



Anglican Diocese
of Bendigo

The Spirit

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**LAMBETH
CONFERENCE**
God's Church for God's world



Represent: The group of Australian bishops and spouses gathered at Lambeth Conference in the UK

Lambeth Conference brings Anglican world together

Bishop Matt Brain

The Lambeth Conference is a rare event. It is the regular but infrequent gathering of the bishops of the Anglican Communion convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The last Lambeth Conference was held 14 years ago, and it is only ever as frequent as once-a-decade.

Like many rare things it is exceedingly valuable. Its value does not lie in the purple shirts, or coloured vestments. Neither is it found in the extraordinary way that leaders from literally all around the world come together. Rather it is a precious sign of how God has called people of all sorts into his family. It was a high honour for Rachael and I to be sent by you to participate, for we went

carrying you as a significant part of God's family. The whole family would have been incomplete without you!

The Anglican Communion is the name given to what has become a very large federation of autonomous churches which have had their origin in a link with the Church of England. Today there are more than 165 nations which have an

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The Bishop writes...

Anglican church! From the beginning the key to the Lambeth Conference's significance was the opportunity for national Anglican churches to act as a consistent and catholic whole. Especially given that missionary expansion was not attended with the power for one part of the Anglican Church to compel another to do things.

Significant energy was expended at the conference to allow the character of this large and diverse group of bishops and their spouses to be felt, and for people to engage with the conference in a language they understood. There was a professional translation team providing a live stream in 9 languages. Pleasingly, the English speakers also had to use this service at times as languages other than English were used in worship, presentation, and small group discussion.

The program was very full. Both the spouses and bishops began with 2 retreat days. The subsequent 'conference' days began in worship, included a shared biblical exposition from 1 Peter, small group bible studies and discussion, plenary presentations, keynote addresses by the Archbishop of Canterbury, workshops for the spouses and some extras such as a trip into London to visit the Lambeth Palace. Most of the conference was spent on the main campus of the University of Kent. This provided a lovely conference venue but set on the side of a hill required considerable strenuous walking.

Such a rich and rare experience has inevitably given rise to a quandary. How can we adequately express what we learned, experienced or decided? Three short glimpses may give some idea.

Rachael and I were reminded that 'God is big'. Time and again we were reminded of how we have been brought by God into a big, living, and active body. God has worked through his people to be doing incredible things the world over. It is amazing to remember that even we are part of God's church, and that God loves his church. Too often we get cowed or disheartened. This experience

is very common, yet we were reminded each day of the abiding affection God has for his people. We also experienced the reality that God is bigger than our problems. Indeed, our shared life is not a problem to be solved, but a challenge to work on together.

We were also reminded that we must 'be open' to God's work. Time and again we saw God at work in unexpected places. Whether this was in personal interactions, or in answer to personal prayer, or whether it was through the movement of the whole conference, God continually worked to bring surprising blessing. Often this was through the realisation of how wonderful God's people are.

With over 650 bishops and 470 spouses (and the many clergy and lay people helping) it was inevitable that new friendships would be forged. Even if we knew an old friend or colleague was present there were no guarantees we could find them. In hearing the stories of life and ministry across the world which these new friends brought we could see the magnificent way that God cares for the world – often through the most difficult of circumstances. We were also given reason to see where none of us do everything perfectly.

There were some aspects of the conference which showed us that even in the Diocese of Bendigo we do undertake some things very well. However, there are other aspects of the Christian life which we can do much better. To be able to see and hear from others how they live out the Christian call is both a spur and encouragement to learn from others.

The final snapshot is the content of our discussions. I have included this last, not because it was unimportant but because it was framed by the relationships Rachael and I shared on your behalf. These were discussions about Christian life and witness held for you, by people sent by you, with the wider people of God. The discussions did not result in 'resolutions'. Rather they will spark a



series of 'calls' in which we the church are called to live a certain way and in turn call out to the world to respond to Christ. The ten calls concerned Mission and Evangelism, Safe Church, Anglican Identity, Reconciliation, Human Dignity, the Environment & Sustainable Development, Christian Unity, Inter-Faith Relations, Science and Faith and Discipleship. The final text of each call was settled as the bishops particularly contributed to the initial drafting work done by others. These will become available as this year draws to a close. Watch out in the coming year or two to see where we can respond to the call and reach out to our world.

To be able to represent you in this significant gathering was an enormous privilege. To experience God's great work as it is expressed throughout the whole world was stunning. But most of all to be able to tell you that you are a vital and dearly loved part of this wonderful work is our heartfelt desire.

Your servants in Christ,

+Matt & Rachael

'Old' running shoes for Bendigo's rough sleepers

Fiona Preston

"Not another pair of runners!" is a phrase you will often hear me saying in my household!

My husband is a keen long-distance runner and a member of the local Bendigo University Athletics Club, nicknamed 'The Bendigo Bats'. Running has great benefits, from being a part of a community, to keeping fit and healthy, but it also means going through roughly six pairs of runners a year! My husband, like many athletes, tracks the kilometres he runs in each pair of shoes to know when it is time to change them over, this means that shoes are often in a good condition when he replaces them.

Earlier this year I was joking to my work colleague about my husband's high shoe turnover and he remarked that if we collected my husband's 'old' shoes we could give them to the homeless – as long as they wore the same size shoe! We laughed...and then realised we were onto something! What if local athletes donated their good quality shoes to MinisTree Bendigo? Then we would have a range of sizes from men and women to give to the rough sleeping community.

The request was sent out to the Bendigo Bats and Gazelles (a women's group) on the last day of May 2022 and within two



Help: MinisTree Bendigo are collecting old runners to give to the homeless

weeks MinisTree Bendigo had received 50 pairs of shoes ranging from adult size 6-13! Thank you to everyone who donated!

The timing couldn't be more perfect. Throughout a very cold and wet winter, good shoes are essential. A few weeks ago, I was driving through the CBD on a cold day and I saw a woman with no shoes on and it broke my heart. It is my prayer that if we meet someone with no shoes or damaged shoes that we will be able to provide for them in this practical way.

Please watch this space

This was MinisTree Bendigo's first winter ministering on the street and it is unknown how many pairs of shoes we will need to provide. In 2023 we may 'throw the net wider', to ask the wider community for second-hand shoes.

Growing into Healing and Wholeness

Growing into Healing and Wholeness is a 10am weekly gathering on Tuesdays at the Cathedral of St Paul. It's an informal coming together giving opportunity to be in touch with the inner self through worship, guided meditation, teaching and healing prayer.

God cares for us and wants to bless us with healing and wholeness. Within our inner world we may recognise areas of woundedness. There is opportunity to receive prayer for inner healing or for ill health. Our gathering can be likened to a leisurely stroll through a park. We invite others to join us. Together we



seek to know even more of God's love through his healing presence.

Worship: through worship we experience God's near presence. Join us in 'wasting' time to loosen the ropes that bind and the boundaries that enclose.

Guided Meditation: with guided meditation we hear the voice of the leader giving instruction for letting go physical tension and arriving at 'stillness.'

Learning about healing and wholeness: Faith is a gift from God. Jesus taught about faith, and he told people to put it into practice. Learning more about faith helps us to grow in faith and put it into practice.

Healing Prayer: God uses us as channels of his grace. Our gathering is an opportunity to prayerfully support those who come forward for prayer.



Lambeth Conference snapshots...



Mama Deborah (pictured with Rachael Brain) and Bishop Gabriel lead a Diocese in South Sudan. They are remarkable people. Deborah speaks five different languages. This was borne out in the Spouses program where she found herself translating in two different languages while engaging in English...which is not her heart language. +Gabriel is frequently away from home as he cares for people scattered by several decades of conflict and now widespread flood. He will often have to travel by open canoe at the mercy of the elements. Despite this they are developing a wholistic ministry in a very young diocese which seeks to serve the spiritual and physical needs of a vulnerable people.

The Lambeth Conference could not have gone ahead without many volunteer and paid teams. Being able to meet folk from many different places who threw themselves into serving the 'Lambeth Community' was a surprising delight. The team of students from the University of Kent who served those who ate at the Café Dolche Vita (yes...the university spelled the name wrong!) were unfailingly kind and willing to help the hundreds who descended upon them morning noon and night. It was hard not to have favourites, and Chris (to Rachael's left) became our particular friend. In a twist that God so often makes, our friendly interactions over the meal queue became an opportunity to share faith with each other – and others in the team.



The number of languages spoken in Canterbury was a striking feature of the Conference. There was a full-time translation team working across 9 different languages for every part of the Bishops' sessions and the shared sessions with the Spouses. +Matt was part of a small group which included three Japanese bishops. This meant that we had a rotating team of translators sitting with us so that we could all participate on an equal footing. A beautiful consequence of this effort at inclusion was the way that the translation team (who were not necessarily Christian) threw themselves into the book of 1 Peter and the content of our discussions so that they could translate well. The spectacular thing was the way that God worked in this effort they made to show them new insights in life and even bring healing for old hurts.



Canterbury Cathedral is old...very old... and expensive to maintain. The Diocese of Canterbury relies on the crowds of visitors who come as tourists and pilgrims to raise the money to keep up with the building works. Yet, for two weeks the bishops and spouses of the Lambeth Conference were given the run of the Cathedral. It was fun to watch the responses of the local Cantabrians and tourists to the flocks of foreigners descending upon 'their' cathedral, especially on the days when we were vested. What is the collective noun for a mob of bishops I wonder?



The Lambeth Conference was not only for bishops and their spouses, we were also graced by delegates from other Christian Churches and Anglican lay people who contributed to discussions in a variety of ways. Archbishop Seraphim (to the right of +Matt) represented the Greek Orthodox Church at the Conference. Archbishop Seraphim had an irrepressible joy in fellowship. He was a wonderful example of how to reflect upon the ups, downs, importance, and mundanity of life and bring it into conversation with scripture...and with us! Our conversations were so much fun we were late to sessions more than once! Professor Andrew Briggs (to the left of +Matt) is an Oxford Professor of nanomaterials. Professor Briggs is the director of the Anglican Communion Science Commission Project. His enthusiasm for his faith and our God-given capacity to explore the world to discover more of how God works through it is infectious. Andrew is the driving force behind a new Communion wide initiative to support and encourage Christians with a vocational call to pursue scientific professions for the well-being of the whole world.

The Lambeth Conference is named after the Archbishop of Canterbury's London residence. The very first 'Lambeth' was held there, but now there are far too many delegates to be accommodated at Lambeth Palace so it is held at the University of Kent on the outskirts of Canterbury. We did spend one day at Lambeth which, despite its title is not much larger than some modern Australian homes. The photo shows 3 ½ sides of a quadrangle with the palace itself the sandstone building in the centre. We were the last group to meet there for at least five years. It is now closed to allow for significant work to occur to bring the house and buildings up to modern codes. The age of this structure paled beside the garden. There has been a working garden at Lambeth for more than a millennium (it predates even the Domesday Book).



Around the Diocese

Daffodil Service remembers loved ones and families touched by cancer



St Mary's Kangaroo Flat held our annual Daffodil Service. This is a service of remembrance of loved ones, prayers for cancer patients, their families, thanksgiving for survivors and thanks for our community of health professionals and institutions treating cancer in Bendigo Regions. Sandra Field spoke about her experiences with Cancer, highlighting how she felt a calm and peace from God – He is there for us, ready to offer a shoulder, to ease your heavy burden, as His load is light. We also viewed a video featuring Warren Penna's diagnosis with melanoma. Warren's parents are members of St Mary's congregation. Sandra Davey, herself with her own cancer story, led the prayers for cancer patients, their families, health professionals and that God would be our daffodil of hope.

- Sandra Davey

Anglicans in Red Cliffs celebrate 100 years of ministry

The Anglican Church in Red Cliffs recently celebrated 100 years of Anglican Ministry. The township came into being after the Great War with soldiers coming into the area in what is Australia's largest Soldier settlement. The first minister was a chaplain in the army. Rather than a focus on our buildings, we celebrated with a focus on a centenary of ministry. Bishop Matt led our service and preached from 1 Peter "inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade". As part of the celebration we were blessed with a song from the Tongan Choir as two of their members also were admitted into Holy Communion on the day. We thank God for the gospel of Jesus Christ and look forward to the future continuing to proclaim and living it out.

- Dale Barclay



Giving thanks for a century's worth of love and life as Walter turns 100!



Walter Lardner of Slaty Creek St Arnaud celebrated his 100th birthday on 26 July. A week of celebrations began with an extended family gathering at Craigs Hotel in Ballarat, with family members coming from Canada, New Zealand, Queensland and Canberra. The week of birthday celebrations finished with a church service at Christ Church Old Cathedral in St Arnaud, with an invitation to family, friends and acquaintances. A beautiful service was led by Judi Bird where she featured a selection of Walter's favourite hymns, and prayers of thanksgiving were offered for the gift of a century's worth of love, for a century's worth of lifetime that Walter has shared with us all which was followed by morning tea.

-Marilyn Hornsby

Around the Parishes

Words to Sing brings music alive at St George's Trentham

This year we turned up the heaters and opened St George's Trentham as a venue for *Words to Sing*, which will surely become a 'must' for future years. It was the brainchild of talented local musician and educator Fay Magee. We sang with gusto a short history of hymns, such favourites from "Now thank we all our God", "Guide me O thou great Redeemer", to Taize chants. After a cuppa, another local, Catholic schools educator Maria Forde, sang of her passion for teaching the faith through music. With her well-known voice and guitar, we were encouraged to sing our faith. The afternoon ended with a beautifully harmonised "Amazing Grace". Spring is always late in Trentham, but the wattles and daffodils are about to bloom.

- Peta Sherlock



St Paul's Pickers caring for God's creation



Last year the 'St Paul's Pickers' group was formed with the purpose of bringing a 'Blessing to Bendigo' and thanking God for God's creation by helping with environment- focussed activities such as picking up rubbish and assisting with local tree-planting campaigns. As time has gone on, the group has formed a loose alliance with the 'Friends of Riley St Nature Reserve Landcare Group' and most of our activities have been focussed on the Riley St Reserve and adjacent areas in East Bendigo. The most recent activity was a stake-pulling and guard-removal session around the Murphy Street frog ponds. The native plants that were planted 18 months ago looked wonderful in their liberation and the Pickers and Friends were more than satisfied with the mornings work.

- Angela Lorrigan

Daylesford concert series continues!

Daylesford's Christ Church have launched a series of five very special concerts on Saturday afternoons from Winter to Spring. Music from the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern periods with string ensemble, viol consort, recorders and harpsichord. A Rossini comic opera and a celebration of the power of music with the Daylesford Community Brass Band. The Church is a popular concert venue with its beautiful setting, stained glass windows and highly regarded acoustic qualities. Central Victoria and Daylesford in particular has a rich tradition and culture of supporting music performance of these traditions. For details and tickets visit Anglican Parish of Daylesford on Facebook.

- Frank Page





Past and current ministry team: Trevor Bell, Greg Harris, Rob Edwards, David Crane and John Geldart

Celebrating 50 years at Holy Trinity Keck Street

Karen Reid

Approximately 200 people attended our combined special anniversary service on 7 August to celebrate and give thanks for our 50 years at Holy Trinity Keck Street. Previous rectors David Crane, John Geldart, and Greg Harris returned to celebrate with us.

Together they encouraged us to continue for the next 50yrs to be faithful to the gospel (2 Tim 2), to be faithful to gathering together (Hebrews 10), and to be faithful to the great commission (Matthew 28). Rob Edwards (former Youth and Children's minister) led the kid's talk for the service.

The congregation was spread across three different locations in the church – the church, the foyer, and the hall. Each group rotated around to each location and thus heard each speaker and engaged in all parts of the service. We celebrated holy communion together also.

A wonderful series of photographs, banners, and Holy Trinity memorabilia from the last 50 years was displayed on the day around the church. Our music was a celebration of the gifts



and tastes of our different services with musicians from our 9:15am, 11am and 5pm services involved and both modern and traditional songs included. Greg Harris led the kid's song acoustically in the hall. Our current rector Trev Bell did a fantastic job rallying the troops and bringing all the moving parts together for the day. It was his vision of how each section would work and hold together so that it would be a true expression of our oneness even across the three different

locations. It took a great deal of planning and behind-the-scenes work for which we are very grateful! After our special service, we enjoyed an excellent shared meal with all who were able to stay.

The day was a wonderful celebration. Praise be to our good and gracious God for the first fifty years onsite at HT and we look forward to how he will continue to work in us and through us for the next fifty to come!

Outdoor service remembers the Yelta Mission

Keith Nicholas

Cross border relationships have always been strong in the North Western region of the Anglican Diocese of Bendigo. A good example of this took place on the fifth Sunday of July when the Parish of the Northern Mallee joined in with the Parish of Wentworth/Dareton (from the Diocese of the Riverina) to remember the ministry to the Aboriginal Communities at the Yelta Mission.

As part of the Wentworth/Dareton Mission Action Plan the congregation goes out every fifth Sunday in the year to the community to celebrate a Eucharist. This occurs in a parkland, in a small community hall or in a small township where there is no longer a functioning church.

The plan on this occasion was to go to the now nonexistent mission station where there is only a memorial cairn left to signify the existence of the mission. The mission site is located on the Victorian side of the Murray Darling junction, which is in the Diocese of Bendigo, and so the Parish of Northern Mallee was invited to be involved.

Historical research about the mission uncovered some wonderful and informative minutes of the Annual General Meetings of the Melbourne Church of England Mission to the Aborigines. In these minutes the first recorded reference to the foundation of the mission was found:

For some months the committee confined itself to obtaining all the information which it could on the subject of the aborigines of this colony, and at length resolved to send forth an itinerating missionary chiefly with a view to obtain such reports from him as would direct their efforts. But here the committee met with the main difficulty which presents itself in their operations. It was found that persons of that peculiar cast

of character which fitted them to undertake the work required by the Society were not easily to be procured. It pleased God however to raise up a suitable instrument in the person of Mr Thomas Hill Goodwin, who offered his services to the Committee, and having received a license as a lay reader from the Bishop of Melbourne, was sent forth in the month of September, 1854 to proceed down the River Murray to its junction with the Darling, and to institute inquiries in his progress as to the localities best suited for a missionary station.

On his return great concern was raised by Mr. Goodwin's report as to the welfare of the four aboriginal tribes of the Murray/Darling Junction area as they had been dispossessed of their land and many conflicts had arisen between Pastoral Companies, New Settlers and the ancestral owners of the land. One tribe, the Marua people, had been nearly decimated in the conflicts. The mission was established in 1854 by Rev. Goodwin and his now assistant, Mr. John Bullmer, with funding from the fledgling Church Mission Society in Melbourne.



Outdoor worship: Shannon Smith, Keith Nicholas and Joe Varghese

The reason for our visit to Yelta was to enlighten our knowledge of the Aboriginal Peoples of our 'little' part of the diocese. To encourage us to begin that journey of understanding and truth about our history we invited Shannon Smith, Aboriginal Communities Officer, to be our guest preacher. It was a wonderful sermon which changed significantly the day before due to the death of Bishop Alistair Arthur Malcolm, the first Aboriginal Bishop. Bishop Alistair was a dear friend of Shannon's and his vision and mission was truly inspiring and very relevant to the hardship shared by many Aboriginal People.

Whilst the time spent on the mission site and the sharing of communion accompanied by Traditional Aboriginal 'Spirit of the Land' music was a very moving experience, the time spent together at a shared meal and an historic journey delivered by Dr. Rodney Smyth really opened our eyes to the unspoken history of the River Junction Country.

We will return to the Yelta Mission and it will probably be at the 175th year of its opening. This will probably occur on another fifth Sunday 'away service' in 2029. God willing we will all still be around.

Merging universes to share Jesus

Karen Reid

You might have seen in the news that the census results have confirmed what we thought was happening – Australians are becoming less Christian.

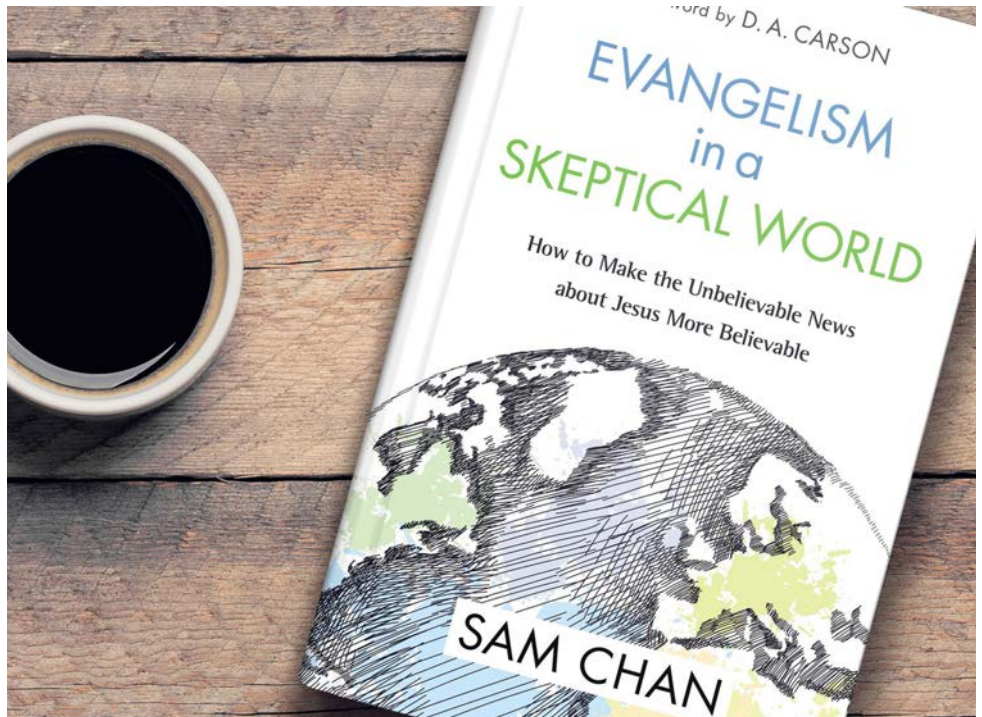
Christians make up 44% of the population, down from 52% last census. In contrast, those reporting 'no religion' is galloping along – now almost 40% of the population, nearly double what it was in 2011.

Now this may not surprise us. But it does mean that we need to rethink our evangelism models, I think. In my Monday home group, we've been looking at Sam Chan's DVD called *Evangelism in a Skeptical World*. Sam's a gifted Aussie evangelist whose aim is to train us on how to make the good news of Jesus more believable to fellow Aussies. Last week we looked at everyday evangelism, and I want to share two things that struck us in the group.

First – intentionally merging our universes. Do you tend to have a group of Christian friends and a separate group of non-Christian friends? Many of us do. Did you know that one simple thing we can do to share Jesus more effectively is to intentionally merge those groups: invite our non-Christian friends to come to the movies or the football when we go with our Christian friends, and visa versa.

The communities we are involved in are powerfully influential in the formation of our beliefs. If your non-Christian friends only know you as a believer in Jesus, they are likely to continue believing you are the one schmuck who does! But if we merge our universes and bit by bit our friends become their friends, then our non-Christian friends will start to meet a range of people who believe in Jesus, making it less likely that we are all schmucks, and more likely that there might be something to this after all!

Our community has a huge influence on whether we think something is credible or whether we write it off. We find a story more believable the more trusted people we know who also believe that story. So, simply merging our universes, helping our non-Christian friends to



“Do you tend to have a group of Christian friends and a separate group of non-Christian friends? Many of us do.”

Did you know that one simple thing we can do to share Jesus more effectively is to intentionally merge those groups.”

become friends with other Christians, will over time make the unbelievable news about Jesus more believable.

Second, sharing Jesus is a team game. We all have different stories of how we came to trust Jesus and different stories of how Jesus has impacted on lives. Different stories will have an impact on different people. If we are intentionally merging universes then over time, bit by bit, different people will have the chance to share different stories. And maybe it isn't your story that resonates, but it is one of your Christian friends' stories that does. Evangelism in our skeptical world is a team event, not a solo pursuit!

Now Sam's got lots of other great ideas and suggestions. Talk to me if your home group would like to train up in this course too (I recommend it!) But for now, how might you begin this week to intentionally merge your Christian and non-Christian universes?

Evangelism in a Skeptical World by Sam Chan is available as a book or on a DVD (which is especially good for use in small groups). The content of both is essentially the same, and excellent in either form. Available to order online from Koorong.

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.



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Going the distance

Ordinary Time – Creation Care

It is the liturgical season of Ordinary Time, but there is nothing Ordinary about God! It is the opposite in fact. God is extraordinary in every way and at this point in the church's calendar, we are invited to pay special attention to God's extraordinary creation. An easy thing to do with blossom and daffodils emerging to mark the beginning of Spring.

.....Nibbles

Everything is connected in God's creation. Taking time to notice & be grateful for the ordinary everyday items that we use is a first step to realising this. Before bed, notice and name some objects in your room, a hairbrush, t-shirt, pillow...items that we often take for granted. Wearing your 'Creation Care' hat ask questions like, I wonder who first invented this? I wonder who thought up this design that I like? I wonder what country this was made in & how it got to my home? I wonder where the plastic, cotton, metal came from and who harvested it? Give thanks to God for all the effort that went into making these ordinary items. Praise God for His resourcefulness, creativity and constant care. Ask God to help you become a better carer of His creation.

.....

Bites

Psalm 104:10-14 celebrates the inter-relationships between nature, animals and humans. It praises God for making springs flow into ravines which flow between mountains and provide water for all the wild animals. It praises God that the earth can produce grass for cattle as well as vegetables for us. Read these verses together and respond to them in a way that suits your family. For example, re-write the five verses together, praising God for things in your city/town/school/lives that interrelate. Draw a series of pictures based on the Psalm to show how God created those things to work together in harmony. Come up with something to do as a family to help the harmonious inter-connection of God's creation, ie. start using a compost bin, plant some native plants that bees & birds like.

.....Chomps

Children and young people have wonderful imaginations and ask all kinds of exotic questions. Sometimes these can be tricky to navigate and we can feel ill-equipped to give the right answer. Never fear. Just as God desires a whole hearted relationship with us, so do our kids. It is not about answering every question correctly, but about spending time together reading God's word and wondering at all the possibilities it brings up. Read both accounts of creation in Genesis with your children. Talk about them. Be honest, if you aren't sure why there are two different stories and then think about together how you could find out more (talk to your minister, borrow a book from Church, phone a friend or ask Archdeacon George!).



Growth: George Hemmings helps plant a new tree in the community garden

“Hope... it Grows!” garden planted

David Fagg

Over 100 people gathered in Long Gully to officially open the renewed “Hope...It Grows!” community garden at St Matthew’s Church. They enjoyed planting seedlings, live music, wood-fired pizza and being with other people.

Councillor David Fagg (City of Greater Bendigo) welcomed those in attendance, and Brooke Williams from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (who funded the renewal) congratulated all those involved. Archdeacon George Hemmings spoke on behalf of the Anglican Diocese of Bendigo, and gave a blessing for the garden.

The garden was originally established in 2010 as a bushfire recovery project after the Black Saturday fires of 2009, in which many houses were destroyed in Long Gully, and one person lost their life. Since then, the garden has been a place of rest, beauty, common work, and the location for numerous events and festivals.

Many of those who attended had never been to St Matthew’s before, and the congregation hopes the renewed garden will be an accessible connection point to the church for those in the community.

The Spirit

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Address: The Spirit, PO Box 2,
BENDIGO VIC 3552

Member, Australian Religious Press
Association

Telephone: 03 5443 4711

Email: thespirit@bendigoanglican.org.au

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