively, Matthew's Gospel includes women in Jesus' family line - something that wasn't customary in an ancient culture, where women were largely powerless and uninfluential. Tim Keller reveals how, by focusing on the women in Jesus' birth narratives, a colourful, scandalous, and refreshing tale of grace emerges.



The Missing Peace: How Christmas Brings the Calm We Crave

Sam Chan, 2025, 64 pages

"Peace on earth" is a crucial part of the Christmas message and a reality we'd all love to experience. But when we look around or listen to the news, it seems like an empty promise. Our world is not at peace, and often our lives and relationships are not peaceful either.

In this short, warm and down-to-earth book, author and evangelist Sam Chan considers the question of peace. Through relatable storytelling and engaging insights into the Christian faith and Christmas story, Chan shows us how peace is possible despite the harsh realities of life in this world.

EDUCATION NEWS

Highlighting learning, faith and community across Anglican education within the Diocese



Students bring Beauty and the Beast to life

Sapphire Coast Anglican College's biggest production yet brought students, staff and families together.

For students at Sapphire Coast Anglican College, Beauty and the Beast was a chance to step outside their comfort zones, work alongside students from across the school and grow in confidence.

The production was the College's fourth major show led by Head of Creative & Performing Arts, Kirstin Gallagher, following previous productions including Aladdin and The Little Mermaid.

Kirstin said Disney productions have proven particularly well suited to a school community spanning Pre-K to Year 12.

> *"When you use a play like Beauty and the Beast, it lends itself to being able to involve a wide demographic of kids, and that's the whole point of it,"* she said.

The College's largest-scale production to date became a whole-school effort. Creative and Performing Arts staff led the production, while Year 9 and 10 Design and Technology students spent Semester 1 designing and constructing the set as part of their coursework.





Teachers, music staff and tutors joined the effort, while a former student returned to assist with choreography.

> *"It really became this kind of whole community event,"* Kirstin said.

For many students, simply stepping onto the stage was a significant achievement.

> *"I had kids that auditioned and wouldn't sing. They wanted to do it but didn't want to sing,"* Kirstin said. *"By the end of it, they all sang and danced."*

She said the supportive environment allowed students to grow not only as performers, but as individuals.

> *"They develop confidence, their self-esteem develops, and there's a beautiful community around them that is holding them."*

That growth extended across year groups, with older students naturally becoming mentors and leaders for younger cast members.

> *"We give them autonomy. I see them problem solve and see them figure things out for themselves,"* Kirstin said.

The production also offered a timely message about character. At the heart of Beauty and the Beast is the challenge to look beyond outward appearances, something Kirstin hoped would resonate particularly strongly with young people growing up amid the pressures of social media.

> *"I really hope that it spoke to them,"* she said. *"Perhaps to reflect on what it means to be kind, considerate and helpful."*

Themes of transformation were evident offstage too.

Former student Alice, who plans to study teaching, returned to assist with choreography and was given the opportunity to move from student to mentor. Meanwhile, Year 9 student Justice had worked hard preparing for a major role before falling ill with influenza during production week.

Year 11 student Will, who had originally decided against performing because of his studies and was helping backstage with microphones, stepped in. He learnt the role at remarkable speed and performed in all four shows.

> *"It was incredibly transformative watching him go from backstage to being the star of the show, and he saved the show,"* Kirstin said.

For Kirstin, moments like these capture why school productions matter.

> *"I love the idea of dreaming big, and I think that every student has the ability to make their dreams come true,"* she said.
>
> *"It's so impressive when you see these kids. They may not be as confident in the playground or in class, but when they are on the stage, they shine."*

Sapphire Coast Anglican College stages a musical every second year, with planning for its 2028 production set to begin next year.



St Peter's Anglican College to welcome new Principal



St Peter's Anglican College has announced the appointment of Wayne Brown as its next Principal, commencing in January 2027.

Mr Brown brings extensive experience in Anglican education and educational leadership, having most recently served as Headmaster of Whanganui Collegiate School in New Zealand for eight years.

A former senior leader at The Hutchins School in Hobart, Mr Brown has also worked in Anglican schools in England.

Mr Brown says he is passionate about ensuring every student is known, valued and supported to discover their God-given gifts. His vision for education, combining academic excellence, wellbeing, character and service, closely aligns with the College's values of Faith, Courage and Excellence.

Mr Brown and his wife Alycia are looking forward to joining the St Peter's community and returning to Australia.



St Peter's Anglican College, Broulee aerial image. Photo by John Fraser.


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