



Anglican Diocese
of Bendigo

The Spirit

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Easter story: Andrew Howe as Jesus and Peter Dyke as Pilate in the Way of the Cross performance

Way of the Cross performance tells Easter story to Bendigo

Cindy Bell

The Way of the Cross performance was such a wonderful production to be a part of! Forty actors, representing many of the different churches in Bendigo, met regularly for over two months to rehearse the Way of the Cross performance as part of the Bendigo Easter Fair.

We came with a common goal to see the true meaning of Easter - Jesus' trial, death and resurrection - portrayed to the city of Bendigo. Most performers had never acted before - and certainly not in front of such a huge crowd! There were many hours of memorizing lines, sewing costumes and building sets.

All the behind the scenes organisation proved to be worth it as we witnessed the forecourt of the Capital Theatre come alive with amazing lighting and quality sound that brought the story of Jesus to the crowd that overflowed View Street. A huge success all round.

Reflection by Collin Flitton:

I had the honour of playing the role of John the Disciple. Being involved in this role was one of the most awesome and surreal things that I have done as a Christian - even thinking about the event as I write this brings back the emotions that I experienced on the day.

There was the responsibility of sharing the gospel message to the 2000 strong crowd. There was the realisation of what an awesome God we have that sent his Son to die in our place. There was also the privilege of working with the cast and crew that were committed to bringing this powerful play to fruition.

I trust and pray that this will go on in coming years as it really brings home the true meaning of Easter and the statement of John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life".

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The Bishop writes

Dear Friends,

I am writing this the day before my first plane trip in a couple of years. It has been funny to think that an activity which had been relatively common in my life has become something of a novelty. One of the odd things which has struck me is the waiting which air travel entails. The transport across vast distances is rapid, but it is punctuated by some long (and usually tedious) pauses.

I imagine that the first disciples had a few of these 'waiting' experiences in those tumultuous days through which the early church was formed. There were periods of rapid and intense action, yet they occurred following days of nervous or uncertain waiting.

We are accustomed in church life to 'wait' through the weeks of Lent, and in the days of Good Friday and Easter Eve, before jumping to the celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter Day. It is good for us to pause and sit with brokenness so that we can more fully appreciate what new life means.

Yet it strikes me that the first disciples experienced two intense times of waiting following Jesus' resurrection. The first was that anxious period between the Resurrection and Jesus' ascension. The second was a seemingly less anxious, but by no means unclouded time between Jesus' departure and the Spirit's arrival at Pentecost.

Did you notice the difference between our waiting in preparation for Easter and their waiting as Jesus departed physically and the Spirit came? We initiate a time of waiting because we know the end of the story and miss what we need to learn by the beginning and middle. The disciples had to wait because circumstances forced them to. The time was not ripe for the next step, and God was working behind the scenes to prepare the next part of his plan.



In a small way, my anticipation of waiting in the airport is like this. I suspect that you also can think of times where circumstance of preparedness has forced you into an unwanted pause. I wonder whether this anxious period for the disciples (and God's resolution in the arrival of the Spirit at Pentecost) provides some hints as to how we navigate those times when a wait is imposed on us.

We can learn from what the disciples did do. They intentionally gathered and prayed and talked about God's plan. There were many things which circumstances and timeliness ruled out. I am sure that the disciples would have wished to do more, but what they could do they did... and I expect that prayer and discussion of God's great purposes were what was needed at that time.

We can also learn from what God did. I guess that the disciples felt that they were left drifting in the breeze, uncertain of their next step. Yet, behind the scenes God was active preparing the way for the one who would enable the next part of God's mission which was no longer tethered to one place. The Comforter and Counsellor would come to empower those anxious and frightened ones with

God's very presence. God was at work preparing good things even when the disciples did not see it happening.

Finally, we can learn from the shape of the waiting. Jesus accomplished all that was required for the fullness of God's Kingdom to flourish through his death and resurrection. Yet, this fullness was held like a seed waiting to burst forth into full fruit. The Spirit's presence enabled the disciples to become part of the growth of this Kingdom, but it foreshadows and waits in turn for the full flourishing to be expressed. So even as the disciples found that their anxious waiting ended when the Spirit came at Pentecost, they were participating in another, longer story. One that they share with us as we enjoy the effects of Jesus' work and yearn for its full expression. So, we wait, but not in frustration and with a sense of wasted time, but in the same way that a concertgoer feels the rising swell of the music and is torn by a sense of immersion in the moment and anticipation of the resolution.

As we begin to begin again with a more usual life. As we celebrate Jesus' ascension and Pentecost. As we navigate ordinary tedium and anxious moments, I pray that we will find that throughout God unstoppable activity brings life out of the waiting.

Your servant in Christ,

tlatt



Blessing: Phil Zamagias offered a blessing for the new bridge. Photo courtesy of the Riverine Herald

Blessings for new Echuca Moama bridge

Phil Zamagias

After decades of waiting and hoping, the Echuca and Moama communities have a new bridge to further enhance their social and economic ties.

Thousands of people turned out on Sunday afternoon 10 April, for an opportunity to walk over the new bridge before it was officially opened to traffic.

A flotilla of paddle steamers and watercraft of all kinds made for a carnival atmosphere on the water while, in the air, a pair of biplanes enthralled the crowd with their antics.

As part of the community celebrations, the Revd Phil Zamagias from Christ Church Echuca was present to offer a prayer and blessing.

Standing on the bow of the historic paddle steamer 'Amphibious', Phil offered

the prayers and symbolically threw a small wooden cross into the water under the bridge.

Reporter, Bransen Gibson, from the Riverine Herald was on board to capture the occasion including this wonderful photo of Phil (above).

Being Palm Sunday, Phil went armed with palm crosses to give to the people aboard the boat. They were well-received and made for some interesting conversations about the memories people had of years gone by.

It's been a big year already for our church communities as the Moama and Echuca churches formed a new ministry partnership across the border. Thankfully now the new bridge makes it even easier (and quicker) to travel between the two border towns.

God at the Movies - for Lent

Fay Magee

The Trentham congregation resumed their Lenten discussion group this year with Charles and Peta Sherlock offering hospitality with a movie and light meal afterwards. With a capacity for 10 persons (always booked out) there was potential for great swapping of thoughts, learning snippets of people's stories, discussing big ideas of life and faith. We all observed the benefit of, and enjoyed, the chance to eat and talk together.

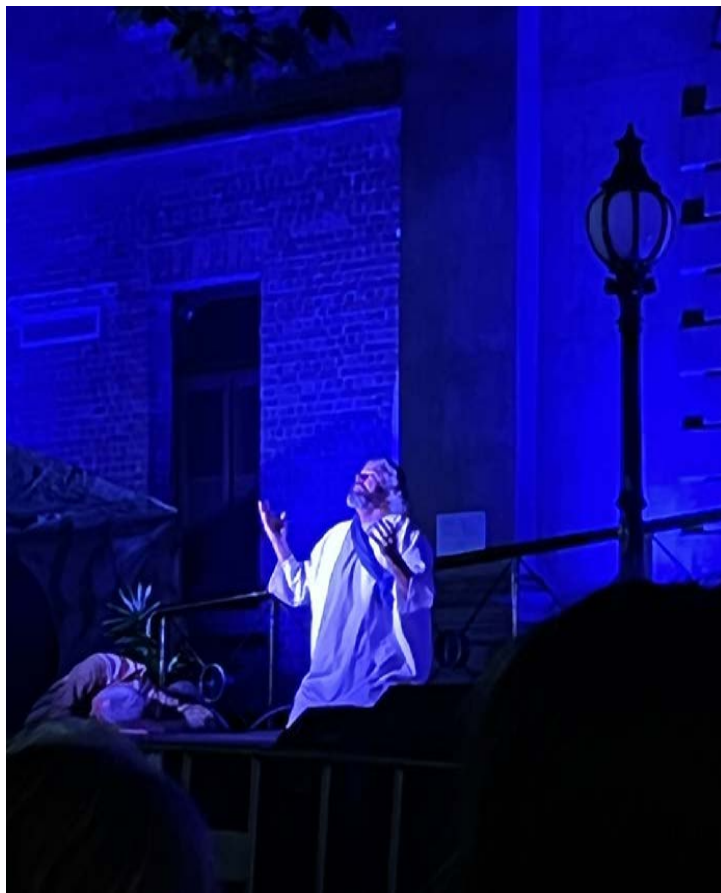
Over the six Mondays we watched films *Collateral Beauty*, *Up in the Air*, and *The Lady in the Van*, all intriguing in many different ways. The first two were particularly striking in seeing actors Will Smith and then George Clooney play roles one mightn't expect to see them in!

The other sessions featured three of Alan Bennett's *Talking Heads* monologues, *Bed Among the Lentils*, *A Cream Cracker under the Settee*, and *Playing Sandwiches*. There really is no escaping the mostly softly-delivered but hard-hitting issues of these stories.

One of our group wrote:

Parishioners of St George's Trentham continued their tradition of meeting weekly during Lent to watch a well-chosen film and then talk about how it related to our Lenten journey together. We certainly saw some wonderfully thought-provoking films – Collateral Beauty (with Will Smith) and Up in the Air (George Clooney starring) were two that will not be easily forgotten. Several of Alan Bennett's 'Talking Heads' monologues were also included, some of them leaving us completely lost for words, close to tears. It was obvious that the films affected all of us in different ways, so discussion came easily. We closed the evening with a delicious veggie meal.

Way of the Cross





Easter around the Diocese

Palm Sunday in Bendigo highlights plight of refugees

Local churches and secular groups joined together to highlight the plight of refugees and asylum seekers looking for safety and a new start in Australia.

Around 100 people gathered in the gardens outside the library, with banners and palm branches. Dean Elizabeth introduced the speakers and orchestrated the activities. In addition to various speakers, there was an address from Bishop Matt, poetry from Ken Rookes, an open letter to sign to the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition, and badges for the children to make.

The Karen community at the Cathedral provided colour and joy, with their singing of 'We are the world' and two traditional dances: Bamboo Dance and Done Dance. During the presentation, the children built a wall of boxes "To keep Dean Elizabeth safe"; later dismantling it to create a table which they covered with a colourful cloth and laid bread on it. This was to signify the change of attitude and action we are looking for, from walls that divide us to a table of hospitality and welcome for all.

It was a beautiful occasion – join us next year on Palm Sunday to make your voice heard too.

- Dean Elizabeth



Palm Sunday at Eaglehawk

Palm Sunday was celebrated at St Peter's Eaglehawk by an enthusiastic congregation welcoming old and new friends who joined in worship.

On the way out after the service members were offered a small palm cross as a reminder of Jesus' death on their behalf. Outside they lined up for a photo around a line of palm branches attached to the railing at the entrance to the building.

This small public display is matched by the free community meal held weekly on Friday evenings and a future Alpha course to be held online.

- Barry Rainsford



Maryborough happenings...

The Parish of Maryborough has been a hive of activity lately.

Three members of Mothers Union Maryborough travelled to the Lady Day Service at St Paul's Cathedral to congratulate and support Hilary Hunt on receiving her scroll for 50 years of active service to Mothers Union.

The Easter Vigil at Christ the King Maryborough was held around the new fire pit (pictured top left). The Easter weekend also saw the parish host a pop-up op shop. The happy staff team are pictured (top right) with the shop well supported by locals and visitors.

- Heather Blackman



Book Review: *God is Enough* by Bishop Matt Brain

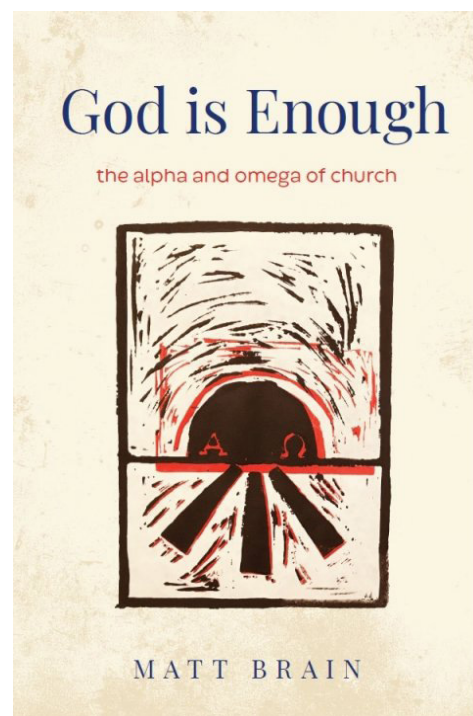
Suzannah Daniels

Don't let the formal sounding title of Bishop Matt's new book fool you. This is not a treatise full of Greek references. In fact, it is so relatable I found myself snorting and rolling my eyes at the word plays peppered throughout. For example, chapter four begins 'St Silas [by the Overpass] has always struggled with a sense of inferiority, especially since the overpass went in. It was easy to be overlooked.'

The first half of *God is Enough* tells the story of a fictional church, St Silas by the Overpass and four of its key members, Pal, Pam, Paul the lesser and Paul the

Piecing together the reality of the humdrum day-to-day with the majesty of God's kingdom. He does this by describing five great traps that can see churches become stuck and by then offering various modes of navigation. As well as answers from scripture, Anglican worship practices and Bishop Matt's personal reflection, importantly, it is the readers themselves who are also invited to take the wheel. The questions and note-taking pages at the end of each chapter are perfect for individual or small group engagement and offer opportunity for edification and mapping the future.

Available to purchase online
from Broughton Publishing



“Bishop Matt skillfully unpacks what church is all about. The pitfalls and the purpose. Piecing together the reality of the humdrum day-to-day with the majesty of God's kingdom.”

greater. The congregation are faithful, hard-working and well-meaning with highly relatable flaws and blind spots (I saw parts of myself in all of them).

Through the lens of St Silas, Bishop Matt skillfully unpacks what church is all about. The pitfalls and the purpose.

The second half of the book offers ten great reasons to be hopeful. They cover international and national perspectives on the Anglican church that even our longest-term saints may not be aware of. As well as encouraging descriptions of local initiatives and of course the very nature of God himself.

God is Enough is a timely offering which will empower you to start conversations at church, stir up a conviction that we are enough and recapture the confidence that God is always and forever enough.

God is Enough is an ideal resource for lay parish leaders, such as wardens and parish council members as well as clergy leading congregations.

God is Enough is available to purchase from Broughton Publishing. A discussion guide to aid small group conversation at a parish level is also accessible from the Broughton Publishing website.

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Launched: Charles Sherlock, Virginia McDonald, Bishop Matt Brain, Suzannah Daniels and Archbishop Philip Freier

Bishop's new book launched with lively panel discussion

Sarah Crutch

Bishop Matt's latest book, *God is Enough*, was celebrated at its launch at the end of March.

Charles Sherlock chaired a panel discussion which featured Virginia McDonald from the Parish of Eaglehawk, the Revd Suzannah Daniels and Archbishop Philip Freier.

The timeliness of the book was highlighted by Archbishop Philip, who saw the book as a significant resource for congregations in a time of anxiety, having endured significant COVID-19 lockdowns and the residual carrying effects that has had on people and parishes.

Suzannah Daniels emphasised the practicality of the book for local congregations, encouraging all parish council members and lay leaders to read *God is Enough* with its practical advice for day-to-day parish life. Suzannah was so inspired she built a lego diorama of the church and characters featured in the book!



Lego master: A lego diorama of the church and people featured in the book



Blessed: Simba Musvamhiri sprinkling water on a rider

Bikers blessed for safe travel at annual service at Tatura

Helen Musvamhiri

The third annual service to bless motorbike riders was held at All Saints Tatura on Sunday 3 April. The outdoor service was led by Revd Simba Musvamhiri and has grown significantly over the years to around 100 riders and their families from various bike clubs in Victoria. Independent riders were also in attendance and came from as far away as Torquay, Gippsland, Ballarat, Geelong and Melbourne.



Greater Shepparton City Council Deputy Mayor, Anthony Brophy opened the event with a Welcome to Country and lent his support to the annual event. Simba then opened the bible and shared Ezekiel's vision – a vivid description of a wheeled chariot, demonstrating that God loves both bikes and riders which connected well with the group. As in previous years, helmets were laid on the path and a moment of silence held for those who have passed away or suffered injury in the riding community before a prayer was offered to comfort those in grief or pain. Simba prayed a number of

prayers covering road safety and mental health needs and shared God's love for the riders. The service finished with a procession and ride past the church as Simba prayed and sprinkled consecrated holy water over each and every rider. A number of the riders requested additional prayers this year and Simba obliged by laying hands on their helmets and praying.

The All Saints crew served up a hot sausage sizzle whilst the ever-essential coffee was supplied by the local Fast Brew Coffee van. Prizes were generously

donated by Shepparton Motorcycles (AJ's) and the Northern Victoria Spyder Riders and were awarded at the end of the event.

It was a wonderful day that brought the riding community together, provided great connection with the local church, glorified God and has led to many follow up conversations and pastoral care opportunities with the riders. Simba has since met with the Northern Victoria Spyder Riders who enjoyed the service and we are excited to announce that they have once again committed to assisting with the logistics and planning for next years event.

We thank God for all who served and helped make the day a great success including the extensive media coverage that was provided before and after the event on the news, radio and in the newspaper. Finally, we thank God for the openness of the riders to the things of God and pray that they will reflect on the prayers that were said, the blessings given and take a step closer to knowing Jesus.

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.



Pentecost

On the first Sunday in June we will be celebrating Pentecost. It is a special day when we remember the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But Pentecost is not just an ancient story, stuck in the pages of Acts 2! Pentecost is about the ongoing life of the followers of Jesus. The Holy Spirit continues to move among us, equipping God's people to tell others about Jesus. Here are some ideas for how you could celebrate Pentecost at home and at church.



Nibbles

The colour for Pentecost is Red, reflecting the tongues of fire that symbolised the coming of the Holy Spirit. Turn up for church in your reddest outfit or spend the weekend wearing red and telling others why. You could offer to help decorate the church for Pentecost with red balloons, streamers or banners. Pentecost is often also considered the 'birthday' of the church and nothing says birthday like cake! You could even try a red-velvet cake. If it's warm enough, or even if it's not you could also make a Pentecost Sundae on Pentecost Sunday. (For those wondering that's ice-cream with strawberry topping).



Bites

At the first Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples it equipped them to tell others the good news about Jesus. The Holy Spirit still does that today, enabling God's people to carry on God's mission. Why not spend some time finding out who your church's link missionaries are, or if they don't have any directly, the different work that people who have been sent out by groups like CMS (Church Missionary Society) or BCA (Bush Church Aid Society) do. Both have prayer diaries and notes on their website. Maybe your family could 'adopt' a missionary family yourself!



Chomps

One of the other signs at the first Pentecost was a rushing wind, or at least the sound of rushing wind. This echoes the Old Testament, where the one word can be used to talk about wind and breath and spirit. As just one example remember Genesis where God breathed life into the first people. Can you think of, or find, other examples in the Bible? If you're able, stand outside and feel the wind on your face and watch as it moves the trees and stirs the air. These days it's probably not a good idea to go blowing on people's faces, but you could make a windmill or windchimes to hang at home to remind you of the Holy Spirit which stirs within us.



Guests: Peter Dyke with Bishop Peter Brain, Christine Brain and Elizabeth Dyke

Clergy Conference features Brain family

Bishop Peter Brain and his wife Christine, Bishop Matt's parents, were guest speakers at this years Clergy Conference held in Mildura.

It's the first time the clergy have been able to gather together in person since the pandemic. The sessions focused on "how do I start again when I feel so tired" to give clergy strategies to maintain energy despite the lingering tiredness felt from the two years of COVID disruptions.

The Spirit

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July issue: Contributions due by Friday 17 June.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED?

Very few of us have the time to think about how we wish to be remembered, how we choose to have our lives celebrated, or the legacy we will leave for future generations.

Planning to leave a Gift in our Will to a worthy organisation like Anglicare Victoria is easier than you think.

Ensuring Peace of Mind: My Personal Wishes for Remembrance is a practical 40-page booklet, provided with the compliments of Anglicare Victoria. It can be used to help plan a funeral or memorial service, record personal wishes and key information and importantly, minimise the distress of our loved ones at a time when they really need support - giving us real peace of mind today.



Leonie, mother of four adult children and blessed with nine wonderful grandchildren.

"My Anglican faith is important to me and reminds me of how I want to live my life mindful of those for whom we should care. The mission of Anglicare Victoria is to care for children, and families who are at risk. Children who are traumatised by domestic violence and the families who live at the margins are in need of support. That mission resonates very strongly with me.

"My way of ensuring Anglicare Victoria's work is assured into the future is to leave a bequest to Anglicare Victoria in my will. The Anglicare Victoria booklet Ensuring Peace of Mind: My Personal Wishes for Remembrance allows me to reflect upon and clearly express my personal wishes and let my family know of those wishes. A bequest to Anglicare Victoria in my will, ensures that my faith journey continues as a legacy into the future."

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