



Anglican Diocese
of Bendigo

The Spirit

monthly

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issue 143



Team: Bishop Matt, Melissa Clark and Niamh Fiford

Serving God a delight for little Niamh

Melissa Clark

Niamh Fiford is one of the younger parishioners at St Mary's Woodend.

She was baptised at St Mary's three years ago this month and now she brings her mum, dad, and little brother Rupert to church every week.

She loves assisting at the altar by helping to pour the water into the chalice, and every week she stands next to Revd Mel during the Eucharistic prayer to encourage everyone to 'lift up their

hearts'. She is learning when to bow and how to cross herself too.

When Bishop Matt was at St Mary's in December Niamh wore an alb for the first time and was the 'official' server for the day. She even got to carry Bishop Matt's crosier before the service – well the top part of it anyway.

When she grows up she would like to be a doctor or a priest, but for now she loves watching Octonauts toys and playing with her PJ Masks toys.



Helper: Niamh with Bishop Matt's crosier

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The Bishop writes

....and tweets  @MattBrain1



New Year's Resolutions

New Year's Resolutions can be a bit of a standing joke. They are often either too general to implement (think, 'I'll *only* eat healthy food this year') or too odd to matter (like, 'I'll learn to catch butterflies while riding my unicycle'). We all know how few resolutions get followed up and they often say more about our desires than our actions. Yet it does seem fitting that the beginning of a new year should also herald a commitment to new or better ways.

Perhaps one way of looking at New Year's Resolutions is as a kind of 'life audit'. As a fresh year begins we look at our lives and have the opportunity to renew ourselves. While the application may be patchy, it is an expression of our desire to be all that we can be.

I wonder if you have ever done a 'spiritual audit'? Many Christians throughout the ages, from puritans to mystics, nuns to non-conformists, have found that regularly scheduling an honest spiritual self-appraisal can be helpful. This is hard work because it requires us to be honest with ourselves and (to be honest) face up to our failings, blind-spots and indifferences. It often exposes how comfortable we are with comfort, and uncomfortable we are with sacrifice.



However, when done well it is the route into new freedom in relationship with God. I am sure that when we are honest with God about where we are at, God then meets us and gives us unexpected joy. Our 'audit' or effort does not merit grace, but by God's grace is the way by which the Holy Spirit begins to help us walk into 'life and life to the full'.

"So what would a spiritual audit look like?"

Great question! Many wise people have written extensively on this topic and I do not pretend to be an expert, but I do think four questions and one action can help.

1. Where has God placed me?

What's my street like? My neighborhood or community? What public institutions or places of education are there?

2. Who has God put me near?

What are my neighbors' names? What families do they have? Where do people congregate? Why are they there? Who are the 'hidden' people? Who are the 'missing' people?

3. What need can I see that has to be met?

Are people struggling? Is there a gap in the services that are available? Where are public institutions at their limit? Where are people self-satisfied or in distress?

4. How does Jesus fulfil this need?

Read of Jesus in the scriptures (not only in the Gospels, but as he is reflected in all the Bible). What strikes you are Jesus' *modus operandi*? How does he treat people? How does he solve problems? Where does he expect help to come from?

The Action? Well, it is to pray.

Simply tell God of the where, who, what and how, and do it frequently. If you end the prayer with 'and please God, show me how I can help', by the time next year rolls around you will be surprised at the things you have done.

So rather than making spiritual resolutions, have a go at a spiritual audit and give God an invitation to use you.

Matt



Induction: The clergy gathered with Bishop Matt and Anthony Stones (left of Bishop Matt) at his induction service

Anthony Stones inducted into new ministry cooperative

Sarah Crutch

Anthony Stones was inducted as the new Priest in Charge of a new ministry cooperation between the parishes of Rochester-Lockington and Elmore in early December.

Moving to live in Rochester from Clayton in Melbourne, Anthony and his wife Jo and their three sons Harvey (16), Kaleb (14) and Tristan (12) were welcomed into their new ministry with a friendly gathering of clergy and parishioners at Holy Trinity, Rochester.

"We are very excited about making our home and life among you, getting to know you all and continuing to grow in faith and love together. We feel very privileged to be given this opportunity to go forward in faith together with you," Anthony said.

Anthony was welcomed with words from parish representative Bill Roberts and Rural Dean George Hemmings.

Between the two parishes, Anthony will be ministering amongst a combined six centres of Rochester, Lockington, Elmore, Goornong, Colbinabbin and Raywood.

"This appointment acknowledges the cooperation of two parishes," Bishop Matt said.

"Anthony will assist the different congregations of the parishes

to continue in worship given the changing nature of their communities, to identify and grow locally embedded ministry and provide pastoral care and nurture across the various communities."

With Christmas only a few weeks following Anthony's induction, he was soon focused on preparations for worship across the various centres and establishing a plan heading into the new year.

"I look forward to seeing how this network of communities might serve God and each other in worship and mission and be a source of encouragement to each other for Jesus sake and for many years to come," he said.

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Lady Day

Monday 18 March

Holy Trinity

South East Bendigo

14 Keck Street, Flora Hill

11.00am

Please BYO lunch

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Just search for 'Anglican Diocese of Bendigo'.



Received: Bishop Matt and Melissa Clark with the new Anglican members

New Anglicans welcomed with service of reception in Woodend-Trentham

Melissa Clark

On 16 December Bishop Matt visited Woodend and Trentham to receive three new Anglicans into the church.

Robyn, Michael, and Greg were all baptised as youngsters in Presbyterian and Methodist congregations and have been faithful attendees at St George's Trentham and St Mary's Woodend in recent years. Their willingness to volunteer for various official roles within the parish meant that they needed to be received into the Anglican Communion.

It was a great service of reception, the first time many in attendance had seen such a service, and everyone celebrated in true Anglican style with a big morning tea spread afterwards.

It was also a first for young Niamh Fiford as she served for the first time. Niamh was baptised at St Mary's three years ago and is a favourite amongst her church family.



Trio: Niamh, Bishop Matt and Melissa Clark



Thankful: Children and families filled the cinema for the free movie afternoon

Thank you beary much! Cinema afternoon welcomed by community

Judi Bird

The 'Free Film for Families' screening held on Sunday 11 November 2018 at the Rex Theatre in Charlton provided 177 movie-goers of every age with the opportunity to see a great movie and have some fun with family and friends.

The movie, *Christopher Robin*, drew crowds from near and far from across our region (Boort to Birchip, Watchem to Wedderburn and from places in between). Upstairs and downstairs levels of the theatre were filled with the aroma of popcorn - the candy bar attendants did a great job keeping up with demand.

Thank you to the Rex Theatre and volunteers for making this an extra-special event for everyone. The movie, *Christopher Robin*, carried a message about the strength of the human spirit. There was plenty of country human spirit in the theatre - especially when delivering the popcorn orders!

This special afternoon was made possible through a kind gift from an

Disney Christopher Robin

Film: For young and old

anonymous donor who, through the Anglican Parish of Charlton-Donald, wanted to reach out to our rural community and let them know that he cares about them.

On behalf of the parish, we hope that, just like Christopher Robin's recovery of the joy, wonder and freedom that inspired his childhood, the memories of Winnie the Pooh and his friends will give you joy for a long time to come.

As Eeyore says, "A little consideration, a little thought for others makes all the difference".

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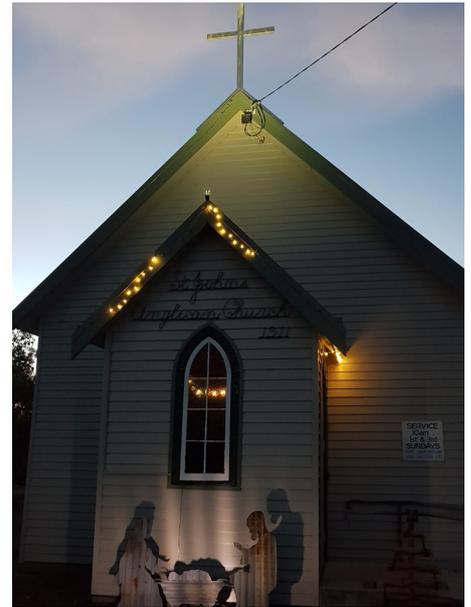
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Celebrating Christmas...



Proclaim: The sign featured at St John's, Bears Lagoon



Display: St John's, Bears Lagoon



Create: Cafe Church activities enjoyed in Swan Hill



Clever: Creative Christmas Tree entries



Storytellers: The team at South East Bendigo presented a children's version of the Christmas Story

...around the diocese



Dress up: Bishop Ron Stone



Photobooth: The nativity photobooth at St Alban's, Mooroopna



Nativity: Mooroopna's photobooth



Show: Sharing the Christmas story



Participate: The congregation at St John's, Chewton telling the Christmas story

Celebrating Christmas...

Christmas Tree competition brings out creativity

A Christmas tree competition involving putting together a Christmas tree from a variety of materials has been creating interest at St Johns Bears Lagoon on the Loddon Valley Highway.

A competition to make the seasonal trees from whatever comes to hand including such things as barb wire, iron posts and cutter blades from a header front, was started by the church five or six years ago and has caught the imagination of community members and passing motorists alike.

There were more than thirty trees entered this year including one left anonymously in a trailer. In the indoor category a book tree, which saw printed pages pleated into pine needles, won first prize. There was also a nativity scene made from lollies which were housed in a glass bottle. The winners were announced at the Christmas Eve service where the little church was full to overflowing.

The church is also known for the evocative and cleverly worded messages that confront regular highway travellers as they pass through Bears Lagoon. These signs were commissioned by the Epsom Community Church and shared with St John's in the hope that the messages they bring might give comfort and hope to those who pass by.

- Gwen Twigg



Creative: A clever Christmas creation

A very noisy Christmas at Kangaroo Flat

The family Christmas service at St Mary's Kangaroo Flat was anything but a 'Silent Night'. In fact, it was 'a very noisy Christmas'.

A cast of characters including Mary and Joseph, angels, shepherds, animals and a donkey took to the stage and presented the Christmas story complete with an unsuspecting member of the congregation, Bishop Ron Stone, who was nominated as the star attraction - baby Jesus.

Unknown to Bishop Ron or anyone else that night when they came to church, they were about to feature in a non-rehearsed, interactive, extremely fun re-enactment of the night Jesus was born. There were angels singing, sheep bleating, crowds bustling and the baby Jesus 'wailing'.

Of course a baby must be appropriately dressed in a nappy to really play the



Fun: The congregation joins in the fun

part and whilst initially blushing a bit, our baby rose to the occasion and won the hearts of all. Move over Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper, truly a star was born that night at St Mary's.

- Tracey Wolsley

Mooroopna explores the ministry of the nativity costume

In our community, in the media, in shop windows and town parks, in cards and decorations there are many images relating to Christmas celebrations but very few relating to the facts about Jesus birth. At St Alban's Anglican Church in Mooroopna we decided to develop some resources to present different images and to provide a way to tell the real Christmas story.

Through the bounty of op shops, the sewing skills, artistic skills and generosity of church members we developed a portable Nativity photo booth. We now have costumes for Mary and Joseph, shepherds, angels and Magi from baby size to full grown adult size. And a baby wrapped in a manger.

So, with this kit, how many ways can we use it?

This past Christmas we set up the booth as one of the activities available during the Christmas Fest held at our church. Through the generosity of one of our farmers we even had a calf and a lamb. There are signs displayed describing the different characters and their part in the birth story. Photos are taken on peoples own phones so there are no issues with privacy. Several church members are available to help

with costumes and to explain who the people were and what happened.

The following week the photo booth was set up at the local carols in the park for the third year. It was very popular with adults and children. The Bible Society booklet 'The Really Good News of Christmas - For Me' was made available and over 90 were taken.

Then, the costumes were used at a playgroup for mothers and children from Afghanistan. The story of the angels visits to Mary and to the shepherds, the birth of Jesus and the visit of the wise men was told. We were able to share the stories we have in common and some of the differences.

The weekly playgroup held at the church used the costumes for dress ups as part of their Christmas breakup and were used again in the family Christmas service. People were invited to dress up and participate in readings and activities.

So, there were many opportunities to portray the story of Jesus birth. We look forward to the ways this resource can be used in the future and encourage others to consider using a Nativity Photo Booth in their community.

- Faye Guyatt

Castlemaine celebrates

Christmas celebrations in Castlemaine were lively events for young and old. St John's, Chewton enjoyed an interactive nativity narrative read by our resident actor, Ian Downie.

At Christ Church, Castlemaine the children, parents, grandparents and friends gathered in a packed church for the annual Christmas Eve pageant led by Samantha Bews, Danni Moore and Cath James.

- Anne McKenna

Christmas Eve Service at South East Bendigo

Instead of protecting their sheep from wolves, lions and anything else that might attack their sheep, two scruffy, smelly shepherds joined the Family Christmas Eve service.

The shepherds had had a surprise visit from an angel and the angel told the shepherds about the birth of baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

After visiting baby Jesus, the shepherds proceeded to tell everyone that a saviour had been born. They used a "Pillow" to tell the Christmas story so that those present could use their pillow at home to recall the events of the first Christmas. Then a third shepherd joined the other two to demonstrate how "Sheep Poo", when used as "Sham Poo" is gross and so is our sin.

Yet Jesus came to earth, he grew up and died on a cross, to take away our "Gross" sin so that we can be forgiven and be friends with God.

- Rob Edwards

Christmas feast brings together Kyabram community



On Monday, 10 December 90 clients enjoyed a nutritious two course Christmas dinner including roast pork and vegetables and home made christmas pudding and custard at St Andrews in Kyabram.

The meal has been running for over 13 years and God has richly blessed us with continuous donations and financial support.

- Patti Harrison

Well fed: Attendees at the Christmas dinner at St Andrew's, Kyabram

Swan Hill celebrates Christmas cafe style

An edible Christmas house, carols, fellowship and pizza were all enjoyed by a good crowd at the Café Church Christmas service in Swan Hill.

We sang old carols and new, including a Christmas version of words set to the Hallelujah tune made famous by the Shrek movie. We also explored, through a discussion, the planned nature of Christmas. That is, God planned both the big picture of salvation in Jesus and all the amazing details. Indeed we are part of His plans too.

It was great to have such a cross section of people, young and old and a special mention goes to the folk from our Ultima house congregation who joined us for this Christmas service.

- Peter Blundell



Fellowship: The congregation at the Cafe Church Christmas service in Swan Hill

Mooroopna to welcome new rector

Sarah Crutch

Simon Robinson has been appointed the new Rector of the Parish of Mooroopna, to take up the new ministry on 4 March 2019.

The Parish of Mooroopna had a very difficult year in 2018 having lost their beloved rector, the Revd Stu Winn suddenly in May. Although the decision to conclude ministry in the Gannawarra Cluster has been difficult for Simon, the Holy Spirit has confirmed the call to Mooroopna in every way possible, through words of wisdom and knowledge, visions, dreams, God-incidences, and a cow!

Simon has been a part of the diocese since 2005, having initially served as Assistant Curate in Mooroopna during 2005 following his ordination as a deacon.

Together with Katrina, Simon has ministered in Eaglehawk and Inglewood, Lockington and most recently as the Team Leader of the Gannawarra Cluster comprising the parishes of Kerang, Cohuna, Leitchville and Gunbower.

"Simon has worked hard to serve and equip the saints in each of these communities to discover their God-given gifts and reach out in mission to those around them," Bishop Matt said.

"His practical example in forging links with a wide range of people outside of the church community over the eight years of his leadership in the Gannawarra Cluster has been inspiring."

"Simon and Katrina will bring caring and outreach gifts to Mooroopna which will help the congregations to discern God's direction as they pursue the work that God's Spirit has prepared for them," he added.

Simon will be inducted on Monday 4 March at St Alban's Mooroopna just in time for Ash Wednesday.



Community Connections



Compassion: Bendigo churches will provide support to the homeless during winter

Bendigo Winter Night Shelter: churches helping the homeless

Bendigo Winter Night Shelter (BWNS) is a developing project in Bendigo which aims to support Bendigo churches as they work together to share the love of God by providing overnight crisis accommodation for people (guests) experiencing homelessness. The accommodation will be provided during winter only from 1 June to 31 August.

The Bendigo Winter Night Shelter project is being modelled along the same lines as 'Stable One' in the Yarra Valley which has just completed its second successful winter of operation. You can have a look at their website <https://stableone.org/> to learn more about this initiative.

It's intended that churches hosting guests will take one night per week to provide shelter in a church building, an evening meal and a self-serve breakfast of cereal and fruit.

BWNS currently has six confirmed sleeping venues, but they are aiming for 14; as this would mean that each church would take one night per fortnight. A number of denominations across Bendigo have already agreed to participate and provide a venue for sleeping, with conversations continuing with other church groups.

BWNS guests will be pre-identified and will enter into an agreement to abide with BWNS policies before being offered a place in the project. In the coming months BWNS will begin to look for volunteers, with an aim to conduct volunteer briefings and training throughout April and May.

Andrew Howe, a member of St Paul's Cathedral congregation, is coordinating the project and is confident that BWNS will be ready to provide crisis accommodation to people experiencing homelessness in Bendigo by 1 June 2019.

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In Loving Memory...

Today's music?

Fay Magee

I do hope Advent and Christmas were fulfilling times with maybe a song or two to spark some reflection. I am currently pondering a topic for a workshop in March: *Today's music for today's church*. Like many such topics, we are probably trying to cover a vast subject in too short a time, and obviously, it is one which clergy and people in the pews have pondered over many years in one way or another.

What is 'today's music', and even, what is 'today's church'? Dealing mainly with music as a classroom music teacher, I was always having to keep up with my secondary students' interests. I observed these to become much more diverse, particularly over the last 20 years.

"Back in the day", as they would say, the preferences of a particular age cohort were largely based on the musical offerings of their early teenage years, derived from what we knew as the 'Top 40'. We all liked the same songs, well roughly, and that was important for our group identity.

Not so now, with online streaming services, YouTube, and social media, we have access to music from every imaginable – and unimaginable – genre from over a thousand years of musical activity and from probably all corners of the globe. As well, recent neuroscience explains how our musical tastes are formed and how these can be developed and expanded.

So, when it comes to selecting music for our worship, the idea of matching this to our community's stated preferences is less of a realistic proposition. The basis for our worship music selection is the other half of the topic about 'today's church'. What we sing in worship is based on our theology of church and our theology of worship, even if we haven't thought of it like that.

Most importantly, there is a wide variety of music out there which will enhance our worship and also enrich our understanding of 'others' and their music.



Relationship: Bishop Johnson, his wife and children with Sue Allen and Kath Tointon

Reaching out: Ugandan clergy support

At the end of 2018, the Revd Sue Allen and Bishop Matt spoke of the opportunity this diocese has to be of practical support to clergy families in the Diocese of West Ankole, Uganda.

Sue has had a long association with the present bishop of West Ankole, Bishop Johnson Twinomujuni, and has discovered that the simple provision of a goat will go a long way to assisting clergy families to have the means to survive.

"A donation of \$50 buys a goat for a family, giving this family milk, and with

The diocese has 333 priests, 25 archdeacons, 132 vicars, 122 curates and 54 chaplains, who are paid differently, based on seniority, education and office or position. The average salary is approximately \$140 (AUD) a month.

"Bishop Johnson is in the process of rebuilding this embattled diocese," Sue explains. "Part of this rebuilding is improving the clergy staff welfare, the state of their accommodation and salaries raised, so as they may send their children to school, and their general health and welfare improved."

“This is a great thing for us to be partnering in as sisters and brothers of those in ministry in Uganda”

the offspring, meat or by selling, a means to subsidise their clergy income."

Sue's association with the West Ankole Diocese began 15 years ago when she went on a SOMA short term mission.

The diocese has faced severe difficulties in recent times. The diocesan secretary, Revd Canon Arthur Atwine outlines its struggles.

"In the past years, this diocese was seriously hit by a wave of winds which sharply divided God's people, hampered growth and affected church order. The diocese was wounded and burned."

"[Bishop Johnson's] paternal voice, prayer, vision and strong authoritative presence give us the strength to live and together build peace in the diocese."

With the support of Bishop Matt, Sue is calling on the diocese to support a Ugandan clergy family.

"This is a great thing for us to be partnering in as sisters and brothers of those in ministry in Uganda," Bishop Matt said.

"My challenge is that each of us consider whether this is a way to give generously to others who serve God like us but are not able to 'repay' the gift," he added.

Donations can be made through New Horizons Welfare Services. A donation form is available for download from the diocesan website. Go to Community > New Horizons Welfare Services.

Safe Church Awareness Workshops

Workshops run by the Anglican Diocese of Bendigo:

Refresher Workshops - 9.30am - 12.30pm

Saturday, 2 March at St Mary's, Kangaroo Flat

Saturday, 30 March at St Mary's, Woodend

Saturday, 11 May at Christ Church, Echuca

Full Workshops - 9.30am - 4.00pm

Saturday, 6 April at Holy Trinity, Flora Hill

Saturday, 15 June at Holy Trinity, Flora Hill

Registration for all of these is through the diocesan website:

<http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/safe-church-awareness-workshops/>

Baptist Union of Victoria are running the following workshops:

Refresher Workshop

Friday, 1 February at Bendigo Baptist Church 6.30pm-9.30pm

Safe Church Awareness Full Workshop

Saturday, 2 February at Bendigo Baptist Church 9.30am to 4pm

Registration for these is through the BUV website:

<https://www.buv.com.au/>



Diocesan Executive

Monday, 4 February

Bishop in Council

Tuesday, 12 February

Senior Leadership Team

Thursday, 14 February

Induction of Simon Robinson

Monday, 4 March, 7.30pm at Mooropna

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, 6 March

MU Lady Day

Monday, 18 March, 11am at Flora Hill

Provincial Council

Tuesday, 2 April

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A tradition that continues...

Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest...

The prayer for Bible Sunday urges us to engage with the Bible in such a way that we know what it says, understand what it says, and are learning to apply what it teaches about our Christian faith and life.

The Gospel of St Luke is this year's gospel, which we will be hearing read during the normal Sunday services. Here is an opportunity to engage with this gospel, hear some fresh perspectives, ask some awkward questions and challenge your understanding.

Dean Elizabeth is delighted that Revd Dr Margaret Wesley, Minister at St John's Heathcote, will be leading a study day at St Paul's Cathedral in Bendigo on Tuesday 19 February, 10.00am – 3.00pm. Details of timetable, costs and catering will be available from the Cathedral Office from 1 February.

This day is for all, not just the clergy! Come along and discover more about St Luke and his story of Jesus.

