



Anglican Diocese
of Bendigo

The Spirit

monthly

From: God
To: You
The greatest
gift of all

november/december 2018

issue 142



Ordained: Simba Musvamhiri with his son Vusa, wife Helen and daughter Thembi following his ordination

Simba Musvamhiri ordained a deacon in St Paul's Cathedral

Sarah Crutch

"Simba – do you have beautiful feet?" It's not the usual question a bishop asks of a candidate prior to ordination, but this is what was pondered during the ordination service of Simba Musvamhiri on 1 December 2018.

Preaching from Romans 10: 8-18, Archdeacon and Vicar General Greg Harris reflected on verse 15: "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news."

"I want to know, did they ask you to take off your shoes and socks?"

"It was said because the news was good, how beautiful are the feet of those that tell us that good news. And the message of good news is this - Jesus is Lord."

"Now I suspect they probably didn't ask you to take your shoes and socks off...it really doesn't have anything to do with your feet."

"The message that brings beauty is that Jesus is Lord. The feet, they just get the person there - it's the message that contains beauty...and the subject of the message is that Jesus is Lord."

Simba and his wife Helen, along with their two young children, have recently

moved to Tatura where Simba has been leading the congregation for the past two months and is now formally licensed as Deacon in Charge of the parish.

Although not previously ordained, Simba has a breadth of ministry experience from serving in several churches across a diverse range of cultural contexts including as an associate pastor in Namibia, an assistant minister in Perth and most recently as lead pastor of Cornerstone Christian Church in Canberra.

"I love God, his family, all people and am now enjoying living in beautiful Tatura, proclaiming the good news of Jesus at All Saints Tatura," Simba said.

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The Bishop writes

....and tweets  @MattBrain1



Dear Friends,

A few weeks ago I went to see a school production of 'Alice in Wonderland'. It was performed by junior (primary) school students who did a fantastic job in bringing the various characters to life. The scene of the Mad Hatter's tea-party has stuck in my head along with its song containing the lines, "a very merry *un*-birthday to you... it's great to drink to someone, and I guess that you will do!"

I like the idea of an unbirthday if it means that people will give me lots of gifts, but I have noticed that birthdays do remain the usual way of celebrating our lives.

I wonder if you have ever pondered why it is that we invest so much in Christmas? In some ways we can choose any number of days and decide to have a nice meal, or give out gifts, sing nostalgic songs and meet up with friends and family. But like unbirthdays, an unchristmas has not really caught on.

There are probably as many answers to why this is so as there are people to ask, but I suspect that it has something to do with what Christmas offers the heart. In other words, if all we got out of Christmas was a nice meal, some gifts, a few songs and family time we would find ways of having unchristmases. Yet we still put so much into our celebration of Christmas because we hope that it

will feed our heart as well as our belly. The food, the gifts, the fun and the family all add up to remind us of the good things in life and give hope for the future. This is why Christmas time is so hard for many, especially those who cannot enjoy these good things or whose hopes are dashed.

We all know that the way that we celebrate Christmas in Australia is not the only way it has been celebrated through history, or even the most common way to celebrate around the world at the moment. However, I think that the desire to invest so much in what Christmas symbolises is something at the very heart of Christmas itself.

Christmas is of course a Christian invention – the celebration of Jesus' coming into the world as a child. But Christmas did not begin with Jesus' birth, it had begun much, much earlier. This is seen in the longing expressed in Isaiah 9:6:

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his
shoulders.*

*And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace
(NIV)*

The people to whom this was first written were struggling. They were burdened and oppressed, subject to war and violence. Their desire for good things and a hope for the future would have felt like a sharp ache. Their hearts would have been yearning for calm, comfort and a future. And it is into this heart-ache that a child is promised.

That we give gifts is hardly surprising, given that the heart of Christmas is the one we receive. It is a divine gift and one designed to answer the heart-felt cries for good. Just as an ox is yoked to a cart so the one who is given will shoulder the very

burdens being carried by his people. The hopes, dreams and aspirations of the people will fall on his shoulders. But we should be alert to the fact that this is going to play out differently to normal when we remember that it is a child who is going to bear these burdens. This Christmas babe is the promised balm for an aching people, but he is not going to simply be the biggest bully on the block – using his muscle to push others aside. His work will be of a different character.

So this Christmas I want to leave you with four reasons why the Christmas baby – Jesus – is actually sufficient to meet our deepest, heart-felt needs:

1. He is the Wonderful Counselor

Jesus turns out to be the very best of law-makers. This was because he could not only set a good standard for living but is uniquely able to act that way too!

2. He is our Mighty God

Jesus is not some 'johnny-come-lately' onto the God-block but shares all of what it means to be God with the Father and the Spirit. He is uniquely able to sustain all things.

3. He is the Everlasting Father

Our future relies on someone outside of ourselves being there to host us. Jesus is unique in being set to prepare our place.

4. We have a Prince of peace

In a world of strife in which the strong use force to dominate and enforce their will Jesus uniquely brings order and peace through his own self-giving.

Do not simply settle for a merry Christmas this year. My prayer is that yours is Beautiful and the yearnings of your heart are met by the unique and best Christmas gift – Jesus.

Matt



Celebrate: Canon Ian Howarth, Archdeacon Anne McKenna, Bishop Matt Brain and the Revd Des Benfield

All Saints Newstead celebrates 150th anniversary

Juliet Cook

The sun shone and the Maldon Brass Band played magnificently as we paraded from the Crown Hotel down to the church in Panmure Street to celebrate the 150th birthday of All Saints Anglican Church in Newstead.

There was a tractor to help transport those who preferred to ride, and an outdoor service in the shade was led by Bishop Matt Brain, assisted by Archdeacon Anne McKenna, the Revd Canon Ian Howarth and Father Des Benfield, our locum priest. Despite the heat over 100 people attended, including past parish priests (one from the 1960s) and parishioners from near and far.

Inside the church there was a display featuring wedding dresses through the ages from people who had been married in the church along with books and registers from past eras. It is worth reflecting on the spirit of those who, over the years, have built and maintained the church, worshipped, played the organ, sung in the choir, been members of various women's groups, have taught (or learnt) in the Sunday School, or have just been regular parishioners.

“This celebration declares that the Church, the community of the faithful, in this place is here to stay”

The community all joined together to contribute to the celebrations, with the Men's Shed helping to set up in the morning and providing a sausage sizzle after the service. There was tea, coffee and champagne to go with the afternoon tea baked by the grade five and six students from the Newstead Primary School. The Blenders, who sang during the service, continued to delight with songs throughout the afternoon.

It's wonderful to think how our little church was built 150 years ago, by the pioneers of the district. In his welcome, Fr Des Benfield drew particular attention to the large gum tree beside the church as a reminder of the past, but encouraged the congregation to look towards the future of the township of Newstead with optimism.

“The large gumtree beside the church is estimated to be over 300 years old. It, therefore, predates the white settlement of the area and is a salutary reminder that we are only the newest custodians of the building and of the past,” Fr Des said.

“We are here today to celebrate the past but as custodians we also celebrate the now, and look to the future. And there is a future: the township is showing signs of new growth, the local Primary School's intake for 2019 is at a high and there is a great community spirit alive and well in this abode of only 536 persons.”

“This celebration declares that the Church, the community of the faithful, in this place is here to stay; worship and the teaching of the faith once delivered to the saints will continue.”

Fr Des also reminded the congregation that “we are custodians of the now and of the future”, highlighting the restoration of the hall to be utilised as a community facility and the development of a monthly ‘Sunday School’ ministry in 2019.

And the 300 year old gum tree that still presides over the church is a symbol of the timelessness of our country.

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The Anglican Diocese of Bendigo and the Editor are not responsible for opinions expressed by contributors, nor do these necessarily reflect the policy of the diocese.

February issue: Contributions due by Friday 18 January.



Christmas Service Times

Parish Christmas service times have been published on the diocesan website.

If you'll be elsewhere across the diocese this Christmas, see which fellow parish you can visit to celebrate Christmas with!

The Spirit online!

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Acknowledgement: A smoking ceremony was performed before the service



Dance: Children's performance



Dine: Cathedral dinner

St Paul's Cathedral marks 150 years

Elizabeth Dyke

St Paul's Cathedral, Bendigo celebrated their 150th Anniversary in November with a full week of events and worship enjoyed by church members past and present, family, friends and community.

Highlights of the week included singing our favourite hymns, hearing part of a sermon from Charles Simmeon, cream scones for morning tea, bbq sausages while playing croquet and a fabulous gala dinner. Who could forget the yummy food, beautiful and imaginative decorations which transformed the hall, and the entertainment! Souvenirs were produced to mark the anniversary and can still be obtained through the Cathedral office or gift shop.

The concluding act of worship on Sunday 18 November began with a smoking ceremony, led by Dja Dja Wurrung leaders and an Acknowledgement of Country from Revd Robyn Davis and Ed King.

Bishop Matt led us through the liturgy and Dean Elizabeth gave us plenty to reflect upon in terms of God's faithfulness down the years and our response in loving service. The choir led with confidence and sang Byrd's *Ave Verum* during communion; the children enthusiastically sang *Open the eyes of my heart* and *10,000 Reasons* with actions!

"It was really nice to have a service which showcases all of the worship styles that happen in our church at different services," a parent said.

At the end of a busy and faith-filled week, one of the wardens said, "All the events of the week were a result of great teamwork and spiritual guidance and we are very thankful to have been a house of God for over 150 years."

Now, we take our 'Faith into the Future', with courage, energy and expectation for the next 150 days, months, years... and may all the glory and the praise go to our ever faithful God!



Leaders: Greg & Karen Harris, Bishop Matt Brain, Peter Dyke, Neil Bach & Dale Barclay



Guest: The Revd Neil Bach



Celebrate: 10th anniversary

Bible in the Bush weekend provides engaging Bible teachings

Dale Barclay

The tenth edition of “Bible in the Bush” was recently held in Red Cliffs. With over 70 people attending it was an extremely successful event in all sorts of ways.

Bible Studies were led by Bishop Matt on the book of Job with attendees soaking up the Bible teaching. They also appreciated the opportunities to discuss with Bishop Matt issues arising from the studies.

The Revd Peter Dyke extended the practical application of the text in his workshop on “knowing what to say when you don’t know what to say” as we focused on caring and listening to others going through a hard time.

The Rev Neil Bach led a very interesting and insightful study into the lives of Leon and Mildred Morris during their Bush Church Aid ministry years. Local businesses were engaged to cater including dinner at the Red Cliffs pub. Good conversations and relationship building occurred during the breaks.

The main goal of Bible in the Bush is to provide faithful extended Bible teaching over a weekend so that lives may be transformed for the glory of God. A secondary goal is to support and inform people about the work of Bush Church Aid.

The Parish of Sunraysia South plans to run the event again next year which also coincides with BCA’s centenary.

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We asked people from around the diocese to share with us....

What does Christmas mean to you?

This might be something you might like to ponder in the lead up to Christmas Day and share with those around you.



Bubbles: Levi Brain

“Christmas means to me a time of ‘unfathomable wonder.’ Each year I find a quiet time, usually extremely late on Christmas Eve, to sit and ponder that the ‘Word became flesh’ for me. I find this a time of chilling speechlessness, which ironically as a preacher is incredibly comforting. I never tire of the wonder and I know I will never be able to fully fathom the depths of this mystery. I look forward to that precious evening each year”

“It’s the only time of year our whole family can get together”



Chat: Sue Allen, Jackie Mullan, Deb Allan and Greg Allan



Laugh: Bishop Matt Brain and Rachael

“Christmas means family, food and the opportunity to talk about the love of God to a world that is trying to forget”

“
The tremendous plan for God
to reconcile us to Him - praying
more people realise this and
come and adore him too
”



New friends: Simba, Vusa and Helen Musvamhiri, Jo Stones and Heather Marten



Good company: Peter Dyke, Peter Blundell, Elizabeth Dyke, Andrew Gall, Levi Brain, Rachel Mavromoustakakis, Matt Harris, Karen Harris and Greg Harris

“
Christmas to me means togetherness
with the family, at church and at home,
remembering that Jesus is the reason to
celebrate . Christmas is a time of giving and
sharing, not just presents, but giving and
sharing of ourselves
”



Play: Vusa Musvamhiri & Karis Brain



Enjoying good food: Simon and Iris Chan with Naomi Fountain

“
Christmas to me is a
balancing act, overwhelming
expectations of my roles,
contrasting the joy of
expressing rebirth of God's
creative love
”

Around the Diocese

Heavenly Hats on parade at St Mark's Golden Square



Melbourne Cup Day 2018 saw the return of the 'Heavenly Hats' parade and luncheon at St Mark's Golden Square. This year went a little differently – instead of a display of the ladies finest millinery styles, we were treated to a presentation from Brian Kinross.

His featured hats started with his military and police service hats, a number of caps he has gathered through his involvement in supporting many charities, through to sporting hats and of course his trusty Akubra and the quintessential Aussie sun hat with corks attached. Each of these had their own fascinating story, and to top it off the final feature of the day was seeing his two ceremonial games torches - one from his youth as a competitor and one from the 2000 Olympic torchbearers relay.

It was a great excuse to dust off the race wear and enjoy a delicious luncheon with parishioners and friends.

- Rhonda Dallow

St Paul's Cathedral kids club garners enthusiasm

At the beginning of September we launched the 'Chocolate Cake Music Practice' at the Cathedral. This was aimed at the younger members to increase their participation in the monthly Intergenerational Service. It has been a resounding success and a great encouragement to those involved.

The format is simple: games with Roger, music using video clips to encourage singing and actions, the mandatory chocolate cake and guitar lessons for beginners.

We try and keep everything to an hour and a half but we are already seeing increased participation and new children appearing from outside the congregation to check us out, with 20 children along for our most recent practice, proving it can only grow.

- Regina Rich



Anglicare Victoria shares with Mothers' Union AGM



Francis Lynch, Regional Director of Anglicare Victoria based in Bendigo, was our guest speaker at the Mother's Union AGM held in early November.

Francis shared with us the many programs Anglicare Victoria are involved in across the Loddon-Mallee region, many of which align with causes MU support, particularly support for families in distress, homelessness, care for children and young people, parenting support and building relationship skills.

Francis opened our eyes and minds to the broad spectrum of need found across the region and the informed manner in which Anglicare Victoria is committed to improving the lives they touch.

- Ronda Gault

Thanks: The Revd Linda Osmond, Francis Lynch, the Revd Barry Rainsford and MU President Leone Tress

Around the Parishes

Mission breakfast a berry good start to the day at St Andrew's Kyabram

What better way is there to begin a beautiful spring Saturday morning than taking your time over a delicious breakfast with a group of friends? That's just how many in Kyabram began the day at the St Andrew's Missions' Breakfast.

Meeting for breakfast is not new, but twelve months ago the seed of an idea was planted, "Why don't we do this ourselves and raise money for our missions giving budget?" and it took off from there.

The menu included berry smoothies, a delicious breakfast trifle, toasted banana bread and a big cooked breakfast. Missions Team member Marg Evans, the Revd David Willsher and his family worked enthusiastically in the kitchen while the 'customers' enjoyed good company, cheerful service and a great feed. Plans for another breakfast in 2019 are already underway.

- Rosalind Willsher



Cook: Olivia Willsher whips up a breakfast berry smoothie

Emergency services blessing in Parish of St Arnaud



Blessing: Bishop Matt blesses the St Arnaud SES members

Four emergency vehicles turned up to St Arnaud Anglican Church on Sunday Morning. No - not because some disaster had befallen the church, but for a special service of blessing and thanksgiving, with Bishop Matt Brain.

It was a great opportunity for the community to show appreciation of the services that keep our town safe. The service included the lighting of a police remembrance candle and the Police Ode read by Sergeant Bill Alford.

After the service Bishop Matt blessed the emergency vehicles and their crews and then everyone gathered for a sausage sizzle. It was a perfect day to enjoy the spring weather and get to know our emergency service personnel, Bishop Matt and his wife Rachael.

- Jan Harper

Vote 1 - free sausage sandwiches at South East Bendigo

"There must be a catch, I don't understand" was a common statement heard during the recent Victorian State Election at Holy Trinity, South East Bendigo. This wasn't in response to the actual election process but rather to a parish backed 'election stunt'.

Holy Trinity is a highly frequented polling station and the parish saw an opportunity to both bless and engage with the local community with an election promise of 'Free Sausage Sandwiches' - a promise that was 100% rock solid with no strings or preference deals attached.

"Often the church has a reputation of putting their hand out and we wanted to turn that around. In the end it was an idea that sprang from one of those 'what if we...' conversations," Rector Greg Harris said. Almost 700 sausage sandwiches were freely given away resulting in either a smile, a look of surprise or an extended conversation.

- Greg Harris



Volunteers: The parish members assisting with the sausage sizzle

Cursillo gifted to Hong Kong

Sue Turner

Rodger O'Hara and Sue Turner of Cursillo were recently given the opportunity to travel to Hong Kong as part of the inaugural Cursillo there. Sue has provided the following report of their encouraging trip.

On arrival we headed off to Hong Kong Cathedral to meet up with the rest of the team who had all flown in from different parts of Australia to be a part of this inaugural Cursillo in Hong Kong.

Our Spiritual Advisors for the visit were Fr Robert and Fr Will who are both Cursillistas originally from the UK, along with Bishop Ian Palmer from Australia and a priest from Tasmania. Representatives from Perth, Tasmania, Brisbane and Newcastle were all a part of the gifting visit.

On our first evening we went out for dinner to meet with the Archbishop and Dean Matthias. Dean Matthias knew of Bendigo, having only visited last year for the Dean's Conference and was familiar with John Roundhill who had worked at the Cathedral in Hong Kong for many years before coming to Australia and eventually Bendigo.

The Archbishop commissioned the team and the new HK Cursillo banner, before we set off for the ferry ride that would take us to the retreat house on the Island of Cheung Chau. We had just over an hour to prepare the rooms before our candidates began arriving on the next ferry. As always, we began with a fellowship meal before formal introductions, and it was so wonderful to see how quickly everyone got along.

Throughout the weekend the talks, meals and spiritual services were great, the singing was amazing and the interaction was lovely to see, especially from a different culture who wouldn't normally interact that way. The weekend was an encouraging success, with the candidates who are now Cursillista's already planning an Ultreya for next October.

They also treasured the banner gifted to them from the Diocese of Bendigo, reading FROG (forever rely on God) which they are going to hang in the Cathedral.



Shine: Parish Fair



Dedicated: New chapel

Kangaroo Flat hosts range of activities

Tracey Wolsley

The Parish of Kangaroo Flat recently had a busy month with a number of activities and celebrations.

It began with the blessing of the animals in the first week, ended with the Parish Fair and in between was the annual service of thanksgiving for the emergency services and the dedication and naming of St Stephen's Chapel.

Each of these services provided opportunities for us to reach out, give thanks and bless. We are indeed, blessed to be a blessing!



Blessed: Emergency services blessing

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ESTD  1853
In Loving Memory...

Singing for Christmas

Fay Magee

“Joy to the world”!! We will no doubt be singing that one with text based on Psalm 98 by Isaac Watts to the tune “Antioch”.

But it's probably rare for a phrase from a hymn to have found itself in a pop song. But that was the case for *Three Dog Night* back in 1970, with the chorus going “Joy to the world... joy to the fishes in the deep blue sea, joy to you and me”. It has certainly been an inspiring phrase and its use elsewhere highlights that great communal outburst of celebration we all enjoy.

For many of us there can be some ambivalence as Christmas approaches but I suspect singing the great songs of the season can be helpful. I like the opening sentence in the *Preface* to *The Oxford Book of Carols* (1928): “Carols are songs with a religious impulse that are simple, hilarious, popular, and modern.” If you have time to read the rest of the Preface, it provides a detailed history.

The community singing of Christmas carols comes to us as part of Victorian Christmas traditions which are successfully embedded in our English cultural inheritance (and beyond). Enthusiasm for carol singing resulted in a wider repertoire emerging during the later decades of the nineteenth century. Nowadays many recording artists produce a special Christmas album to capitalise on the consumer mayhem and new commercial songs.

Those organising community events usually ensure everyone has a jolly good sing of their favourite carols and it seems we run out of time! We can make sure we keep singing the carols in our Sunday services throughout the Christmas season!

If you are looking for something a little different to sing there is new material available in various musical styles. One good selection comes from American artist, Kathy Mattea. The song *Mary, did you know*, was a great addition to one Advent-Christmas event in a former parish and the school children really got into it. (score available from www.musicnotes.com)



Christmas: What is it really all about?

What is Christmas all about?

Elizabeth Dyke

In the lead up to Christmas, I get interested in television adverts – sad, isn't it? What are they telling us this year?

Christmas is about family! Every member gathered in from far and wide, whether they want to be there or not, whatever their differences of lifestyle, politics or availability. Suddenly family comes first, and *Lifeline* and *Beyond Blue* get ready for the fallout.

Christmas is about food! A better ham than last year, with crispy crackling; spectacular pavlova and pudding; the table groaning under the weight of food...how much will be wasted, thrown out before it has 'gone off' because we have 'gone off' it?

Christmas is about furniture! Or the other 'stuff' which we put into our homes. Fantastic, oz-designed, buy-now-pay-later – we are urged to fill our homes with the newer, better, easily purchased! But do we really need more or different?

These are pale shadows of the truth Christians proclaim about Christmas.

Christmas is about family – God invites us into His family through the giving of Jesus to the world. Born to a human family, nurtured by human parents, Jesus lived, died and rose again from the dead. Only Jesus holds open the door of heaven and welcomes us home.

Christmas is about food – the Bible says 'taste and see that God is good'. And waiting for us is the heavenly banquet prepared by God for all His children to share.

Christmas is about furniture – filling our lives with the temporary, transient and tawdry, always leaves us hungry for more. Jesus promises love, joy and peace for today and eternity.

So, may you experience happy and fulfilling times with your earthly family and your Christian family; may you taste afresh that God is good; and may you experience God's love, joy and peace in abundance.

Happy Christmas!



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Baptism a family affair for Trimbles

On Sunday 21 October Patrick Thomas Trimble (seated on his mum's lap in white christening gown) was baptised during Sunday worship at St Peter's Eaglehawk.

A large family contingent came from far and wide to celebrate the event and the church was well represented by members of the Parish.

The Revd Brendan McDonald was overjoyed at the turnout.

"This is an important and joyful day for the family," he said.

The Trimble family continue to have a long association with the Parish of Eaglehawk, with Patrick and his brother Hamish being the fourth generation to worship at St Peter's.



Family baptism: Members of the Trimble Family gather for Patrick Trimble's baptism at St Peter's Eaglehawk



Induction of Anthony Stones

Friday, 7 December at Rochester

Bishop Matt visiting South East Bendigo

Sunday, 9 December

Senior Staff

Tuesday, 11 December in Charlton

Bishop Matt visiting Woodend

Sunday, 16 December

Registry Office closes

Friday, 21 December

Christmas Day

Tuesday, 25 December

Registry Office re-opens

Wednesday, 2 January 2019



Steve Geyer



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Paraphrase, Matthew 25:37-40



Photo: Julia Loersch/Act for Peace

In Matthew 25, King Jesus says 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Serving those in dire humanitarian need are received as gifts to the Saviour King himself.

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