

THE Melbourne Anglican

NOVEMBER 2025, No 650

Blessing the pets at St John's Toorak

Page 11



P13
Tony Rinaudo's
environmental
peace prize



P19
From Youth
groups to church
planting



P23
Walking for
reconciliation

St John's Toorak vicar Reverend Peter French and Hudson. Picture: Sybil Gazzard.



■ Alison Taylor

November is always a busy month. Christmas preparations are already underway in the shops and in our homes. Schools are preparing for end-of-year events, holidays are being planned, and parishes are gearing up both for the annual meeting and for Advent.

But November has so much else to offer. Just look at the riches of our church calendar!

Right at the beginning of the month is the wonderful celebration of All Saints. That is the occasion when we give thanks to God “for all the saints who from their labours rest” in the words of the famous hymn *For all the saints*. It’s a thanksgiving for the named saints we know about, but also for all the saintly people known to God alone. They are often ordinary people – not famous – who have faithfully but quietly served our

Lord in the midst of their daily lives.

It is a celebration of that “blest communion, fellowship divine”.

All Saints’ Day is followed by All Souls’ Day, also known as the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed. Please don’t confuse this with the commercialised Halloween! This is not about spooks and skeletons. It is a quiet and intimate time for the church to give people the opportunity to remember before God the people they have loved, and the people who have nurtured them in the faith by their teaching or example.

There are also a number of interesting saints who are remembered throughout November. They include Leo of Rome, bishop and teacher (died 461); Martin, soldier and Bishop of Tours (died 387); Charles Simeon, the 19th century English Evangelical cleric; the seventh century Abbess Hilda of Whitby; and the pioneer Aboriginal deacon, James Noble, who died in 1941.

A major November saint, the apostle St Andrew, is usually celebrated on 30 November. This year though, 30 November is the first Sunday of Advent – the start of the new church year – so Andrew’s commemoration has been transferred to 1 December.

This year too, 30 November is very significant for us in this diocese, as we will be welcoming our next Archbishop, Dr Ric Thorpe, at his installation that day.

The week before that, the church year will close with the celebration of Christ the King, also known as the Reign of Christ. Before we begin the new year by once more looking for the coming of the Messiah in Advent, we close the ‘old’ year by proclaiming Christ’s universal sovereignty.

At a time of world insecurity, this reminder that Christ’s reign is supreme over all others offers us great hope!

Vacant Appointments as of 3 October 2025:

All Saints, Ascot Vale; St Barnabas, Balwyn; St Stephen, Belmont [from January 2026]; St Bartholomew, Burnley; St Mark, Camberwell; St James Croydon Hills with St Mark’s Wonga Park; St Michael and St Luke, Dandenong North; St John, Diamond Creek; St Mark, Emerald; St Matthew Endeavour Hills; St John, Frankston with St Luke Carrum Downs [from December 2025]; St John, Healesville with St Paul Yarra Glen; St George, Ivanhoe East; St Paul, Kew East; Holy Trinity, Lara with Christ Church, Little River; St Aidan, Parkdale; Pascoe Vale-Oak Park; All Saints, Rosebud with St Catherine’s, McCrae; St James Wandin with St Paul’s, Seville; St John, Wantirna South; St Stephen Warrandyte; St Paul, Westmeadows [from January 2026]

Appointments:

DENT, The Revd Stephen, appointed Vicar, St John, Sorrento with St Andrew, Rye, effective 7 October 2025
GIFFORD, The Revd Andrew, appointed Vicar (from Priest-in-Charge) Holy Trinity, Bacchus March with Christ Church, Myrniong and St George’s, Balliang, effective 16 February 2026.

JACKSON, The Revd Bradley, appointed Parish Minister, St Luke, Vermont, effective 24 November 2025

JONES, The Revd Keiron Margaret, appointed extension as Area Dean, Deanery of Mornington Peninsula, effective 22 December 2025

KELLY, The Revd Reece, appointed Vicar (from Priest-in-Charge) Parish of St Paul, Clyde North (Ministry Presence) effective 1 February 2026.

KOROH, The Revd Isaac, appointed Parish Minister (from Assistant Curate) Parish of Mullum Mullum, Ringwood, effective 26 November 2025 then appointed Vicar, Church of the New Guinea Martyr’s Croydon South, effective 3 February 2026.

LO, The Revd Samantha, appointed Intentional Interim Vicar, St Paul, East Kew, effective 15 December 2025

MACKENZIE, The Revd Kirk, appointed Vicar (from Priest-in-Charge) Plentylife Anglican Church, Mernda, and Doreen, effective 6 December 2025.

ROSS, The Revd Kirsty Leanne Ross, appointed extension as Area Dean, Deanery of Stonnington, effective 2 September 2025

SNIBSON, The Revd Joel David, appointed Parish Minister, Church of the Epiphany, Hoppers Crossing, effective 1 February 2026

Permission to Officiate:

HANSON, The Revd Mark, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 23 December 2025

SULLIVAN, The Revd David James, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 21 December 2025

WELLARD, The Revd Kim Janice, appointed Permission to Officiate within the Diocese of Melbourne, effective 13 December 2025

Resignations:

JACKSON, The Revd Bradley, Assistant Curate, St Barnabas, Glen Waverly, effective 24 November 2025

Clergy Moves



THE Melbourne Anglican

ISSN 1324-5724

Editor and senior journalist:

Jenan Taylor

jtaylor@melbourneanglican.org.au

Journalist:

Hannah Felsbourg

hfelsbourg@melbourneanglican.org.au

Journalist:

Lesla Scholl

lscholl@melbourneanglican.org.au

Administration Officer: Alisha Vujevic

avujevic@melbourneanglican.org.au

Digital Media Specialist: Sybil Gazzard

sgazzard@melbourneanglican.org.au

Advertising: WildHive

ads@melbourneanglican.org.au

Design & Layout: Ivan Smith

ads@melbourneanglican.org.au

Subscription Enquiries

(Annual Subscription \$40):

tma@melbourneanglican.org.au

Printing: Mailhouse Direct

Published by:

Anglican Media Melbourne,
209 Flinders Lane Melbourne VIC 3000
ph 9653 4269

tma.melbourneanglican.org.au

[@MelbourneAnglican](https://www.facebook.com/MelbourneAnglican)

[@MelbAnglican](https://www.instagram.com/MelbAnglican)

Clergy Moves is compiled by the Registry Office and all correspondence should go to registrar@melbourneanglican.org.au



Bishop Sarah Mullally will be the first woman to serve as Archbishop of Canterbury.

Picture: Lambeth Palace

Installation date for first woman Archbishop of Canterbury

■ Lesa Scholl

The first woman appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury in the role's 1400-year history will be formally installed on 25 March 2026.

Archbishop-elect Dame Sarah Mullally will be the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury since Saint Augustine arrived in Kent from Rome in 597.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is the most senior bishop in the Church of England and serves as Primate.

Bishop Mullally is currently the Bishop of London. Before her ordination she was the youngest person ever to be appointed as the government's Chief Nursing Officer.

She was a leading signatory in the multi-faith fight against England's assisted suicide legalisation and led the Elliot Review, which called for wide-sweeping changes in safeguarding.

Bishop Mullally reflected on the huge responsibility of her new ministry and

"I have learned to listen deeply – to people and to God's gentle prompting – to seek to bring people together to find hope and healing."

Sarah Mullally

sought to approach it with a sense of peace and trust in God to carry her.

"As I respond to the call of Christ ... I do so in the same spirit of service to God and to others that has motivated me since I came to faith as a teenager," she said.

"I have learned to listen deeply – to people and to God's gentle prompting – to seek to bring people together to find hope and healing."

Lambeth Palace said the Crowns

Nominations Commission for Canterbury comprised diverse representatives who nominated Bishop Mullally following a process of public consultation and prayerful discernment.

CNC chair Lord Evans of Weardale said it was a great privilege to chair the CNC through its discernment process, which involved hearing the voices of thousands of people expressing their hopes for the nomination of Bishop Mullally.

Anglican Communion secretary general Bishop Anthony Poggio commended the nomination and invited the global communion to pray for God to grant her wisdom and discernment in encouraging mutual support and unity.

Bishop Mullally gave an address at Canterbury Cathedral ten years after she was consecrated there as Bishop of Crediton.

The Church of England first consecrated women as bishops in 2014.

GAFCON announcement is ‘not the Angli

■ Jenan Taylor, Hannah Felsbourg

The Global Anglican Future Conference decision to reject the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury lacked clarity and unanimity but should not be ignored, Anglican leaders say.

The GAFCON communique declared it would form the true Anglican Communion and reject the instruments of communion including the Archbishop of Canterbury and Anglican Consultative Council.

Issued by chairman Archbishop Laurent Mbanda of Rwanda, the statement came 13 days after the announcement of Bishop Sarah Mullally as Archbishop-designate in October.

It declared the Bible was the only foundation of communion, and that GAFCON would not continue communion with those it claimed advocated a revisionist agenda that abandoned biblical authority.

It also required member provinces to remove references to Canterbury from their constitutions, cut financial ties with the ACC, and assent to the Jerusalem Declaration of 2008, which upholds traditional marriage and biblical authority.

General secretary to the Anglican Communion Anthony Poggo responded to the communique by calling for urgent attention to and repair of the divisions among Anglicans and many others in the Body of Christ.

But local and international Anglican figures questioned the declaration's cogency.

Toronto University academic and co-author of *The Anglican Communion at the Crossroads* Professor Christopher Brittain said the statement did not align with Anglican ecclesiological tradition.

"It's not the Anglican way to have one archbishop make declarations about what other archbishops are going to do. This is a very strange thing," Professor Brittain said.

"The Archbishop of Canterbury would not make a statement like this about what the Anglican Church of Australia is going to do, or what it can attend. Likewise with the Anglican Church of Canada or the Episcopal Church of the United States."

He said it was also peculiar that it spoke as if it was one voice yet only had one name on it.

"That's the Archbishop of Rwanda and obviously he's speaking on behalf of GAFCON, but do all the member churches of GAFCON necessarily agree," Professor Brittain said.

"The rest of the Anglican Communion needs to pay attention to this voice of protest, but I don't think it should overreact or panic or assume the [declarants] know what the different affiliated GAFCON leaders want to do or will do."

According to reporting on *Ministry Watch* news, some African Anglican bishops were not aware of the GAFCON move or had not been following the developments.

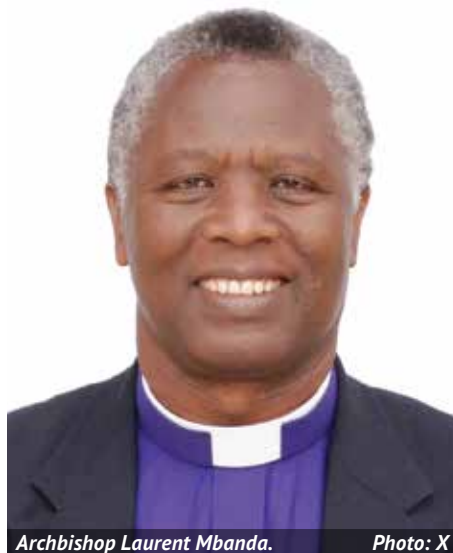
"The rest of the Anglican Communion needs to pay attention to this voice of protest, but I don't think it should overreact or panic..."

Christopher Brittain

"As far as I know, the Kenyan Province is still in the Anglican Communion because the constitution has not changed. The synod has to sit and authorise the move from the Anglican Communion," Bishop Alphonse Mwaro Baya of the GAFCON-aligned Mombasa Diocese, part of the Church of Kenya, told the service.

Professor Brittain said it was intriguing there were as yet no joint declarations from other provinces or people lining up to endorse the GAFCON statement.

He said given the Communion was in the process of reviewing its governance and decision-making via the Nairobi-Cairo proposals, other provinces in Africa might decide to reaffirm their commitment to talking through these proposals at the Anglican Constitutive Council.



Archbishop Laurent Mbanda.

Photo: X



Anglican communion at the crossroads.

Licensed lay reader and Melbourne journalist Dr Muriel Porter said the GAFCON decision was not something that could affect the national church currently, but it ought not to be ignored.

"I think we will see this issue raised at General Synod next year. I think there will be some pressure coming from some quarters in Australia who are very pro-GAFCON," Dr Porter said.

"They will be trying to push the line that the Australian church should move away from Canterbury.

"They will know that that's next to impossible, given that our constitution requires all five metropolitan diocesan synods to agree to any change in our constitution. So, it's not going to happen, but they are going to be pushing their angle that there should be opposition to anything

can way'



to do with same sex relationships.”

She believed there would be attempts to put pressure on the Australian church to accept such opposition in a way that would be unhelpful and especially hurtful to people in same sex relationships.

Dr Porter said although the focus was the same sex issue, it was not about that, but about the Bible and who controlled the narrative.

“It’s not mentioned in the statement, but it’s a strong coincidence that the statement was developed in Sydney about the same time as the announcement of Bishop Sarah Mullally’s appointment, amid a lot of rumour that it was going to be a woman,” she said.

“There is a real underlying thing about this being a woman, because Bishop Mullally’s views on same sex issues are, as

“The whole basis of the Church of England for Elizabeth the First was a church in which the Puritans and the Catholics could live side by side. And that’s what we’ve got to fight for.”

Dorothy Lee

far as I’m aware, no different to the previous Archbishop of Canterbury.”

Dr Porter said GAFCON comprised many Anglicans around the world including many from African countries.

“Their voices want to be heard and deserve to be heard and we cannot ignore these. But from the very beginning this division of over same sex issues has been encouraged by some in the Western church who seek to make their own point of view the most powerful.”

Melbourne diocese Reverend Canon Professor Dorothy Lee warned there was misogyny behind the statement and that GAFCON could eventually unite under an anti-women stance.

She forecast difficult times for the Australian Anglican church, based on reports that it was drafted in Sydney, and said it was important to remember what was worth fighting for.

“The whole basis of the Church of England for Elizabeth the First was a church in which the Puritans and the Catholics could live side by side. And that’s what we’ve got to fight for.

“We’re fighting for a genuinely diverse church where each acknowledges the gifts that the other brings.

“I don’t want to be in a church where there are no Evangelicals. I want someone to remind me of the centrality of Scripture and personal relationship with Christ. But I also want to be in a church where the Anglo Catholics say, ‘Don’t forget the sacraments.’

“Church order is important and our liturgical traditions are important. These are all gifts we bring each other.”

A range of Anglican leaders including from Canada, the Episcopal Church of Brazil and the Diocese of Brisbane have released statements affirming their commitment to the Anglican Communion’s instruments of communion.



Archbishop-elect Dame Sarah Mullally.
Photo: Roger Harris.

List names churches, bishops limiting women's ministry

■ Hannah Felsbourg

A campaign group for women's equality in the Church of England has published the first-ever list of 587 churches and eight bishops who limit women's ministry.

The list was published ahead of the Church of England's announcement of Bishop Sarah Mullally as the new Archbishop of Canterbury.

Bishop Mullally will be the first woman to take up the role.

British organisation Women and the Church said the eight bishops had indicated they would not receive communion from a female Archbishop.

The group said one in five London churches still limited women in some way, including major congregations such as All Souls Langham Place and St Helen's Bishopsgate.

It said neither the Church of England nor individual dioceses provided this information publicly, which was why the group had compiled the list.

WATCH said it wanted the Five Guiding



Ordination of priests at St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne in 2015.

Picture: Janine Eastgate

Principles that permitted discrimination against women to be reviewed so women were finally treated equally in the Church of England.

Movement for the Ordination of Women national convenor Elaine Lindsay said WATCH's research was important for parishioners to know where their church stood on women's ministry.

Barriers to women in leadership also existed in Australian Anglican dioceses, she said.

Dr Lindsay urged Australian dioceses to examine gender disparity in ordination and appointments, following the example of Canberra and Goulburn's 2024 report.

The full list is available on [WATCH's](#) website.



TRAVEL WITH

Selah



[selah website](#)

Experiences for Christians to deepen their faith

Join other Christians as you journey through holy places, bible tours and visit beautiful destinations. We have a range of options including fully chaperoned tours with Christian leaders. Don't miss out!



Camino Walk Spain

March 2026



Footsteps of the Apostles Greece and Türkiye

April 2026



CS Lewis & the Storytellers of Faith (UK)

April 2026



Pilgrim's Path - Via Francigena Lucca to Rome

May 2026



Central Australia Walk Northern Territory

May 2026



Crossroads of Global Missions Malaysia & Singapore

June 2026



Walking the Celtic Way United Kingdom

September 2026



Iceland and Northern Lights

October 2026



Origins of Christianity with Prof John Dickson

November 2026



Holy Land Tour Returns

2026



Picture: iStock

Sydney Anglicans defend 'freedom to pray'

■ Lesa Scholl

Sydney Archbishop Kanishka Raffel has declared he will stand by any clergy or lay worker brought before a tribunal or court because of the NSW Conversion Practices Ban.

The state's law banning practices aimed at changing or suppressing sexual orientation or gender identities came into effect in April this year.

The government consultation process included faith groups, but a Sydney synod motion claimed Christians had been promised that prayer for consenting individuals would not be banned.

In his presidential address to synod, the archbishop said the diocese opposed gay conversion therapy but prayer should not be included as a conversion practice.

He saw the law as attempting to regulate Christian teaching and practice in a way he had not seen before.

"The legislation will intimidate people into self-censorship," he said.

He believed people would choose not to teach the truth of God's word regarding sexuality and marriage for fear of transgressing the law or provoking a complaint.

He reiterated a message he sent to

clergy and lay ministers earlier this year advising them to continue teaching confidently on the subject of sexuality in accordance with God's word.

"We must not be silenced or intimidated from teaching God's good plan for human sexuality and relationships," he said. "We will insist on the freedom to do so, respectfully but without fear."

"We must not be silenced or intimidated from teaching God's good plan for human sexuality and relationships."

Kanishka Raffel

The synod motion brought by Bishop Michael Stead encouraged Christians to be unafraid to proclaim the truth of God's word in these matters and to provide prayer.

It commended the work of parishes providing support to individuals experiencing same-sex attraction or gender incongruence as they sought to express their sexuality and gender in accordance with the historic Christian faith.

The NSW legislation outlaws conversion practices including psychological or medical interventions, counselling, or subtle and repeated messaging that LGBTQ+ people can change or suppress their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Synod representative Elise Christian said it was time to recognise some prayer practices were coercive and caused spiritual and psychological harm, in her speech to synod in 2023.

She said the church needed to stop being defensive about prayer and acknowledge not all prayer practices were benign.

Equality Australia legal director Heather Corkhill said the law did not ban prayer, but religious-based practices that tried to suppress or change someone's sexuality or gender caused harm.

She said the issue with requested prayer was that it did not happen in a vacuum.

"Someone asking for prayer may be expressing a 'choice' in an environment of subtle, but persistent pressure," she explained.

Ms Corkhill encouraged faith leaders to reassure their communities that respecting the new laws went hand in hand with caring for people and helping them feel human and whole just as they are.

Confront porn use in anti-violence struggle: Expert

■ Jenan Taylor

**CONTENT WARNING* This article discusses domestic and family violence, sexual abuse and exploitative material.*

Churches have been urged to tackle high pornography consumption rates in communities in the struggle against domestic and family violence and other escalating social harms.

Anglican pastor and online sexualisation education specialist Marshall Ballantine-Jones cited widespread research that showed physical and verbal aggression escalated when there was frequent pornography consumption, at the recent Ten Commitments national DV conference.

Dr Ballantine-Jones warned there were strong links between frequent pornography use and brutal violence against women and children that reflected modern pornography content including choking, hitting and coercion.

He pointed to studies that claimed there was high pornography use among Christians in the United States, and findings claiming this was also the case among church workers in a large Australian denomination.

He believed leaders were unaware or dismissive of this widespread harm and the magnitude of pornography consumption within churches, and exhorted anti-violence advocates and congregations to call them out to take this seriously.

"We need to educate leaders, including clergy, students and others responsible for governance on the risks of pornography, its relationship to domestic violence and impact on people's lives," he told the conference.

"We need to facilitate support services for users ... and for spouses, families and others caught up in the trauma and abuse of pornography use.

"We need to address congregations about why pornography is harmful, and teach good sexual ethics and good sexual theology."

The University of Melbourne reported that pornography consumption globally was proliferating and that in Australia in 2020 about 85 per cent of men aged under 30 were accessing it regularly.

Dr Ballantine-Jones said a survey of

staff at a large denomination in Australia found 61 per cent of males under 50, and 20 per cent of females under 40, viewed pornography once a month or more.

He told *The Melbourne Anglican* reasons for these trends included churches failing to critique the sexualised culture that society, the media and the internet bombarded people with.

He believed the tendency of Christians to not discuss in their church communities their private struggles with sin and temptation also contributed to high rates of consumption.

"We need to address congregations about why pornography is harmful, and teach good sexual ethics and good sexual theology."

Marshall Ballantine-Jones

"Particularly when those struggles are about sex, there's shame involved. People keep things under the rug, and when things are kept hidden they remain dormant and at an active risk as well, so secrecy is a big problem," Dr Ballantine Jones said.

"This also might explain why church leaders are oblivious to the statistics of high porn consumption among Christians.

"They're not engaged with people at this personal level, and we're culturally not comfortable and skilful at helping people at that level. Therefore, there's a disconnect between the awareness at the leadership level and the practice in the personal arena of individual lives."

Melbourne diocese administrator Bishop Genieve Blackwell said the impact of pornography on attitudes to women was higher because of its availability and accessibility.

She said the deliberate approach of the [pornography] industry increased the likelihood of addiction.

Bishop Blackwell said churches could

collaborate with other organisations to advocate for better safeguards for young people to ensure they didn't become addicted.

She encouraged churches to engage with the Melbourne diocese's Prevention of Violence Against Women program for a chance to address the gendered drivers of violence against women, including pornography.

"The PVAW program also has a great resource in Equality and Respect for Kids – a series of sessions designed to help young people work through what God is saying to us about equality and God's desire for us to treat each other with respect, with a particular focus on gender equality," Bishop Blackwell said.

In 2024 Our Watch reported that young Australians urgently needed clear guidance and education about porn and the violence against women it depicted.

Chief executive Patty Kinnersly warned that generations of young people were growing up with greater access to material that had a major influence on how they understood sex, gender and healthy relationships.

"Porn may be a fantasy, but it has real-life impacts. Young men and boys who frequently use porn are more likely to blame a woman for abuse, while acts such as sexual "choking" or strangulation commonly depicted in porn, have become mainstream," Ms Kinnersly said in a statement.

"More than half of women aged 18 to 35 report being strangled during sex at least once."

Dr Ballantine-Jones said there were no clear findings of a tie between pornography use in Australian church communities and the rates of domestic violence there.

He said further exploration was needed to establish, among other things, the definitive causes of domestic violence within churches.

If you or someone you know needs support contact 1800 RESPECT.

You can also call or visit: BeyondBlue or call them on 1300 22 4636 or www.beyondblue.org.au; Lifeline at 13 11 14 or www.lifeline.org.au; Mensline on 1300 789 978 or www.mensline.org.au. In an emergency please phone triple zero (000) to reach ambulance services or police.

Religious freedom concerns raised at cult inquiry

■ Hannah Felsbourg

Religious freedom advocates have warned recommendations to criminalise coercive control in cults could target mainstream churches and faith communities.

The Victorian Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee's inquiry into the recruitment methods and impacts of cults and organised fringe groups is holding public hearings.

The inquiry has heard from survivors and experts detailing severe psychological harms and calling for stronger protections, as well as faith leaders urging caution.

In hearings on 21 October, the Australian Christian Lobby and Freedom for Faith raised fears the inquiry's outcome would affect how Christians practice and teach their faith.

ACL Victorian director Jasmine Yuen said she would be concerned about new legislation against high control groups targeting Christian churches.

Ms Yuen argued practices and beliefs were inseparable, suggesting any legislation targeting coercive practices would inevitably impact Christian teaching.

She cited examples such as discipleship and end times teaching, warning these could be misinterpreted as coercion or fear-based manipulation.

"It will be really coming after the Christian churches or other faith-based group," she said.

Ms Yuen said education and prevention were more effective than legislation, arguing people needed to be taught to identify what cults were rather than creating new laws.

Freedom for Faith executive director Mike Southon claimed Catholic, Anglican, Baptist and Muslim groups among others had contacted the organisation with concerns.

Mr Southon said there was a risk of scope creep in definitions of harm and coercion, warning laws could unintentionally capture passionate religious or political movements.

He urged the inquiry to focus on illegal behaviour by individuals rather than regulating communities.

"I would be concerned when recommendations start reaching into what we teach and what we believe," he said.

Inquiry chair Ella George MP said there was no proposal to recommend legislation specifically targeting Christian churches or faith groups.



A Victorian parliamentary inquiry is examining coercive control in cults and high-control groups. Picture: Nils Wedding (CC BY-ND 2.0)

The committee was bound by its terms of reference, which focused on coercive behaviours rather than beliefs or religious teachings.

Ms George said the committee had received suggestions from witnesses to consider coercive control legislation.

The evidence would help shape recommendations protecting individuals while upholding protected rights, she said.

The inquiry's guidance note states it is not about judging or questioning anyone's beliefs but focused on harmful behaviours.

Religious Trauma Collective co-founder and counsellor Elise Heerde is a former Hillsong Church leader who now supports cult survivors.

Ms Heerde told the committee she experienced sexual assault and institutional cover-up at the church and lost her entire social network when she left.

She said survivors of high-control groups commonly presented with depression, anxiety, complex PTSD and isolation.

Many struggled to trust their own thoughts after years of being told what to think, believe and feel, she said.

Ms Heerde said many also struggled to rebuild basic life skills after leaving.

The committee conducted an anonymous

questionnaire completed by 317 people with lived experience of cults and high-control groups.

It found 82 per cent of respondents experienced mind control techniques or indoctrination.

More than 81 per cent reported pressure to remain in groups or fear of punishment if leaving. Nearly 78 per cent experienced isolation from family and friends.

Ms Heerde urged the committee to fund specialist trauma-informed services for people leaving coercive groups and establish an independent commissioner for coercive group harm.

"This inquiry is not just about fringe groups," she said.

"It's about what happens when power goes unchecked, when institutions are protected instead of people."

International cult expert Professor Janja Lalich told the inquiry her work focused on harmful behaviours rather than religious beliefs.

She said coercive control occurred in political, commercial, wellness and self-improvement groups as well as religious ones.

"My purpose has never been about challenging or questioning freedom of religion," Professor Lalich said.

Professor Janja Lalich said cults existed on a continuum from extremely harmful to less harmful.

However, she said they were never benign or consensual when they used coercive methods demanding absolute allegiance.

Professor Lalich said these groups used ongoing controlling behaviours, wide-ranging restrictions and humiliating punishments for disobedience.

She recommended Victoria criminalise coercive control in group settings and find ways to hold leaders accountable.

"If there's coercive control, there's coercive control," Professor Lalich said.

"I think religion should be held to the same standards as anyone else."

The Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee is due to report to parliament with findings and recommendations from the inquiry by 30 September 2026.

If this story raised issues for you or someone you know, support is available from Lifeline on 13 11 14 and 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

Craigieburn church joins City on a Hill network

■ Hannah Felsbourg

An Anglican church plant facing closure has doubled in size after being adopted by City on a Hill.

Redemption Church in Craigieburn approached the church network after its founding pastor moved on at the end of 2023.

The church officially relaunched as City on a Hill Craigieburn on 14 September 2025 with an additional 40 members joining from nearby congregations.

Founding member Peter Waterhouse said the church approached COAH because of its experience in church planting and vision to expand into growth corridors.

He said joining COAH's established network had been a great help, as it already had systems for safe ministry, training and authorising people for ministry.

City on a Hill Craigieburn is the movement's 12th church, part of a vision to plant 50 churches in 10 cities.

The September 14 launch attracted

157 adults and 18 children, and included a baptism.

Mr Waterhouse said the church was conscious they were presenting the gospel to people who had come from all nations of the world to find a home.

"Here's a place where they find refuge and peace and love and acceptance and welcome. That will be life-giving for them."

Graeme Chiswell

Craigieburn is the second-largest suburb in Australia, with approximately 65,000 residents.

Mr Waterhouse said about two-thirds of residents spoke a language other than English at home and there were Sikh and Tibetan Buddhist temples and a Turkish mosque nearby.

"We had good news for the nations and that was why Redemption started and nothing's changed," Mr Waterhouse said.

"We want to see that expand now ... grow in number, grow in maturity and see people come to faith in Christ."

Lead pastor the Reverend Graeme Chiswell said he wanted the church to be a place of peace for people in Craigieburn.

He said many families had moved to the area for affordable housing but were now experiencing mortgage stress.

"People up there are pedalling pretty hard," he said.

"Here's a place where they find refuge and peace and love and acceptance and welcome. That will be life-giving for them."

Mr Chiswell said he hoped the church would reflect the multicultural area it served and reach the youth of Craigieburn.

He said Jesus offered transformation that could not be found anywhere else.

City on a Hill Craigieburn meets at 4pm on Sundays at Hume Anglican Grammar School, 100 Mt Ridley Road, Mickleham.



The 14 September launch attracted 157 adults and 18 children, and included a baptism.
Picture: supplied



St John's Toorak assistant minister the Reverend Wendy Crouch blessing a dog at St John's Blessing of the Pets 2025.

Picture: Sybil Gazzard

Dogs congregate for blessing at St John's Toorak

■ Hannah Felsbourg

Clergy at St John's Toorak blessed more than 25 dogs at last Sunday's annual Blessing of the Pets service held in honour of Saint Francis.

Golden retrievers, dachshunds and poodles sat patiently with their owners on the church's south lawn as clergy offered prayers before providing each pet with a certificate of blessing.

Attendees were also encouraged to donate to Save-A-Dog Scheme, a local no-kill animal shelter in Malvern.

Vicar the Reverend Peter French said the service gave people a chance to give thanks for the blessings of animals in their lives.

Dr French said after COVID lockdowns almost everyone talked about how important it was to have their animals with them.

"Particularly people who are living on their own, and just how much comfort and joy they got from their pets," he said.

Dr French brought his own dog Hudson, a seven-year-old golden retriever who failed guide dog training for being too lazy.

Assistant priest the Reverend Wendy Crouch said what she really liked about the service was seeing the relationship between people and their pets.

"It's really comforting and reassuring. There's lots of emotions about it," she said.

Parishioner Julia Osborne, who has bred

dachshunds for 50 years, said she brought different dogs to be blessed each year.

Dr French said the parish had held the service for decades to celebrate Saint Francis, the patron saint of animals.

He said while dogs were most common, cats and even a turtle had been blessed over the years.

Some people had joined the church community through the service, he said.

As the warm afternoon drew on, St John's provided refreshments for everyone – cupcakes for the humans and "pupcakes" for the dogs.

More information about [Save-A-Dog Scheme](#) is available on their website.

Church leaders can help stop measles

■ Lesa Scholl

Public health advocates are urging church leaders to use their influence to encourage vaccination as cases of the deadly measles virus increase across Australia.

The virus is highly infectious and can lead to serious complications like pneumonia or encephalitis, which can cause deafness, epilepsy and death.

National vaccination rates for two-year-olds dropped to less than 90 per cent, according to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing in June this year.

This meant a drop in children receiving their second measles-mumps-rubella vaccination at 18 months, leaving them under-vaccinated.

Global Centre for Social Justice and Advocacy Leadership director Alopi Latukefu said the world had forgotten how dangerous measles could be.

"People think of measles as just simply a rash," he said. "It became a minor disease in the 20th century because we controlled it."

Mr Latufeku said continued drops in vaccination rates could mean measles in the 21st century looking like measles in the 18th

and 19th centuries, with high temperatures, brain swelling and death.

Warragul general practitioner Chris Williames said the reported statistics reflected what he saw on the ground.

He said he has seen a slight drop in vaccinations and increased concern regarding vaccinations since the COVID pandemic.

"People make decisions for different reasons, the most common one being fear," he said.

Although Dr Williames did not think religion was a key reason people were hesitant about vaccination in his practice, he understood there were small groups of people who refused vaccination on faith grounds.

He believed churches and church leaders could help by promoting an enthusiasm for science and not seeing science as an enemy to Christianity.

Dr Williames said pre-vaccination in the United States there were half a million recorded cases on measles a year and 500 child deaths.

"In 1963 when [the vaccine] came in, the incidents dropped by more than 95 per cent overnight," he said.

Theologian Austin Stevenson said it was incumbent on Christians to approach questions about vaccination collectively rather than individually because it was an issue of social justice and public health.

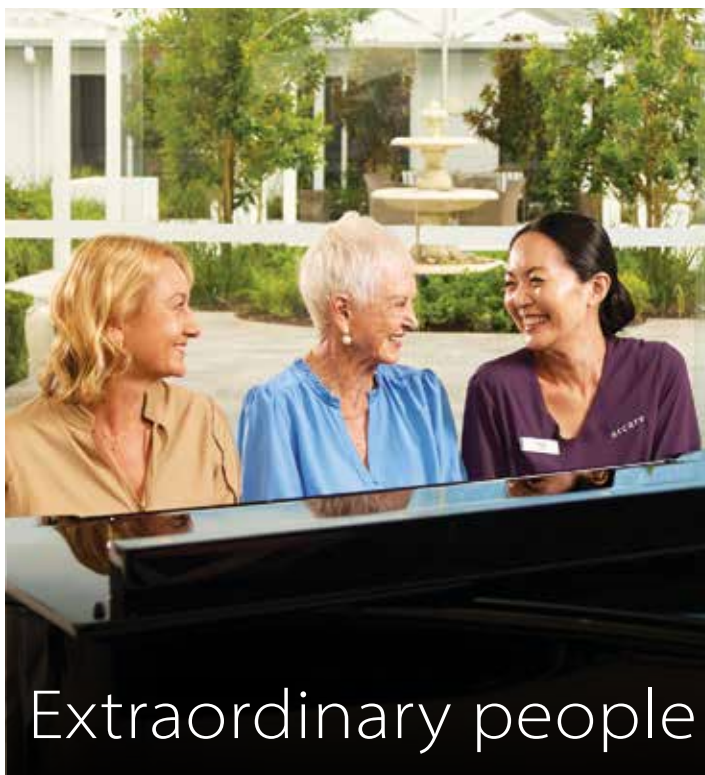
"When we weigh whether to get vaccinated, the question is not the cost and benefits to us, but the cost and benefits to our whole community," he said.

Dr Stevenson said vaccine debates were often proxies for deeper disagreements about values and so churches played a vital role in shaping people's relationship to those debates.

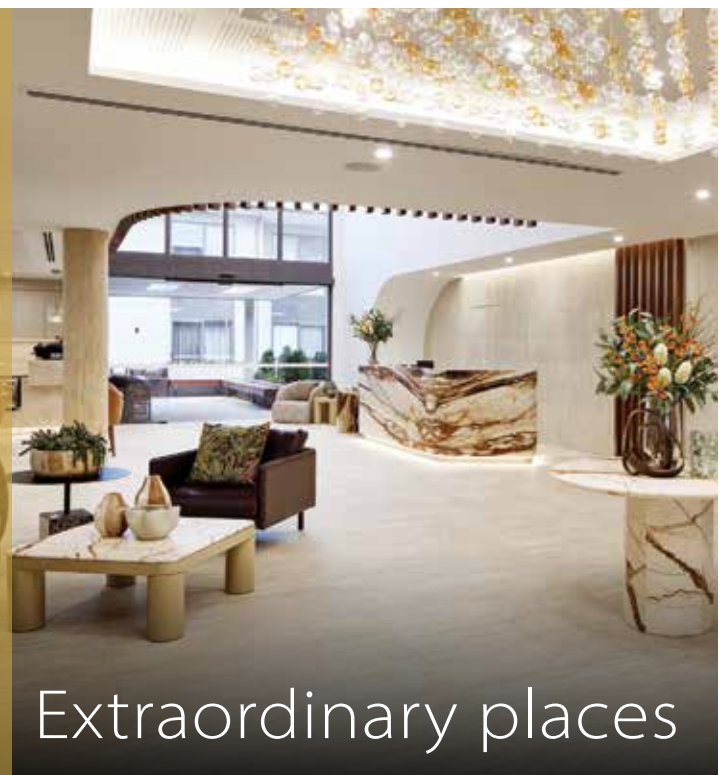
He said churches focused on the vulnerable, the elderly and children would be more likely to understand the significance of vaccination for the good of the community.

Paediatric infectious diseases professor Christopher Blyth said Australia continued to be exposed to measles because of outbreaks in neighbouring countries and frequent travel.

He was concerned about the lower vaccine coverage in the community, especially for those too young to be vaccinated and the small groups of individuals who could not receive the MMR because it was a live viral vaccine.



Extraordinary people



Extraordinary places

We believe that every Australian elder is extraordinary, that's why we create extraordinary places. With over 55 residences across Australia, we provide the highest level of aged care, that's centred on trust, quality and communication.

Book a tour on 1300 ARCARE or at arcare.com.au



Tony Rinaudo (centre front)

Picture: supplied

Work with what God supplies abundantly: Peace prize winner

■ Jenan Taylor

A noted Anglican and recipient of the Luxembourg Peace Prize hopes more Australians will work with God's creation instead of destroying it, and recognise its life-giving role, including in sustaining food supply.

Agronomist Tony Rinaudo received the prestigious prize for Outstanding Environmental Peace in June for his efforts against deforestation and desertification in Africa's Sahel region.

Mr Rinaudo's introduction of his farmer-managed natural regeneration idea in Niger in the 1980s led to better food security and improved livelihoods for millions.

Through FMNR, Niger's farmers revived depleted soils and grew enough crops to avert food scarcities that might have led to famine, the increased displacement of people and deeper conflict. The method is now used in more than 25 countries.

Mr Rinaudo said witnessing the difference this made convinced him God supplied for everyone's needs abundantly through His creation, but that humans generally destroyed nature for short-term gain, including wealth.

He wanted more Australians to learn to care more for the environment and see that working with God's creation was beneficial.

"I'd love to see in Australia regenerative agriculture, which is a move towards

working with what nature is trying to do, become mainstream and more recognised as legitimate and actually essential for long term sustainability of health, food supply and of nature itself."

Mr Rinaudo was worried that falsehoods about the environment were being widely propagated including in modern day Australia.

"There's a belief that there's a cost to looking after the environment, that we have to make money, that it's infringing on progress and so on. That's a total nonsense," Mr Rinaudo said.

"Particularly in light of climate change, it's going to get harder and harder to grow food and other crops. There'll be higher temperatures, more variable weather patterns and so many other things that come with that.

"[Caring for the environment] is a great benefit. It's not a cost, it's an investment in a more secure, more productive future again and again, not just in agriculture, but in housing development and industry and more. "[The idea] we can't afford to do the right thing by the environment because it will reduce our profit margin. That's totally false thinking."

His outlook comes amid increasing reports that disinformation and misinformation campaigns aimed at undermining attempts to curb environmental degradation, are proliferating locally and overseas, largely

through pro-fossil fuel expansion interests.

A senate inquiry on information integrity on climate change and energy in Australia began hearing about the prevalence and motivations of these campaigns and their effects in early October.

Mr Rinaudo said his environmental stewardship efforts were shaped by witnessing the destruction of the natural world, and his subsequent childhood prayer, answered by God, to be able to make a difference to the environment.

The hunger he saw when he was stationed in Niger while working for World Vision also played a role, as did his conviction that helping increase food security through good work was "plain fun."

Mr Rinaudo formerly attended St Alfred's Blackburn North, but moved to country Victoria recently and is now a member of St Paul's Warragul.

Reflecting on his deep faith, Mr Rinaudo said his mother's strong Christian beliefs had been a great influence when he was a child.

But relearning old lessons as life presented its changes and challenges still sustained him.

"What continues to shape my faith is prayer, reading God's word, fellow believers," Mr Rinaudo said. "Also, being reminded that God is there for you, that he hears prayer even when there seems to be no answer, and that you need to persevere and trust Him that He's in control."

God's plan is the right fit

■ **Lesa Scholl**

St Philip's Collingwood deacon-in-charge the Reverend Bruce Everett describes himself as sitting back, watching, fascinated by what God is doing.

Mr Everett said he felt the fit in God's plan when he received confirmation that he would be one of the ordinands priested in November.

Chatting after his service at Rushall Park retirement village, Mr Everett reflected on the energy and mission focus of his congregation there.

"There's love here, and there's love of neighbour, and that's living out the mission, isn't it?" he said.

He saw 88-year-old Margaret, making tea and coffee in the kitchen, as a powerful example of God at work.

Earlier this year Margaret was in palliative care.

"She recovered," Mr Everett said. "She's moving furniture around and serving today. That's a miracle."

Margaret became emotional when remembering the care she received from Mr Everett during that time.

"He was always there," she said, her eyes

well up with the memory.

God making a way when there did not seem to be a way has marked Mr Everett's ministry.

He came out of retirement to answer the call to ordained ministry, and was deaconed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After becoming a Christian when his first child was born, Mr Everett went to Bible College so he could learn more about his faith.

He was happy being a distinctive deacon and never saw himself as a parish priest, but the diocese asked him to be in charge of St Philip's.

Because he cannot bless the sacrament as a deacon, they worked out a way for the parish to use reserve sacrament predominantly.

"Being in the role, being in that place with those people, it fit," he said. "I can now see myself as a parish priest caring for souls."

The outward vision of the diaconate was still of the highest importance in Mr Everett's ministry.

For him, ministry in aged care and work with soon to be released prisoners from the Judy Lazarus Centre were critical to living out Isaiah 61. He said there were challenges, but also fabulous things happening as the parish



The Reverend Bruce Everett. Photo: Lesa Scholl

lived out Jesus' mission to proclaim freedom and declare the gospel to the poor and needy.

Mr Everett said he received encouragement in his ministry from his parishioners and the way they recognised they were part of a team caring for each other.

He teared up when he mentioned his mother having died three weeks prior, and the fact that she had been so proud of him.

This made him feel he was not alone.

"I'm carrying the responsibility lightly because I feel it's God's work and I'm assisting in it," he said. "It's not all about Bruce."

"I had to learn to get out of the way and let God work," he said. "It's living out our lives of faith in action."

THE Melbourne Anglican

E-editions every month
tma.melbourneanglican.org.au

TAKING JESUS TO THE BUSH AND SHAPING GENERATIONS...

bca bush church aid
Going the distance

Across rural, regional and remote Australia there are tens of thousands of people who may never hear the name of Jesus.

You can be part of training the **next 25** future ministers, reaching the **next 25** communities, building the **next 25** ministry initiatives and taking the Good News of Jesus to those longing to hear.

Giving your best gift before 31 December to help meet a \$420,000 funding goal means your legacy can echo for decades to come.

bca NEXT25
bushchurchaid.com.au/next25pa

Melbourne Anglicans to celebrate installation of Archbishop Thorpe

Melbourne Anglicans are preparing for the imminent arrival and inauguration of Bishop Ric Thorpe as their new archbishop.

The former Bishop of Islington became Melbourne's Archbishop-elect on 24 May 2025.

When he takes up his crozier this November, Bishop Thorpe will become the 14th Archbishop of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne.

Bishop Thorpe likened his election to St Paul's call to a new continent and was humbled, daunted and excited to become the new faith leader of Melbourne's Anglicans.

Having visited Melbourne often with his wife Louie and served and ministered in the diocese and other denominations prior to his appointment, he said they both loved the city.

As Melbourne archbishop, energising churches will be a large part of his ministry.

"Seeing the whole Church of God thrive, and enabling churches to be healthy, new congregations planted, and struggling churches revitalised," were, Bishop Thorpe said, his passions.

The archbishop's installation will take place at 4pm at St Paul's Cathedral on Advent Sunday 30 November 2025.

It is expected to be a service rich with traditional and contemporary music and worship, and will include the participation of Psalm Drummers.

All of Melbourne is warmly invited to view the installation at:

youtube.com/live/W957vtVI50Q

Date: Sunday 30 November 2025

Time: 4:00pm

Venue: St Paul's Cathedral

For more faith news, follow *The Melbourne Anglican* on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or [subscribe to our weekly emails](#).

We are called to model the heart of Christ: Healthcare chaplain

■ **Samantha Lo**

A recent communique from the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne to clergy gives directions regarding hospital visiting by spiritual carers. The *Ad Clerum* notes that spiritual carers “delight in meeting Anglicans and others on a daily basis.”

As an Anglican priest and someone who has worked in healthcare chaplaincy for over a decade, I can attest to the delight spiritual carers in hospitals have in meeting patients of all denominations (and none) on a daily basis.

Notifying the spiritual care department of your parishioner’s admission to hospital is also appreciated, as spiritual care staff can prioritise a visit to your parishioner, especially when your parish is a long way from the hospital.

According to the *Ad Clerum* changes in hospital policy mean only patients who request a visit from a chaplain or spiritual carers will be offered emotional and spiritual support.

This hospital policy does not exist in the private hospital system in which I have worked for the past 12 years. Spiritual care staff in private hospitals are expected to visit as many patients as possible, prioritising need and planning visits accordingly. Naturally, visits are prioritised according to urgency and often through referral from the patient themselves, from medical and allied

health colleagues, or from family, friends and clergy.

Even if a staff member from the hospital’s spiritual care team is able to visit your parishioner, they will be unlikely to be able to provide sacramental ministry. In my most recent position leading a spiritual care team of 21 people, I was the only Anglican and certainly the only Anglican priest.

“When you take the time to visit an acutely unwell parishioner, it says that they matter. It says that they are missed and loved by their community.”

It saddens me to read that leaving the spiritual care of sick parishioners to the hospital SC teams “can save you hours when you could be gainfully employed with other parish tasks.” Since when did the spiritual care of the sick and dying become a lower priority for clergy? Even *if* (and that’s a big if, given the decision to axe most Anglican healthcare chaplaincy) there is an Anglican chaplain available, it misses the point.

Spiritual health is all about connection: to God, to our faith and our faith community, to others, to ourselves. Please don’t underestimate the impact your presence or

your absence has on the flock entrusted to your care.

As someone who has worked simultaneously in hospital and in parish, I get it. There will always be parish emails, sermons to write, pew sheets to format and so on. But the priority must always be relationship: love God, love people. Do parish tasks next.

When you take the time to visit an acutely unwell parishioner, it says that they matter. It says that they are missed and loved by their community. It says that they are worth the time and effort. Far too often, I have sat with patients who weep at knowing that they are not considered worth the effort of a visit from their priest. And far too often I have heard patients give voice to the nagging fear that if they’re not a priority for their priest, then maybe God too has forgotten them.

So, while liaising with and utilising the expertise of hospital spiritual care staff is a wonderful addition to our pastoral toolkit, please don’t ever, *ever* forget that our calling is to model the heart of Christ and in doing so, to prioritise the care of the most vulnerable among us.

The Reverend Sam Lo is an honorary assistant priest at St Paul’s East Kew. Since undertaking her Clinical Pastoral Education training in 2013, she has worked as a chaplain at Baptcare Karana, a pastoral harpist at Epworth Eastern Hospital and most recently as Pastoral Care Coordinator at St Vincent’s Private Hospital.





Picture: iStock

What's going on with hospital ministry?

■ Muriel Porter

Hospital ministry is in the Melbourne diocese's DNA.

Within a few short years of the diocese's foundation in 1847, it had established a chaplaincy at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. Frances Perry, wife of our first bishop, Charles Perry, was a founder of what is now the Royal Women's Hospital. Anglican chaplaincy flourished in Melbourne and Geelong hospitals for more than 150 years.

Two years ago, however, in an effort to balance the diocesan budget, the Diocesan Council decided to cut funding for most of the chaplaincies. Nine chaplaincies were lost by the end of 2023; some of those chaplains had been working in this specialist ministry for more than 20 years.

During a failed attempt to have the decision reconsidered in Melbourne Synod in 2023, we were told that parish clergy would be expected to pick up this ministry.

This was only ever going to be an extremely limited form of hospital ministry, though at least it was something. Clergy could certainly visit their own parishioners, but would of course not have the authority, let alone the time, to seek out other sick and dying patients in need of Christian pastoral care. And what of Anglicans in hospitals far away from their own parishes?

Now, something odd has happened.

The latest *Ad clerum* – that is, a letter to the clergy and licensed lay people from the Bishop Administrator – seems not to have heard about the chaplaincy cuts. An item headed “Parishioners in Hospital” suggests

no cuts have been made, as it recommends that parish clergy don't need to visit their parishioners in hospital at all.

“Spiritual carers and Anglican chaplains at the hospital” offer all the spiritual care needed, the item says, adding that that means clergy can be “more gainfully employed with other parish tasks”. Just ensure that the hospital knows about your parishioners, and they will be cared for.

Has the diocese quietly re-instated Anglican hospital chaplains? That would be wonderful, but no, I don't believe that has happened. There are now few Anglican spiritual carers and chaplains in our hospitals. The other spiritual carers in hospitals will be of all faiths, and none; some I am told are atheists. That is fine for patients who do not want Christian, let alone Anglican, pastoral care, but who will provide sacramental ministry to Anglicans patients? Who on earth is going to care for them, if there are few chaplains and parish clergy are told to be more “gainfully employed on other parish tasks”?

Just what other parish tasks can ever be more important than the priest's personal ministry to the sick and dying of their parish? Let's not forget that from the *Book of Common Prayer* on, our prayer books have been explicit that parish clergy should offer pastoral and sacramental ministry to people unable to go to church.

Our most recent prayer book, *A Prayer Book for Australia*, provides specific services for ministry with the sick and the dying, and says that “of first importance in this ministry is the relationship between those

in need and those who care for them”. The clear expectation is that parish clergy will be involved in this ministry. Even if all our chaplains were re-instated, parishioners still need to see their parish clergy, as well as the hospital team, when they are in need.

And what of the many seriously ill and dying patients who have no particular allegiance to any faith, let alone a parish? That's where the hospital chaplain can step in.

In-house hospital chaplains are surely an essential part of the church's ministry. They are on the ground, known and trusted by clinical staff as they have built relationships and earned respect. They are there when an emergency arises. They are there when nursing staff need someone to comfort a patient or a relative in real anguish, when a patient receives a terrible diagnosis, a parent learns diabolical news about a child, when death looms, or when a staff member is in need. They offer the emotional and spiritual support that nurses and doctors are too busy, or not able, to provide.

Chaplains are not there to preach or proselytise or sign people up. But by their love and care, they embody the Good News of God-With-Us, of Jesus Christ who called on his followers to follow his example of visiting the sick, and caring for those in need, whoever they are. Surely that is a truly Evangelical ministry!

One day soon, please God, full hospital chaplaincies will be reinstated by our diocese.

Dr Muriel Porter is a Melbourne journalist and writer, and a licensed lay reader.

Students step up where adults can't speak about faith

■ Hannah Felsbourg

High school students across three Australian states are helping lead their peers towards Christ where adults are no longer allowed to talk about faith.

Mustard Leadership provides mentoring and resources to equip young people to run 85 Christian lunchtime groups in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.

The organisation shifted from adult-led evangelism to a student-led model in 2016 when Victorian legislation restricted adults from speaking about religion in state schools.

Mustard Leadership CEO Lara Ruddle said young people were yearning for truth and authenticity but had few opportunities to hear about Jesus in increasingly secular schools.

Young people were struggling with fears and anxieties they could not make sense of, but when they found Jesus they knew who they were created to be.

She said faith was no longer part of the curriculum in state schools and chaplains were unable to mention faith unless specifically asked.

However the legislative provisions in Victoria specifically allowed students to share their faith and hand out religious

material, Mrs Ruddle said.

Mrs Ruddle said high school student Talei was referred to Mustard Leadership because she was the only youth in her church and she did not know other Christians at her school.

She said Talei wore a t-shirt that said, "created with a purpose" to school which piqued the interest of a couple of other Christian students she had been unaware of.

Those students joined her in starting a lunchtime group. She found she was a natural evangelist and went on to run a Zoom Bible study after school.

Through the process two of her friends became Christians.

Mrs Ruddle said one school took three years before the principal finally agreed to allow a lunchtime group.

She said young people could face ridicule in public schools for sharing their faith and pressure in private schools to say all religions were the same.

"My hope is that despite that pressure, young people will be emboldened and there'll be real revival of sharing faith and young people coming to know Jesus," she said.

National School Programmes Director Erin Juers said the student-led model was more authentic and powerful than having

adults come in to teach.

She said Mustard provided students with mentoring, online resources and regular leadership training to help them run their groups effectively.

A student movement director checked in with student leaders every one to two weeks, asking how their groups were going and what challenges they could help with.

Mrs Juers also runs workshops and chapel services in private schools where religious organisations can still operate.

She said at a recent chapel service in a multicultural school her colleague shared a testimony about moving between countries and struggling with identity.

Afterwards she was swarmed by a group of Year 7 and 8 girls who had similar experiences of moving countries and not knowing who they were or what their culture was.

Mrs Juers said the Hindu and Sikh background girls then came along to a lunchtime group to learn more about finding their true identity in Christ.

She said teachers sometimes attended lunchtime groups to supervise or out of curiosity and left with big questions about faith.

"It is an opportunity to open up conversation about things that really matter," she said.



Picture: supplied

How youth group shaped my calling

■ Judah Fairweather

Church planting is all I have ever known when it comes to church. I grew up in a church plant, and it has shaped my whole experience of faith. I have been part of Plenty Life Church for 15 years, and looking back, I can see how God has been at work through so many different seasons.

One of the most significant things that made Plenty Life unique was our missional communities. Every second Sunday, instead of a normal church service, we would do something creative as a group to connect with people who were not Christians or not ready to come to church, and to build the relationships between us as a church. These Sundays look different each time, but they were always focused on building genuine communities and sharing life with people outside of the church walls.

I was part of a missional community called Kinect, and our aim was to “build family relationships by having fun together.” That simple vision shaped so much of who I am. In Kinect, I learned that my voice mattered and that my ideas were worth listening to. Even as a young person, I feel like I can contribute and that what I say is valuable. That kind of encouragement is a big part of why I love the church and why I feel called to serve in it myself.

Alongside this, my youth group is one of the most important influences in my journey of faith. Youth group is where I feel supported, where I can ask questions, and where I begin to imagine a future in ministry. Like so many things, COVID deeply affected our youth group. Numbers dropped, energy faded, and when the group restarted, there were only four of us meeting in a small school classroom. I was one of those four, and honestly, it was hard to see the point in continuing.

But God has something bigger in store. Three years ago, the youth group shifted from the school room to my house. That change might sound small, but for me, it was a turning point. Meeting in my home made me feel more comfortable, more excited to attend, and more willing to invite my friends. It felt personal, and it felt alive. Over the past two years, I have watched the group grow from four people to 25. Eventually, we outgrew my house altogether, and now we meet in a church hall with about 30 youths attending every week.

For me, this growth is about so much more than numbers. It is about seeing



Judah Fairweather.
Picture: Bree Mills

“Growing up in a church plant has shown me that church is not about attending services. It is about community, creativity, and stepping out in faith to reach others.”

young people discover that they belong, that they matter, and that faith is real and relevant to their lives. It is a privilege to play even a small part in helping that happen.

Because of this I have been led to also doing work experience with the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne in church planting and revitalisation. This placement has helped deepen my knowledge and grow my passion for ministry. More than that, it has given me a chance to see how churches can be strengthened and renewed so that more people can encounter the hope of Jesus.

Growing up in a church plant has shown me that church is not about attending services. It is about community, creativity and stepping out in faith to reach others. It is about believing that God can use ordinary people and simple acts of hospitality to build His kingdom. That is the story I have lived, and it is the story I want to keep living as I step into the future.

What is transhumanism – and why sho

Transhumanism might seem like a foreign concept, but it's based on ideas and technologies already in use today. As Emma Berthold, Senior Editor at ISCAST–Christianity & Science in Conversation, discovered, it's something Christians need to take seriously.

■ Emma Berthold

Friends and family were very confused when I told them I was busy editing a series of discussion papers about transhumanism.

Conversations typically went like this:

"Transhumanism? What's that?"

Like, transgender people?"

"No, transhumanism, as in using technology to enhance and upgrade your mind and body."

"Oh." Puzzled silence. "Wait, what?"

Their confusion is understandable.

The term "transhumanism" and the wider movement it represents haven't really made their way into the public consciousness. Most people, when hearing descriptions of the term, think it belongs only in science fiction: microchips in brains, arms that shoot lasers, swapping consciousnesses into robotic bodies.

To be fair, I probably would have thought along similar lines before starting this editing work. But, as I soon learned, while those fictional representations may seem a bit extreme, they reflect elements of modern transhumanism: a real movement, driven by real people, and based on technologies that already exist or are in development now.

What is transhumanism?

Broadly speaking, transhumanism is about using technologies to improve the human condition. ISCAST's recently published discussion papers, *Humanity 2.0? Christian Perspectives on Transhumanism*, define transhumanism as:

"The intellectual, philosophical, and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally

improving the human condition, especially by developing and making widely available technologies to eliminate ageing and to greatly enhance human cognitive, physical, and moral attributes."

Transhumanists often describe the "good life" as one of *super-longevity* (much longer lifespans), *super-intelligence* (enhanced memory, concentration, and cognitive skills, possibly even digital consciousness), and *super-wellbeing* (improved physical and emotional states).

"Are transhumanists overstepping the line, interfering with nature and "playing God"? Or are they upholding God's good design for humanity by using the skills and tools he gave us for the benefit of all?"

At its most extreme and controversial, some would argue that the "holy grail" of transhumanism is the ability to directly access, copy and re-create a human mind: to be free of the limitations of our physical bodies. Others, such as Australian philosopher Julian Savulescu, argue that we should screen human embryos to select those with genes linked to the best chance of living

a "good life" – and the lowest chances of engaging in criminal behaviour.

And while that may sound like a lot, transhumanism is based on concepts that most of us are already familiar with. We install artificial joints and metal rods to restore function to damaged bones. We implant battery-powered pacemakers to keep hearts beating, and bionic ears to restore a sense of hearing.

Earlier this year, Noland Arbaugh the first recipient of Elon Musk's Neuralink brain implant publicly shared how the device has transformed his life. Paralysed since 2016, he can now control a computer with his mind. He can browse the internet, send messages, play games, and connect with the world in ways that sometimes exceed his pre-accident abilities.

We also have technologies for enhancing our bodies by choice, rather than restoring lost function. For those with the desire and the means, a wrinkle-free forehead is just a few Botox injections away. Silicone or saline implants change breast shape. Performance-enhancing drugs like steroids boost athletic performance by increasing muscle mass and strength. These technologies can be restorative as well as cosmetic, but they remain the most familiar examples of body enhancement today.

Why, then, do many of us feel vaguely uneasy at the idea of using technologies to enhance our abilities far beyond what is considered "normal" or restorative?

Perhaps we've seen too many portrayals of the downsides and pitfalls of technological misuse in science fiction: any fan of Netflix's *Black Mirror* series can attest to the bleak futures it depicts as humans make terrible choices about using new technologies.

But there are also deeper questions to explore about what it means to be human,

For an Anglican Approach



SELWYN ALLEN FUNERALS
Selwyn & Geoff Allen

Tel: (03) 9888 1672

Email: enquiries@selwynallenfunerals.com.au
www.selwynallenfunerals.com.au

- Selwyn and Geoff Allen, and their caring staff, offer personal, dependable service with over 100 years combined experience
- All areas, any time
- Secure pre-arranged and pre-paid funerals



Accredited Member



AUSTRALIAN FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION



Geoff Allen

Selwyn Allen

Looking for the prayer diary?



Use the QR code above or find it at bit.ly/ADOMprayerdiary.

ould Christians care?



Picture: iStock

how much intervention is too much, and what human flourishing should look like from a Christian perspective.

Why should Christians care about transhumanism?

Are transhumanists overstepping the line, interfering with nature and “playing God”? Or are they upholding God’s good design for humanity by using the skills and tools he gave us for the benefit of all?

Christianity calls humans to be stewards of creation, receiving life as a gift and caring for it responsibly. And there is undoubtedly a place for technology to be used in line with Christ’s teachings when it is guided by justice, mercy and concern for human dignity.

Christian transhumanists argue that, just as Jesus healed the sick and cared for the vulnerable, we too should use modern science and technology to advance human wellbeing: reducing suffering and

promoting compassion and abundance in the world today. They believe such tools should support the disadvantaged and help build a more equitable world where all can flourish. Since humans have the capacity to transform and enhance ourselves, they argue that we should use the tools God has given us to continue that transformation into the image and likeness of God. At the same time, adopting new technologies requires responsible stewardship and careful governance to ensure their ethical use.

However, technological progress often moves faster than our ability to consider its moral and ethical consequences. Many Christians who question the transhumanist vision of limitless progress call for a more cautious approach and to re-examine what it means to be human. They raise concerns about reducing people to mere data instead of fully embodied beings made in God’s image, and remind us that technology

cannot solve every problem: genetic engineering cannot undo the Fall, and science cannot free humanity from sin.

Regardless of where we stand on how technology should (or shouldn’t) be used, we need to be aware that these advances are happening now – and we need to start thinking about their implications now, too. As Christians, we have a unique perspective on what it means to be human. That means we are well placed to contribute to discussions about a future where enhancement pushes us beyond our natural state.

How can we make good, wise choices about the best use of new technologies that change our bodies and minds? By carefully considering what it means to be human right now – and having those important conversations as much as we can.

ISCAST’s new discussion papers, *Humanity 2.0?*

Christian Perspectives on Transhumanism, are available at iscast.org.au/transhumanism/.

THE
Melbourne Anglican

**Love the letters section?
So do we!**

Write to us at editor@melbourneanglican.org.au

Letters must be less than 250 words, and include your full name, address and phone number for identity verification.

They may be edited for clarity, length and grammar.

Your voice...

THE
**Melbourne
Anglican**

**Advertise with us online
and in our magazine!**

Contact Ana to learn more:
ahall@melbourneanglican.org.au

'Lungs of the Earth' campaign heads to COP30

■ **Lesa Scholl**

Faith leaders from across the globe are calling for better protection of natural resources, including forests, ahead of this year's United Nations Conference of the Parties.

The Anglican Communion Environmental Network is collaborating with Green Anglicans and Anglican provinces around the world to advocate for climate justice at COP30 in Brazil in November.

The ACEN said Brazil was a unique platform for their Lungs of the Earth campaign, which advocated for protection of marine life, forests and frozen landscapes.

The initiative invited Anglican churches to restore and protect the lungs of the earth, one of them being the Amazon.

In dialogues led by Brazilian Anglican primate the Most Reverend Marinez Bassotto, the ACEN was advocating for nature-first and community-led responses to climate change.

Bishop Bassotto said climate change effects leading to diminished water, sanitation and healthcare was a key challenge, in an interview with Trinity Church New York earlier this year.

She was convinced God had called her to lead initiatives in Anglican diocese of creating resilient communities and restoring the biome and forests.

She said these initiatives would allow the church to positively impact the lives of the region's inhabitants through social action and living out the Gospel.

Monash University Antarctic researcher

Felicity McCormack said it was foundational to Christian faith and the heart of God to live in ways that protect places like Antarctica.

She said low-lying Pacific nations were already experiencing the devastating effects of rising sea levels, compounded by other extreme climate events.

"We're talking about loss of entire habitats, entire islands, impacts on food and water security, and potential mass migration."

Felicity McCormack

"Coastlines are eroding, drinking water is becoming salty, and we're seeing more frequent and extreme flooding," she said.

"Driving around the roads on the perimeters of islands, the roads are already partially inundated most of the time."

Dr McCormack said up to one billion people living in low-lying coastal areas were likely to be affected by sea level rise by the end of the century.

"We're talking about loss of entire habitats, entire islands, impacts on food and water security, and potential mass migration," she said.

Climate Change Commissioner for the Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi said the ocean was not just their highway or source of food but the heart of the Pacific identity

and survival.

Kenyan Anglican archbishop the Most Reverend Jackson Ole Sapit said the Church was actively involved in forest restoration, adopting 3000 hectares and aiming to plant 15 million trees.

He said restoring ecosystems exemplified the Church's commitment to honouring God's creation.

Church of England lead bishop for the environment the Right Reverend Graham Usher said the CoE was pioneering an ambitious net-zero by 2030 drive and the initiative was already reducing energy bills.

It involved parishes and CoE schools replacing heaters and lights with LEDs, installing double glazing, and replacing kettles with insulated urns to reduce their carbon footprint.

The Anglican Communion's permanent representative at the United Nations Martha Jarvis said the UN's climate negotiations had delivered change but not fast enough.

"More action is needed and that can feel overwhelming and disheartening because of the scale of the environmental crisis," she said.

"The good news is that when we care for creation, recognising that as an expression of justice for our brothers and sisters locally, internationally and in future generations, we are responding to God's call on humankind."

COP30 will take place in Belém in the Brazilian Amazon from 10-21 November, with the Heads of State Summit beforehand on 6-7 November.

The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne has no tolerance for any form of abuse, harassment or other misconduct. All concerns and reports of abuse and misconduct must be reported.



ANGLICAN
DIOCESE OF
MELBOURNE

Reporting Child Abuse in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

1 If a child is in **immediate danger** at any point **CALL 000**

2 All suspicions or reports of child abuse must be reported to:

Police
Child Protection
Kooyoora Professional Standards (see below)

What is Child Abuse?

Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to:
Physical Abuse,
Emotional Abuse, Family
Violence, Sexual Abuse,
Grooming and Neglect.

Who can report neglect and abuse of a child under the age of 18?

Children, Parents,
Staff, Volunteers,
Anyone.

What sorts of things must be reported?

All child safety concerns must be reported:

- Disclosure of past and present abuse and harm
- Allegations, suspicions or observations
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct

**CONTACT
NUMBERS:**

**POLICE
000**

CHILD PROTECTION: 13 12 78 (After Hours)
North **1300 664 977** • South **1300 655 795** • East **1300 369 391**
• West (Rural) **1800 075 599** • West (Metro) **1300 664 977**

**KOYOORA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
1800 135 246**



Reverend Canon Di Langham, Anne Crook and Heather Priest.

Picture: supplied

Walkabout for reconciliation

■ Lesa Scholl

Early one Melbourne spring morning, a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Christians departed on a walkabout of truth and healing from St Paul's Cathedral.

Victoria's Provincial Walkabout would see the group enter each Anglican diocese of the state to listen to the stories of local elders and First Nations leaders.

Bendigo diocese's the Reverend Canon Shannon Smith said it was as important for the church's First Nations leaders as well as non-Indigenous people to hear these stories.

"The clergy working in Victoria, they're not Victorians," she said. "We're going to be coming and working on this country; we've got to learn."

She said if the church wanted the First Peoples to walk with them, the church needed to learn to walk with First People before it extended the hand.

While some of the truths told were harrowing, Canon Smith believed God's presence protected the group.

"I don't think we would be going to these places if it wasn't God's will for us to be there," she said. "Between God and our old people, they come along with us."

She said it was as if *Bunjil* (Kulin for Creator God) was there saying they would hear things, but he was there to hold them.

"He just popped up everywhere," she said.

Past and present bled together on the journey. On the first day the "walkabouts" were invited to join in Sorry Business for a slain young Indigenous man in Gippsland.

Canon Smith said the group was confronted by the visit to Portland and the Convincing Grounds, where the first recorded genocide of Indigenous peoples occurred.

"We were able to walk down to the waters, just walking out there thinking, this water was just once soaked in blood," she said.

Yet while confronting harrowing pasts, many of the walkabouts found healing.

Gippsland's Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy said the most significant part of the journey for her was being on country in Hall's Gap, her mother's country.

"That's where I was able to connect because my mum, being removed as a young girl and not being able to return there ... That was her country, which meant that through her, it was mine," she said.

"Within that connectiveness I was able to walk on country," she said. "I paid my respects to them [the ancestors] and, in turn, they received me with gracefulness."

"You live here and you're accepted. But it's so different from being home, on your own country."

Kyneton-Malmsbury-Trentham priest-in-charge the Reverend Lauren Lockwood-Porter said she wanted to be on

country rather than just read books and see television shows about it.

For her, it was meeting different people and experiencing the relationships on walkabout that helped her understand the history of the land.

She said she was blown away by the generosity of the people in sharing their stories and the detail and care with which they spoke about their culture.

Ms Lockwood-Porter learned about the trade of smoke eels and was amazed by the way in which the eel traps worked with the natural waterways and paths of the eels.

"It was such a smart system that it freed up a lot of time for culture and for storytelling," she said.

Ms Lockwood-Porter said her parish held a lot of interest in Aboriginal culture and the reckoning with the history.

She said there were sites where terrible things happened, so she wanted to listen and understand, and find meaningful ways to acknowledge Victoria's past.

Canon Smith said three Aboriginal clergy joined this year's walkabout, and as they shared stories of their own country, the atrocities were often the same.

She said many of the places were recreating the spaces into healing spaces rather than trying to eradicate the history.

"This is a part of our history," she said. "We need to accept it as well."

"We need to walk it together."

Looking Ahead to Year A

■ Bob Derrenbacher

I'm a big fan of our Australian Lectionary.

Based on the Revised Common Lectionary, our Australian Lectionary allows us to be immersed in one of the three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) on a three-year rotation. Our Lectionary also enables us to experience the fullness of the Christian year together while exposing us to some occasionally difficult and lesser-known texts of Scripture. In addition, using the Lectionary is one of the few liturgical ways that has the potential to unite us as Anglicans, serving as an expression of inter-parish, cross-diocesan and cross-provincial unity and synergy. Finally, using the Lectionary is simply good liturgical practice, particularly as our Anglican prayer books presuppose its use and are designed as such.

On the First Sunday of Advent, we will begin our new liturgical Year A, with the Sunday Gospel readings largely coming from the Gospel according to St Matthew, with our first and second readings (usually from the Old Testament and the New Testament letters), along with a Psalm, read to complement the Gospel text. Year

A will take us through much of the Gospel of Matthew, a Gospel that presents its own unique portrait of Jesus and distinct vision of the "Kingdom of Heaven" (a phrase that is unique to the Gospel). Matthew has reworked his main narrative source text (the Gospel of Mark), included with it extensive sections of teaching/discourse material (from a lost written source called "Q" to which Luke also had access), plus extensive material that is unique to Matthew – that is, unparalleled in any other Gospel.

Matthew's Gospel also presents a unique structure, where it alternates between five significant sections of discourse/teaching and six sections of narrative. In fact, it appears that the sections of discourse inform and validate the sections of narrative that follow. As commentator M. Eugene Boring notes: "For Matthew, 'words' precede 'works,' since he considers teaching to take precedence over and to validate miracles, not vice versa," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*. This particular strategy is reflected in Jesus's concluding words in the Sermon on the Mount (the first significant section of discourse in Matthew): "Everyone, then, who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his

house on rock" (Matt 7:24 [NRSVue]). Thus, in Matthew's Gospel, the teachings of Jesus inform the sections of narrative that follow.

Matthew stands apart from the other New Testament Gospels in other ways as well. For example, it has a particular Jewish flavour – it is especially interested in presenting Jesus as a lawgiver, as a "new Moses" of sorts; it contains at least 60 quotations from (or allusions to) the Old Testament – at least twice as many as any other New Testament Gospel; and, it interprets and appropriates the Old Testament in ways consistent with first-century Jewish interpretive techniques.

Matthew also stands out in its focussed presentation of the disciple Peter. For example, in the story of Jesus walking on the water, it is only in Matthew where Peter gets out of the boat and makes an attempt to walk on water himself (Matt 14:28-31); it is only in Matthew where Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi is followed by Jesus's special blessing of Peter as a "rock" upon which he will build his church (Matt 16:17-19); and it is only in Matthew where Peter asks Jesus if there are limits to the forgiveness of a sinning sister or brother (Matt 18:15-22).

tearfund

Useful Gifts



Still arguably the world's most Useful Gift catalogue 30 years on!

- 1 Choose Useful Gifts
- 2 Receive your cards
- 3 Make an impact

Last year, over **\$1 billion** worth of unwanted gifts went to waste. This Christmas, say no to overconsumption and yes to meaningful change. **Every Useful Gift supports the poverty-fighting work of Tearfund's partners around the world.**

Browse the catalogue at usefulgifts.org today!

Advent Prayer Calendar

24 days of prayer for the work of Tearfund's partners around the world.



24 days of prayer for hope and justice around the world.

Download your free Advent Prayer Calendar



On 38 of the 52 Sundays of Year A, we will hear from the Gospel of Matthew, having the opportunity to hear those themes and passages that are distinctly Matthean. On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we will hear Matthew's version of the birth of Jesus (Matt 1:18-25); on the First Sunday after Christmas, we will ponder the story of the slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem and the Holy Family's flight into Egypt (Matt 2:13-23); on the First Sunday in Lent, Matthew's version of Jesus's temptation will be read (Matt 4:1-11); and, on Trinity Sunday, our Gospel reading will be the concluding passage in Matthew – the so-called "Great Commission" (Matt 28:16-20).

Then in the season after Pentecost, we will hear a number of unique and distinctly Matthean Gospel readings – the Parable of the Weeds (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43), the Walking on the Water (Matt 14:22-33), Jesus's encounter with the Canaanite Woman (Matt 15:21-28), Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:13-20), Jesus's words on forgiveness and the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt 18:21-35), the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt 20:1-16), and the Parable of the

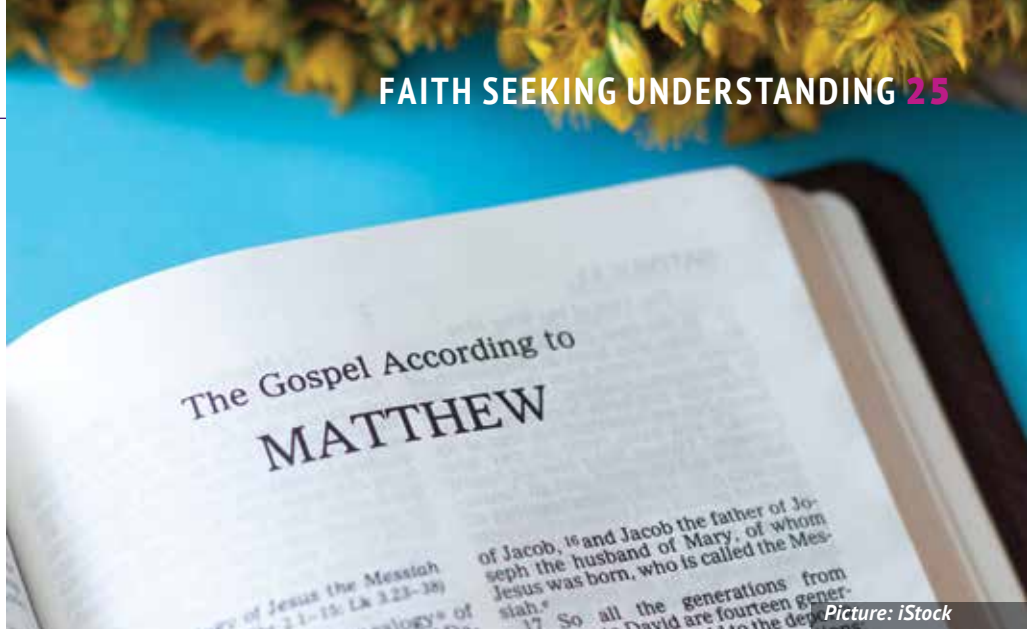
Wedding Banquet (Matt 22:1-14). Finally, Year A will conclude on Christ the King Sunday, where we will have the opportunity to contemplate Jesus's teaching on the last judgement, where the Son of Man will separate the sheep from the goats at the end of history (Matt 25:31-46).

Thus, the Australian Lectionary provides all of us with the opportunity to be immersed in the Gospel according to St Matthew and to learn how Matthew's portrait of Jesus is distinct and see a powerful presentation of Jesus's vision of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Year A Gospel readings afford us the opportunity to be not just "hearers" of the words of Jesus, but also "doers" of them

as well as we act in response to the voice of Jesus that we hear in Matthew's Gospel.

If you would like to learn more about Matthew's Gospel and the lectionary readings for Year A, please consider attending an online seminar that Dr Rachelle Gilmour (Bromby Associate Professor of Old Testament) and I are leading on Saturday morning, 15 November. For more information, including registration details, please visit www.trinity.unimelb.edu.au/whats-happening/events/year-a-seminar.

The Reverend Canon Bob Derrenbacher is Dean and Frank Woods Associate Professor of New Testament at Trinity College Theological School.



Picture: iStock

ACT FOR PEACE
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER
THROUGH THE actalliance



**Christmas
Bowl**

THERE'S HISTORY IN THIS BOWL

What began with a single bowl on a family table 76 years ago, has become a sacred tradition, a legacy of faith and generosity shared by churches across Australia.

With more than 120 million people displaced by conflict today, families need help and hope.

Remind families they are not alone this Christmas.



Joel Pralley/Act for Peace



GIVE TODAY

Join the Christmas Bowl — bring love, unity, and hope to those who need it most.
For more information, please scan the QR code or visit afp.link/w5t

The Christmas Bowl is the Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia | ABN 86 619 970 188 | christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au

What Type of Supervision would Strengthen

This article is the third in a series exploring professional supervision.

■ Elizabeth Delbridge

When I was a curate, I sought a supervisor who could help me articulate what sort of priest I wanted to be. I needed someone who had more experience than me in the role and who understood parish dynamics. Years later, as an experienced cleric myself, I sought collegiality, where I could explore the subtleties of ministry, notice my blind spots and tweak my actions. I did not need to be told what to do. Rather I sought someone who could support my reflection on how to be. That person did not need to know parish ministry inside out, to ask exploratory questions that accessed my inner wisdom.

What are you looking for in supervision? You choose your supervisor, so whether you are reviewing the supervision relationship you are currently in or need to find a new supervisor, finding one who is a good fit is important. Maybe we don't know where to start or what to look for. What if we started with ourselves first, with questions like: What stage of ministry am I in, or what sort of supervision am I looking for? I suggest that prayerfully reflecting on those questions first, before reviewing or looking for a supervisor will help your discernment.

At different stages of ministry, we learn different things and we seek support in different ways. It is helpful to identify what stage of ministry I am at to find a supervisor who supports me. It is also helpful to realise

that there are different types of supervision. What suited me when I was a curate and my training vicar was educating me about the nuts and bolts of ministry, is different years later as I focus on the impact of the work on me as the minister and my impacts as leader on the ministry at hand.

“At different stages of ministry, we learn different things and we seek support in different ways... It is also helpful to realise that there are different types of supervision.”

Jane Leach and Michael Paterson, in their book *Pastoral Supervision Second Edition* (2015) describe four stages of professional development. First, the “novice” practitioner who wants an expert who can tell them what to do (which could be experienced positively or resisted.) They want help surviving rather than drowning in their new endeavour, yet they might blame the supervisor if the advice given does not work. The novice needs a supervisor who knows the context well, can focus on skill development and build confidence in the face of anxiety. They help the novice trust the supervision space and

use it well to explore their work. Second, the “apprentice” practitioner oscillates between wanting an experienced practitioner who can help them develop their own skills, interpretations and strategies, and someone who can reassure them and direct them. This requires a supervisor who can help them get work into the room, find their own voice as well as explore personal and spiritual issues that arise from the work. Third, the “independent” practitioner wants to consult about complex situations and dynamics. They benefit from a supervisor who can celebrate their independence and expertise as well as exploring wider contextual and organisational issues. Fourth, the “senior” practitioner seeks a place of peer collegiality in which subtleties are explored, blind spots revealed, practice tweaked, identity strengthened, and integration sought. The senior supervisee needs a supervisor who is not threatened by an equal and can tolerate complex situations where there are no easy answers. Where might you see yourself or others you know? The training and licencing sequence of clergy seems to correlate well with these stages. Being a theological student on placement might be like the novice practitioner. Being a curate could be like the apprentice practitioner. Being a priest-in-charge in the early days, might still be regarded as an apprentice in this framework, moving towards being an independent practitioner as they approach becoming an incumbent. The senior practitioner might

	Managerial Supervision	Formational Supervision	Missional or Regenerational Supervision	Transformational Supervision
Attends to	Nuts and bolts Time & diary Service Delivery	Training Mentoring Educating Upskilling	Wellbeing of those for whom the practitioner cares/works.	Impact of the work on the worker and the worker on the work.
Favours	Management & organisational needs. Quality control. Reporting. Management of Risk. Fitness to practice.	Initiation into a profession. Students in training. Growth in practice. Growth in competence.	Wellbeing of those cared for. Wellbeing of the system within which the supervisee works. Values and behaviours which underpin action and sustain growth.	Development of practitioner autonomy. In depth reflection on self in the work. Practice as a teacher.
Requires a supervisor who:	Knows the organisational culture, needs and commitment and can help supervisee meet those needs. Line Managers	Knows the professional discipline. Can teach, train, coach. Is not afraid to be didactic. Who can inspire others to want to inhabit a profession.	Does not collapse supervision into pastoral care or counselling for the supervisee. Makes the absent others present, visible and audible. Refuses to collude or avoid fitness to practice issues.	Sees practitioners as wise peers, life-long learners. Can facilitate reflection rather than invite reporting. Fosters questions of identity and not just of performance.
Michael Paterson © IPSRP	Uni-Professional Supervision.	Uni- Professional Supervision.	Cross-Professional Supervision.	Cross-Professional Supervision.

n my Ministry?

be 10 or more years in ministry. As the stages describe the way ministry develops, authorised lay ministers can find themselves described, considering their years in ministry and what sort of questions they are asking.

Having looked at developmental stages of ministry, let us now explore different types of supervision. Michael Paterson, founding Director of the Institute of Pastoral Supervision and Reflective Practice, describes four different types of supervision – *see table below left*.

Managerial supervision is the type most people have experienced in the workplace and are familiar with it as line management. This is not what we are seeking in professional supervision, but it is important to describe here to show the contrast. As part of a ministry team, a curate, an associate or authorised lay minister would experience line management within their ministry setting yet would expect a different style of supervision from their professional supervisor.

Formational supervision has a strong educational component – nurturing competence and inspiring supervisees to grow in their ministry. Formational supervision strengthens confidence and our embrace of ministry in our early years as an authorised lay minister, curate or priest in charge. Historically, the Anglican church has had an apprenticeship style of training for curates, where Managerial supervision and Formational supervision have been conflated into the same person. Now that we understand about power dynamics and adult learning, best practice suggests keeping them separate. The onsite training vicar focusses on the day-to-day realities of training and formation development, so the curate develops the presence and competence required. The external supervisor, chosen by the curate, can support exploration of personal, spiritual, relational and ethical areas that the curate may not want to raise in their placement setting or that need a wider consideration.

Some senior clergy have questioned me about the benefit of supervision. They do not need to be told what to do. They have so many years' experience under their belt. Their question assumes that all supervision is either managerial or formational, which is hardly surprising if that is their only experience to date. So, the next two types extend the scope into a more collaborative and consultative expression of professional supervision.



Picture: iStock

When we have grown in competence and are inspired for ministry our focus turns to the wellbeing of those we care for in our setting. Missional or Regenerational supervision explores the wellbeing of the people who are the focus of ministry and of the system in which the ministry occurs. The skilled minister now explores with their supervisor what behaviours support initiative and growth. Many active clergy and lay ministers enjoy this type of supervision.

Being open to reflection on our ministry experiences to notice what they might have to teach us is the starting place of transformational supervision. The emphasis shifts from skill development or doing, to how the minister is being in the setting.

Types of supervision are not necessarily stages that one grows through, nor is one better than another. They each have their place and can be switched between. For example, an “independent” minister may encounter a situation for the first time, so the supervision becomes more formational in style. A priest in charge, still growing in competency in some arenas, might usually expect Formational or Missional supervision, yet is open to and benefits from reflection on their being and identity and the supervision becomes transformational in style.

The bottom of the table lists “uni-professional” and “cross-professional” supervision meaning that the supervisor comes from

the same profession or from a different profession. Managerial and formational supervision clearly require someone with a deep knowledge of ministry. However, the latter types, Missional/Regenerational and Transformational, being more reflective in nature, need someone who can notice and wonder alongside the supervisee, without necessarily understanding the detail. For some who don't want to be told what to do, find a supervisor from another discipline – the supervisor can't fall into the temptation of telling you what they did in a similar situation. Instead, they support your exploration. One priest described ministry in a rural diocese where the only nearby person with suitable qualifications was a psychologist. She was pleasantly surprised how supportive those conversations were to her ministry endeavours and continued regular sessions over several years.

Four stages of professional development have been described to help us identify where we might be. Also, four types of supervision have been outlined to clarify different approaches. We can use these frameworks to help discern what stage we are at and prayerfully reflect on what we might be looking for in professional supervision.

The Reverend Elizabeth Delbridge is a spiritual director and professional supervisor in Melbourne.

Collection focuses on creation and our relationship with Creator

■ Carol O'Connor

Matthew Pullar: This Teeming Mess of Glory. Resource Publications, 2025

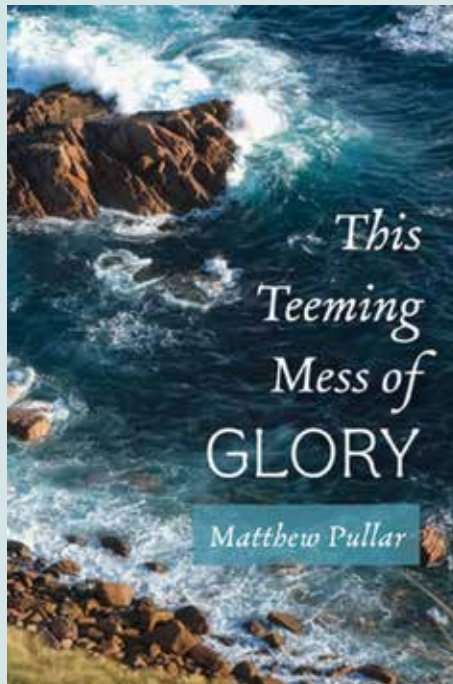
According to spiritual writer Mark Oakley, a prayer for those wishing to introduce a poet's work to those who may be unfamiliar with it ought to be: "Lead us not into interpretation." This assertion seems very pertinent with regards to Australian poet Matthew Pullar's latest collection, *This Teeming Mess of Glory*, shortlisted for the 2025 Australian Christian Book of the Year award.

This work concerns itself with the nature of creation and our relationship with our Creator which truthfully can never be fully known nor finally interpreted. As Pullar's title suggests, and much of his subject matter in these poems display, our existence and the world itself defies being pinned down or contained; even "familiar substances" teem with a "vast array of / electrons, orbiting atoms ..." In fact, the very beauty of reality lies in the recognition of the unrestrained, wildness of God's grace, particularly in life's slipperiness and messy irresolution. Faith, that deep human longing, works like this:

*"... belief is often evasive, often abstract,
like air which itself defies grasp
yet needy lungs clutch at it with
the certainty
that this, this alone they must have."*

Pullar's poetry delights in lingering on the ordinary, the particular. Many poems act as small personal word portraits: the remembered childhood "school beneath the mountain where I play"; a conversation had with his two-year-old son whilst shaving in the bathroom, or watching his children playing "Pretend Church" before dinner.

Three sections of this work are based on the primary elements of earth, air and water, whilst the last combines the various interweaving themes into the subject of life itself. Yet all parts dwell on this phenomenon of life's abundant disarray, enchanting, amazing, also dark and painful. From *Soil*, a series of poems recognising not only how many of us are born into a land already invaded, dispossessed and misinterpreted by settlers, but also a country that nevertheless binds overflowing individual memories of childhood with the unique story of



each grandparent, our own story and our children's, to *Water* where life teems and "No abyss can stop it" every aspect of life seems put under scrutiny. In *Breath* Pullar muses upon the first sounds and utterances a child makes, and in *Listening for Air* considers our own human physiological need to breathe, as he "stands between the cot(s)" of his three children during the night waiting "to hear three channels of breath flowing through."

Several poems poignantly reflect upon his own periods of fragile mental health, times when life loses coherency:

*"These days when all of the socks are odd
and all your thoughts are scrambled eggs
and, try as you might to talk to God,
nothing makes any sense ..."*

The final section, *Life*, includes a long poem considering *Aves Australiae*, scanning the vast array of birdlife in Australia spotted in traffic, on freeways, across the seas:

*"Feathers unlike and alike all flutter
as Heaven heaves this living
flock together."*

His images, as in *Other Bodies*, are of life "in constant merging and departing." The nature of human life is a riddle opening "like a chasm" into "a longing for one" (*Riddle I*) until it is realised that life only makes sense when "You are / in the chasm", even at "the end" or "into failure I open in /You." (*Riddle II*)

Many poems here employ a gentle, searching tone which considers the mystery of our being born from dust. Pullar is inspired by other poets; his own tone sometimes echoing the wry, probing conversational manner of WH Auden. *We Are Such Stuff* examines the "naked naming" of substances in a chemistry class to find a comparison with Prospero's proclamation at the end of Shakespeare's *Tempest* that we are "the stuff of dreams." For Pullar, "the stuff of life. The stuff of us."

However, the thread running through his whole collection, is "You". And it's entering into relationship with this "You" that enables this stuff to cohere, make sense and bring life. The word God is seldom used by Pullar, but God's presence is pervasive. It's incarnational and personal. In *Holy Mess*, it is "unholy pain" that "sends me to Your feet". Here is a relationship not only of stretching out arms to You, but one of being held steady by "patient arms" or the human cry when beset by "every force of hell" of "Hold me. Carry me. Hold me."

And it's this quality of his poetry that reminds me of early English poets like Thomas Traherne, who in poems such as *Salutation* also wondered to find himself alive on earth, "out of nothing now awake" and "a stranger here" seeing "strange treasures lodged in this fair world." God's limitless nature too became the ground, sustainer and container of all the beauty, the unfinished and failed in our lives.

The temptation is to slot *This Teeming Mess of Glory* into a category, confessional or devotional poetry. Indeed, it can be in poems such as *Hyperecho* which contemplates the capacity of prayer, like Jesus' deep sleep in a boat during the tempest, not to add more thunder as "hell rages all about" but one whose "reason-defying head / sleeping instead" and "in a voice like ultrasound, / bids me do the same." But ultimately these poems elude such easy categorisation.

Yet, this remains a work that can be used as an aid for spiritual directors and teachers, to read reflectively in quiet times or simply share with others in recognition of our common humanity. It's a startling and beautiful collection.

Carol O'Connor is a Melbourne writer and Manager of St Peter's Bookroom, Melbourne.