



Anglican Diocese
of Bendigo

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Ordained: Newly ordained deacons Katy Lambert, Ma Thae Bleh Dah Moo, Jacob Kelly and Andy Ellis

New ministries begin following recent ordinations

Sarah Crutch

Four newly ordained deacons have commenced their ministries across the diocese, each bringing their own unique gifts and energy to their new appointments.

Katy Lambert was ordained a deacon in November 2021, and has taken up an appointment as Curate in the Parishes of Pyramid Hill-Boort, Charlton-Donald and St Arnaud alongside the Rev'd Judi Bird. This new shared ministry covers a significant geographical region, however with cooperation and planning the parishes will each be well cared for. Katy's ordination was a wonderful celebration

with those who have journeyed with her, both in Australia and in the UK, joining in the live stream of the service. A highlight was the puppet show led by Archdeacon George, which featured a bishop, a dean and a second Katy!

Jacob Kelly, Andy Ellis and Ma Thae Bleh Dah Moo were ordained deacons in February 2022, with the service recognising the diversity of ministry in the diocese. With the ordination of Ma Thae, who is part of the Karen community based at the Cathedral, the service was translated into Karen and featured a wonderful performance from the Karen Choir. Interspersed with the usual ordination service was a kid's talk

led by Bishop Matt, with the kids all watching eagerly when hands were laid on the candidates as they were ordained.

Jacob Kelly has been a student minister in the diocese based in Echuca for around three years, but has now moved to the Parish of Kyabram with his wife and six month old son to begin in his first parish based role. **Andy Ellis** began his new ministry as the Youth and Families Minister at South East Bendigo in November, and will continue in this ministry now as a deacon. Andy is so far enjoying his new role at South East Bendigo along with his wife MaryAnn and two young children. **Ma Thae's** life in ministry is shared on page 3.....*Photos pages 6-7*

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The Bishop writes

Dear Friends,

As we move through Lent and prepare to celebrate Easter once more, we do so with a sense of weariness and heaviness. But there is something that we must remember throughout: God is the God of the upside-down kingdom. And this is very exciting!

There is no shortage of ways to be disheartened as we think about the church. Especially when we consider the church in western lands. It seems that wherever we look there is a chronicle of the decline of Christianity. Commentators either bemoan or celebrate empty churches, but they do agree that the churches seem empty. Ground is lost, and it is difficult to imagine how it could be recovered.

There are numerous reasons why we may feel this way. But one is the growing perception that the Church at large no longer has a significant place within the heart of western public life. Rarely are Christian leaders, let alone representatives of any church, asked for comment on social or political matters. Further, many of those who do lead or make comment, forcefully deny the right to a Christian opinion in public affairs. This is a clear reminder that as a church we have lost the respect of many, and declining influence has followed. To be honest, this really should not surprise us. Having lived through the awful revelations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, we can understand there are many aspects of church life that undermine our moral authority. However, it is not simply respect and influence that have changed, these speak to our lost power and prestige.

So where is the encouragement and cause for hope? It lays in the character of God, who is the God of an upside-down kingdom. Throughout scripture we can see that God has a heart for those who are weak and downtrodden. This transcends a mere preference for weakness against strength: it is a settled desire to see those who are set aside in this world



rise in God's kingdom. The usual way of the world is that the strong, wealthy, clever and well connected prevail. The consistent story of scripture is that the powerful are brought low, and the weak and surprising are lifted up. Indeed, this can be found in the Babel events, which bracket the Bible. The attempt to build the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) can be read as an exertion of human power and control over dependence on God. The consequence is a clear dispersal of the strong, who wished to build their own name. The final two chapters of Revelation see this dispersal reversed as the many different types of people (and their languages) are brought into a city God has made. The effects of self-exertion are rolled back as the riches of the earth add to the beauty of God's land. In-between the two brackets we see God giving grace and strength to those who lay their weakness before him, and those who seek to make a name for themselves consistently denied.

In this sense, the kingdom that God is intent on bringing is an upside-down kingdom. It does not conform to the usual pattern where the strong rise and then dominate the weak. Rather, the one who is strong provides the ready foundation upon which all may build. It also means that each of us who build on this foundation are recruited and enabled by God to lift up those who possess only slight strength. Finally, it forces us to accept the assistance of those whom God has provided to give us aid.

In many ways, we have, as a body of western Christians, become accustomed to acting as the strong amongst the world. We have too easily fallen for the illusion that we have a name that must be exerted. So, losing apparent power and prestige is a helpful and healthful correction. If the heart of our worry is that we can no longer command respect, then it is to our benefit that we should be forced back on God's enabling hand. Losing power and prestige – how exciting!

So, the task is to discover new ways to live in God's upside-down kingdom: where we are not self-sufficient but dwell with the surprising sustenance that comes from a God determined to lift up those who build on him. The answers are not always easy, either to digest or implement. But they are good.

And the missing generations? In the west, a curious thing has occurred. The many, who make up the cohort of missing ones, actually find the Christians they know to be kind, loving and praiseworthy people. We Christians are usually attractive when taken one by one. It is the whole lot of us, when acting as a group, that can be hard to stomach. I wonder what would happen if our corporate life reflected more closely the things that are attractive about our personal faith?

This is a small excerpt of a new book I have written 'God is Enough: The Alpha and Omega of Church' which is available through Broughton Publishing.

Your servant in Christ,

tlatt

A life in ministry leads to ordination: the story of Ma Thae

Contributed by Ma Thae Bleh Dah Moo

Ma Thae Bleh Dah Moo's ordination in February 2022 is the culmination of a significant life dedicated to ministry.

Ma Thae is the father of Baw Mu Htoo Bleh Dah Moo, who serves as a Karen Community Worker based at St Paul's Cathedral. Ma Thae will minister to the Karen community alongside Baw Mu Htoo as they seek to welcome, support and strengthen their lives in Bendigo.

Ma Thae provided this biography as part of his ordination discernment panel which has been translated by Baw Mu Htoo Bleh Dah Moo:

On 1 June 1965, I went to St Peter Theology school for three years. After I finished Theology school the bishop asked me to do ministry in a village as a catechist, I attended ministry there for five years. After that Bishop Gregory asked me to move to Tee Ger Haw to minister there.

I started my ministry at Tee Ger Haw village in 1974. There was only one Christian family in the village but the kids of that family were not yet baptised as Christians. They provided a house for myself and my family and on Sundays we would worship along with the Christian couple. I ministered for one year. After that, the kids of the Christian couple became baptised as Christians and that same year we built a wooden church and we worshipped in the church every Sunday. There were three services; morning prayer, afternoon prayer and evening prayer.

March 1980, we lived in Tee Ger Haw village for six years and Bishop Kyaw Mya asked me to go to Mae Ter Ray (Maw Per Koh) and look after a church there. The congregation grew and there were more than 100 people. I built a double-story house because there was no church there yet. My family stayed on the first floor while we would worship upstairs on Sundays. We worshipped there for seven months and then we built a church. We worshipped in the church and because of the number growth in the congregation members, we organised a Sunday school, Youth group and Mothers Union. Every Sunday morning at 7am we would have morning prayer but occasionally we would have holy communion. At 10am there was Sunday school, at Afternoon Prayer we would have Mothers Union and during the Evening Prayer at 2pm there was a youth gathering.



Ordained: Ma Thae Bleh Dah Moo will continue to minister among the Karen people

In January 1984, it was my fifth year living there. Due to the Burmese military attacking our village, I fled to Thailand, Show Kio camp. Due to a growth of congregation members, we built a big church and during the morning service we would have approximately 400 people attending the Holy Communion service. At 7am we would have Morning Prayer or Holy Communion, at 10am we would have Sunday School and the older kids in the Sunday School would have confirmation lessons. At 11am we would have Mothers Union and an Afternoon Prayer, at 2pm we would have a youth gathering. If there was no Holy Communion on Sunday morning, I would have to lead the Morning Prayer and do the preaching, as well as lead the 5pm Evening Prayer along with a reflection. I lived in Show Kio camp for ten years. In December 1994, DKBA was formed and they fired and attacked the camp and burnt down our houses so we had to move to Mae La camp.

At that same year, in 1994, I had to look after a ministry in Oo Thu Kio village. When I first arrived in the village, there was only five Christian families and no church. So, we worshipped and gathered in a house. In 1996, we built a wooden church and we worshipped inside it every Sunday. We also had a morning prayer, afternoon prayer and evening prayer with Sunday school kids, Youth and Mothers Union. I also gave the

bigger kids in Sunday School confirmation lessons, we had a Holy Communion once a month which was led by a parish priest. If there was no Holy Communion, I would preach during the morning prayer. In July 2009, I came and settled into Australia. I studied English for three and a half years. In 2014, I went back to Thailand, Oo Thu Kio and built a new church together with the church members. When I lived in Werribee, we gathered all fathers on Wednesday at 6pm to worship at each church members' house. I led the group in reading, praying and preaching. On Sunday at church, I would do the reading, do the prayer and chalice assist.

In 2019, I moved to Bendigo. On Sundays, I would volunteer to do the reading, be a chalice assistant and do the prayers. During home fellowships at each congregation members' homes, I would volunteer to do the prayers and the reflection.

In the future, I would like to continue to volunteer at the services as well as ministry amongst the Karen congregation within the Cathedral's community, and also minister and do home visiting on Saturday and Sunday evenings. Also, I would like to encourage fellow Christian members to come to church and provide them with bible study, creed lessons, confirmation lessons, holy communion lessons and other information that every Anglican Christian should know.



Helping hands: The dedicated team sharing lunch

Karen community space refreshed and ready for ministry

Peter Dyke

The Karen Ministry space in St Paul's Cathedral has been refreshed and ready for the new year as a dedicated meeting space for the Karen community.

In partnership with the Diocese of Bendigo, some rooms were set aside in the halls at the Cathedral for the Revd Baw Mu Htoo Bleh Dah Moo and his team. However, the rooms were needing care and attention, cleaning and re-painting. Under the leadership of Doh Do, a local painter and decorator, the team spent many Saturdays preparing surfaces and painting.

Our picture shows the team with Revd Baw Mu Htoo standing centre and Doh Do kneeling centre. A freshly prepared delicious lunch was supplied by members of the Karen Mothers' Union



at the Cathedral, which was shared with painters and helpers.

In the picture are two paint-spattered helpers – Dean Elizabeth and Chaplain Peter. A big thank you to the MU members: Ree Htoo, Tha Daw and Surina. The final clean-up was done by another MU member Mo Lo.

The Karen Ministry includes a soccer team We are Brothers, homework club, weekly worship in the Cathedral as well as pastoral and social care and sharing in family celebrations. The ministry will expand to include more regular homework clubs, bible study groups, English classes, music and singing groups, social spaces and office space.

**PLEASE REPORT ABUSE
CALL 1800 135 246**

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

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

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

You can contact Kooyoora Ltd by calling 1800 135 246
For further information: www.kooyoora.org.au

Feet on the street in the CBD

Fiona Preston & Andrew Howe



MINISTREE BENDIGO

Grown out of a mutual passion to offer pastoral care beyond the conventional walls of the church, we (Revd Andrew Howe and Revd Fiona Preston) have begun to put our feet on the street in the CBD of Bendigo.

MinisTree Bendigo offers dignity, respect, and a listening presence to vulnerable people on the streets of Bendigo. MinisTree Bendigo has a specific focus towards people sleeping rough and the small businesses within the area who have unique insights and experiences with this vulnerable community.

Three days a week you will find us heading out from our offices on 8 Myers Street, into the nearby public places where, following God's leading, we are slowly building trusting relationships with the many sleeping rough. These members of our community often sleep in doorways, tents, cars, carparks, or in squats and for complex reasons and circumstances, and the critical shortage of affordable housing, mean that some of these individuals have been sleeping



rough for years. Please read the stories that share of the types of people we encounter every day.

Please pray for these our brothers and sisters who are sleeping rough in Bendigo and for the organisations that work with this complex community. Please pray for MinisTree Bendigo as we endeavour to walk Christ-like with this community and build ongoing trusting relationships.

MinisTree Bendigo

Andrew and Fiona will contribute to *The Spirit* regularly to update you on stories and the other activities MinisTree Bendigo is running.

Please contact us via www.ministreebendigo.org.au

Sleeping on the street

Until recently V* had been sleeping in a specific doorway for 5 months and Andrew would visit him regularly. Getting to know him, checking to see if he was ok, helping him clean his area and talking to him about Christ's love were regular activities. V* was under community pressure to move on from his location but was reluctant to move because of the access to local support and networks he had built up around him. A few weeks ago, we went to visit V* only to find he had been 'moved on' from his location and all his belongings were gone. We have recently seen V* walking the streets but it has been a slow process to re-establish the link we had before when visiting his doorway home was easy. Sadly, we can't check in on V* as we don't know where he is now sleeping, though he says he sleeps in a carpark. V* has complex mental and emotional needs and will always find it hard to gain secure housing. Will he always be subject to living on the street?

*Not their real name

A daily experience

N* arrived in Bendigo before Christmas and told Fiona she had been on the street for 8 years. N* would only open up to Fiona as woman-to-woman because of the years of abuse she had experienced. One day, when Fiona was sitting on the pavement with N* in the CBD a shop owner approached. At first he tried to explain that N* was a nuisance to his business and needed to move on however after becoming agitated he proceeded to yell at N* and Fiona until security intervened. This encounter, while terribly upsetting, opened the window for Fiona to see and experience the hostility rough sleepers endure on a regular basis. It is difficult for passers by to see individuals like N* as equals and to know how to help.



Ordination Celebrations...





Radio reaches out

Tracey Wolsley

Through the COVID lockdowns we commenced a relationship with LIFE FM 105.1 Christian radio in Bendigo where I presented an on-air church service. We had people listening to the service in Melbourne, in places across regional Victoria, and as far away as Brisbane.

Though in-person services could recommence, we kept our radio time slot. A growing number of people in Bendigo and beyond, Anglicans and people from other churches, and people with no church connection, were tuning in. We realised we were creating another congregation - a 'congregation beyond the walls'.

We have changed our radio slot to an hour program entitled 'Traditional Hymns of Praise'. During the programme Peter Stanton and Bishop Ron tell the stories behind each hymns and then the hymn is played. People are finding it quite inspirational.

The program is introduced as 'an outreach and part of the mission of St Mary's Church' and has been very effective. The audience is growing and the program now goes to air twice a Sunday. During the many lockdowns, it became 'church' for people of many denominations.

The COVID experience has shown us we need to engage with modern technology, not only when church attendance is restricted, but because there are many people who cannot, or do not, attend gathered worship for various reasons. For example, those in aged care, those suffering from social anxiety or mental health issues, those who are physically isolated, or those seeking to find faith in God but who do not know how to start, or aren't ready to walk through the church door.

We want to provide 'church' and be 'church' for all such people. We want everyone to feel a sense of belonging. We want everyone to know the Good News of the Gospel that God is love, and that they are of immeasurable worth to the One who sees them and loves them. These are the people we want to reach and to be part of another congregation of St Mary's - a wider 'congregation beyond the walls'.

Book Review: Neither Bomb Nor Bullet

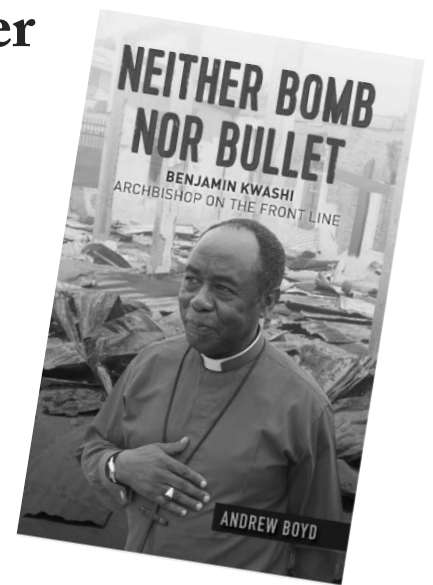
Simba Musvamhiri

Neither Bomb Nor Bullet: Benjamin Kwashi: Archbishop on the front line tells the story of Benjamin Kwashi's vibrant life and faith. With twists and turns, you are taken down Kwashi's memory lane as he recounts his upbringing, military career, hearing the gospel shared by a fellow military officer, heeding God's call to ministry, family, ordination and ministry across the world. Every now and then, you will be angered, you will be shocked, and at times you will smile as you read some dry wit from the archbishop. This is an easy (though at times graphically violent) read filled with truth and humour.

The book's title couldn't be truer. Kwashi is the Anglican Archbishop of Jos, which is in Plateau State, Nigeria. Archbishop Kwashi starts with a Nigerian geopolitical precis, giving also his sceptical analysis of British imperialism. Jos sits in the centre of Nigeria and suffers religious and tribal armed conflicts. Peace and security are a big issue. The rise of radical extremist Islamic fundamentalism is a daily threat to ordinary citizens and the spread of the gospel.

The Archbishop tells stories of how many communities, face brutal violence and destruction daily from, the Boko Haram insurgency and their proxy fighters, the Fulani Militants. The Fulani militants, formerly known for cattle rustling, now use very violent tactics on civilians and own sophisticated military hardware. Both Boko Haram and the Fulani militants have now pledged an alliance to Islamic State. The Nigerian government often sends in troops to quell violence, but the militants are always well prepared to fight, or they simply make a tactical withdrawal and come back at the right time to attack. It is in this dangerous environment that the Archbishop, his family, and all those that serve with him, rely on God for protection and boldness to share the gospel. The book tells a story of someone experienced in rural and urban churches.

The archbishop on the frontline, faces diverse challenges as he bears witness



to Jesus. Kwashi is ready to die for the gospel. Kwashi says, "Three times they have tried to kill me. They have come close. But each time just makes me more determined to live my life to the full for Jesus." He recalls one particular attack at his house at night when militant men in balaclavas took him to his bedroom to kill him. He was so sure he was going to die but he asked for one last chance to pray before they killed him. Kwashi read Psalm 23 and started praying while lying down on his stomach. The next thing he remembered is his son saying, "Dad, they're gone."

Archbishop Kwashi is ready to forgive those causing havoc and persecuting his family because Jesus expects Christians to do that. He speaks truth to power. His phone has been tapped several times by security agents. He recounts how he publicly confronted the president for not protecting citizens from terrorists. He is a justice and peace advocate, reaching out to Imams and mosque leaders to create peace. Kwashi is raising an army of evangelists who are planting churches, sharing the gospel in the midst of suffering. Kwashi is a radical gospel-centred Bishop whose story will move you to reconsider how to genuinely follow Jesus and share his precious message.

The book is divided into three parts and ends with heart-warming appendices - a challenge to fellow Nigerians living in the diaspora to not feel comfortable in their mono-cultural churches but to be missionaries in the culture they live in. He also makes a bold gospel appeal to a lost world and to a successful young Charles (his imaginary young friend).



From NT to Victoria: Phil and Leeanne Zamagias served in the Northern Territory amongst indigenous communities before moving to lead the people of Christ Church Echuca in Victoria.

Why would you move to Victoria in the middle of a pandemic?

Phil Zamagias

Such was the incredulity of our friends basking in the tropical delights of the Northern Territory when we announced we were pulling up stumps and heading south. Indeed, many of our new friends here have asked the same question.

To say it was an interesting start to our new ministry at Christ Church Echuca would be an understatement. From our awkward journey south in the middle of border closures to the vagaries of negotiating the policies of four state governments, we sometimes didn't know which way was up!

Thankfully, developments in technology meant that despite not being able to have my induction surrounded by family, friends and colleagues, Bishop Matt and I had a lovely Zoom meeting to take care of formalities.

It was a roller-coaster of emotions since then as we lurched from lockdown to being let out and back into lockdown again as every Victorian knows only too well. I had few opportunities to conduct in-person services but the parish had embraced Zoom church and online Bible study groups.

Leeanne and I were getting to know parishioners by holding virtual morning/afternoon teas via Zoom. They turned out to be a pleasant way to meet people as we can see their faces without masks!

We're delighted to be settling in to Echuca and Moama and look forward to exploring the towns around us. For now, we feel that our priority is to facilitate a measured approach to reviving the church's Vision2030.

From our early days as missionaries in Arnhem Land, we have been drawn to regional ministry. We hope that, under God, we can make a useful contribution to the life and witness of the church here and in the broader context of the diocese.

Leeanne was the Registrar of the Diocese of the Northern Territory before we moved and has now set up a consultancy business helping organisations to stay up-to-date with compliance, strategy and management issues. She serves on a number of boards including Anglican Insurance and Risk Services (AIRS) and the Anglican Long Service Leave Board.

Leeanne and I have two married sons in Adelaide. Tim is married to Kristen and they have two daughters, Madelyn (3)



Welcome: Phil & Leeanne Zamagias

and Amelia (1). Alex is married to Esther and they have a son, Callum (almost 2) and another child born in October. Both families are actively involved in leadership of their church.

When not exploring new places, we enjoy theatre, movies, going for walks and eating out. We have started exploring the fabulous eateries around Echuca and Moama. I also have a flight simulator in which I can pretend to go on holidays while keeping my proficiency as a pilot up. We look forward to meeting our colleagues throughout the diocese and covet your prayers as we settle in.

Prayer for Lent

Peter Dyke

Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; Keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul.

Our prayer is set for the Second Sunday in Lent in the Book of Common Prayer. The prayer is worthy of repeating throughout Lent to remind us and keep us focused on the spiritual battle that we face daily. Our prayer was one collected by Archbishop Cranmer from the Gregorian Sacramentary by way of the Sarum Rite. It reflects not only the troubled times in Europe in the sixth century and in the Reformation times but also the troubled times that we see now in Eastern Europe, in the health issues in our own nation and in the disrupted thoughts of our own hearts.

The opening words are stark. We have no power that comes from within ourselves to help or save us. The statement destroys the lie that we are self-sufficient. Look back for a moment on your life's story including the devices and desires of your own heart and you will see how easily we sink into ourselves. Our culture tells us to be self-sufficient so we choose to be God-dependant. We petition the God who is outside of us to face and keep us – both outside (as in Psalm 91) and inside (as in Psalm 32). "Hold me, grasp me, claim me, do not let me slip through your fingers" we plead. Not only for our physical safety but also our emotional and spiritual safety.

Then, we declare God's defence, God's safekeeping over our lives. The next few words focus on our own thoughts especially our temptations. The inner life is more important and significant than our outward experience because it's more lasting and more impactful. You can appear strong but know that you are hiding in a brittle shell. You can appear beautiful but believe that you are contemptible and worthless.

This prayer assures us of God's loving-kindness that is so strong it penetrates into our deepest and darkest places. This prayer sets limitless hope upon the sure and steadfast hold of God.

Never give up meeting together

Edward Barkla

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- Hebrews 10: 24-25

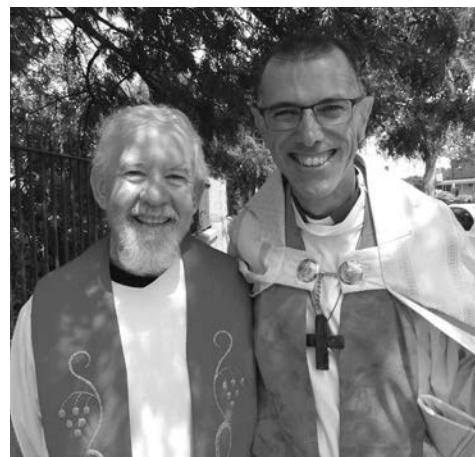
Maree and I have been away for four weeks with our family in Adelaide. I rode solo covering about 1,400 kilometres making an occasional contact with other riders, one which was a Christian and we shared the good news of the Gospel. I also had opportunity to pray for a lady with a bee sting just under her eye; God is good.

This morning was my first Saturday morning back in Bendigo and the chance to re-engage with the cycling community. On the first Saturday of the month I take up a voluntary gold coin donation for pastoral needs. I wait at the start of the rides to collect donations as freely given by the riders, until the last bunch leaves so I get to see and share with many.

When it was the last bunch, we left for the ride route which was going to be longer than I wanted because I like to meet with as many of the riding bunches at the coffee shops afterwards - it gives another opportunity to share in what has been happening and allow for the collection to freely continue.

As we climbed the first hill, I could see ahead another bunch I sometime ride with. By the time we reached the crest of the hill the bunch ahead was out of sight and my thought of joining them as they were riding a shorter timelier route, was not a reality. I rode solo back into town after leaving the bunch I started with. After a while I could see a large fast bunch coming around a corner just ahead of me. Despite my best efforts to make contact with the back of the bunch they were too fast and the gap was too much for me to bridge alone.

A bit further up the road, I caught up with two ladies on their own and gave them a free sit and draft tow for another four kilometres before leaving them on my return back to the coffee shops. As I was pushing into a



Cycling pals: Edward with Bishop Matt

stiff cross head wind, I could see another bunch ahead of me and changed up a few gears and dug deep into my reserves hoping to catch them. A red-light change separated me from making contact with this bunch.

On my way home I felt encouraged to share this experience in the context of our worship fellowship in the Lord, His body the Church and the isolation we have been having.

In Adelaide despite reading the word of God and praying each day and having no doubt of God's presence and leading of His Spirit, there was still that sense of isolation and lack of connection with the local riders in fellowship.

This morning, not being able to make contact with the three bunches again, I could sense the isolation and desire for fellowship was strong and how many might feel this in the Church, not knowing whether they can hang on. What was the hope of catching up with these bunches? Being able to get shelter from the wind (the opposition we cannot see), to be connected with others going the same way (place of refreshment), to allow their strength and unity to enfold me and carry me along, despite my lack of strength to catch up with them alone.

Our Church fellowship is very much the same, when we meet together, we worship in unity of faith, not knowing where others might be at, but accepting and enfolding them in the love of the Lord. As a Church we can look out for others that might be struggling and uphold them and encourage them in the faith of Christ our redeemer and our deliverance our refuge, our strength, bringing others back into the fellowship.

Looking forward to seeing you on the road soon God willing.

Youth and Families Ministry

A word from George...

When I worked in a bookstore there was a connected series of readers called Aussie Nibbles, Aussie Bites and Aussie Chomps.

The fun thing about them was that you could tell which series a particular title belonged to by the size of the bite that had been taken out of the book!

This page of *The Spirit* will look at a particular theme or part of the bible and give you some suggestions of how you might take a nibble, a bite or a chomp into it with your family.

These ideas can be used at home for family time, for Sunday School or an activity to do with the grandkids when they come up to visit.

Archdeacon George is the Children's, Youth and Families Ministry Development Officer for the Diocese, a position partly supported by Bush Church Aid.



bca
bush church aid



Going the distance

Symbols of Easter

Easter is a highlight of our Christian calendar. The story of Jesus' death and resurrection is not only an epic tale from the past but has real impact on our lives today. Christian symbols are a great entry point to understanding this life-changing story about death and new life. Here are some ways you and your family can explore what Jesus' death and resurrection means:



Nibbles

Eggs and crosses are both symbols of Easter. Eggs represent new life, think of a baby chick hatching and seeing the world for the first time. When Jesus rose again, he showed everyone that there is a new way of seeing the world. One where God can transform anything, even death. The cross reminds us of Jesus' death as well as his resurrection. It reminds us of the darkness in the world and of how God took away the darkness by resurrecting His son, the light of the world.

Rather than being limited to hot cross buns and chocolate eggs, why not during Lent serve your carrot sticks as crosses. Or use a spoon to make egg shaped balls of watermelon or sticky rice?



Bites

Holy Week starts at Palm Sunday and goes through until Easter Sunday. Have a family meeting and plan for what you will do that week in your home. For example: decorate your front door with palms, take turns re-telling in your own words the Easter story, watch some Holy Week youtube videos, fast for that week from something you enjoy (technology, particular food ...), make some Easter baskets to deliver to neighbours or friends, light a candle & pray together each day (the September issue of *The Spirit* for ideas on Prayer).



The Easter story depicts moments of great darkness which are in the end overcome by 'the light of the world'. At an age-appropriate level for your children, make space for a conversation about dark and light in the world, in your community or in your own hearts. Children and young-people typically respond well when adults are age-appropriately honest and authentic with them about feelings, events or experiences. Read the story of Jesus' death and resurrection together and notice how it moves through darkness into light. (Luke 19:28-40, 22:1 – 24:12) Notice how God is present in the different people who come alongside Jesus. How might you as a family be beacons of light in your communities this Easter?

Gulliver the GutterVac's travels!

Archdeacon George Hemmings

Introducing Gulliver the GutterVac! Cleaning gutters is an important part of our annual maintenance and is required of all parish buildings. As an added incentive, our insurers offer a significant excess reduction for any claims relating to storm or water damage if we can demonstrate that a regular gutter cleaning program is in place.

With the support of AIRS (our insurer) the diocese has purchased an industrial gutter cleaning vacuum. It easily reaches the highest of gutters without needing to take your feet off the ground (and thanks to a camera system you can see what's going on).

Now that Archdeacon George has finished testing (and playing with) the system on the Registry, he is putting a short training guide together. Soon Gulliver the GutterVac will be able to be used by parishes to clean the gutters of their parish buildings. AIRS constantly remind us that cleaning our gutters is one of the simplest things we can do to reduce the risk of damage to our properties, and now we have the tool to do it!

We hope that Gulliver the GutterVac gets to travel around to all the parishes across our diocese for a visit to clean your gutters!



The Spirit

Monthly news magazine
of the Anglican Diocese
of Bendigo

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Contributions are welcome, and will
be edited. Email contributions are
preferred. Anonymous articles will not
be considered for publication.

Photographs should be sent in
digital form to the general email
address above. Full size, 'raw' files
are necessary. Physical photos are
normally not returned.

The Anglican Diocese of Bendigo
and the Editor are not responsible for
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policy of the diocese.

May issue: Contributions due by 15
April 2022.

ESTATE PLANNING & WILLS INFORMATION SESSION

With guest presenter, Russell Robertson of O'Farrell Robertson McMahon Lawyers, this information session will cover estate and inheritance planning, wills, probate and gifting. Russell will answer your questions to help prepare you for future transitions.

Tuesday 29 March 2022, registration from 10.00am, start at 10.30am

BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL BEFORE 18 March 2022

RSVP NOW to Mary Croxford on 03 9412 6006 (Tuesday - Friday)
or email eps@anglicarevic.org.au. Morning tea will be provided.

This event will be held in accordance with COVID-safe requirements at the time and if necessary, may change to an online Zoom event.



**FREE Bendigo Bank Theatre,
The Capital, Bendigo**

