



Anglican Diocese  
of Bendigo

# The Spirit

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**Team:** Tracey Wolsley and Fiona Preston partner to minister to the homeless in the Bendigo central business district

## MinisTree Bendigo welcomes Tracey Wolsley

**Fiona Preston**

**MinisTree Bendigo welcomes Revd Tracey Wolsley to the team, where she and Revd Fiona Preston have hit the ground running this new year!**

Tracey faithfully served the Parish of Kangaroo Flat for the last five years. Although she was sad to leave the

beloved parishioners, she sensed deeply within herself that God was moving her towards new challenges. When Fiona met with Tracey in October last year, she expressed a desire for God to take her out of her comfort zone and God has certainly answered that call!

Tracey will wear many 'hats' in this new season. She will be working half the

week with MinisTree Bendigo, serving the rough sleepers on the streets of the Bendigo CBD with Fiona. The mission of MinisTree Bendigo is to 'provide care and a listening, respectful presence on the streets of Bendigo', established in 2021 by Fiona Preston and Andrew Howe.

Tracey will also be the new Anglican

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# The Bishop writes...

## The value of a body

I am no poet (you will see evidence of this soon), but as I have been thinking about Easter I find myself grasping after words to describe the significance of Jesus' resurrection. So rather than simply giving a list of why Jesus' resurrection from the dead is so important for us I thought I would try to express something of it in verse. Here goes.



I lift

I strain

I run

am lain

To rest

To dream

The skin's

To ache

Lithe screen

In pain

Holds tight

A dream

The parcel

Of flesh

That body

Nephesh\*

Is me

Unseen

The part

To be

A whole

Not torn

A whole

Made sound

Seeks one

Soar free

Body strain

Live on

All me

Not part

Scars mend

Beauty be

*\*Nephesh is a Hebrew word which means something like spirit or soul (I have spelled this as it sounds in English). It is a hard word to properly translate because it literally means 'throat' but carries a meaning more than the soft part of your neck. It means something more than the Greek philosophers' idea of spirit and soul being a separate part of a person which we have brought into our thought world. It is more like the 'being-ness' of a person or their 'very'. It is a word to describe our whole experience of personhood.*

I told you I am no poet! I hope that you hear something of the reality of being a whole and complete human though in this scribble. We are more than a bag of bones, yet our body is no mere shell for a detached spirit. God has made us gloriously embodied and the pleasure and pain of bodily life only works to show the magnificence of a God who does not despise weak human flesh but delights to have the scrapes and pain be healed and made new.

Dear friends, this is why Jesus' resurrection is good news. That body which was torn and degraded on the cross and disposed of in a tomb was made new in resurrection life. The nails which tore skin and fractured bone bore joyful witness to restoration – a living deposit guaranteeing that the yearning of the spirit will be met by a whole, and really whole, life.

God loves all of you and is calling your 'very' flesh, bone and being to be made new. The promise lies in that man who once was dead but is now alive. The firstfruits of our own resurrection.

Your servant in Christ,

*tlhatt*





**Inducted:** Dale Barclay with his family as they begin a new ministry in Eaglehawk



**Licensed:** Bishop Matt & Dale

## Barclay family move to Eaglehawk

Leonie Paton & Christopher Gibney

**O**n Friday 24 February Bishop Matt Brain along with clergy from across the diocese and clergy representatives from other churches within Eaglehawk came together to celebrate the induction of Revd Canon Dale Barclay at St Peter's Church in Eaglehawk.

It was a wonderful celebration of joy, as we welcomed Dale and his family as our new Rector. It was also a time of sadness as the people of Red Cliffs gave Dale to us to take us into our future. We praise and thank our Lord for such a quick appointment and look forward to where this new ministry leads.



**Present:** Symbols of ministry

## Tracey Wolsley joins MinisTree

*continued from front...*

Chaplain at the Loddon and Middleton Prison Precinct serving the approximately 700 men in the low to medium security prison settings. She will offer counselling, spiritual direction and supervision out of the MinisTree offices at 8 Myers Street and provide Sunday service relief where needed.

Who Tracey is as a person and the many experiences she has traversed is what makes her a wonderful asset to MinisTree Bendigo and as a Prison Chaplain. In 2009 Tracey served as

a chaplain in the bushfire response effort in Eaglehawk, this role would lead her to opening Our Place, a community relief and recovery centre for those affected by the bushfires, then, Our Shed which established a social enterprise and continues to engage men in the local community, and Our House, an arts hub for people with disabilities.

Tracey has significant lived experience with mental health challenges as well as substance abuse. This exposure

has given her great compassion and desire to work with those who suffer in these areas and spurred her on to complete a Masters in Counselling and Psychotherapy in 2019. Over the last 20 years in the diocese, Tracey has served in both parish ministry and chaplaincy including chaplain to the CFA, school chaplain and community chaplain. Tracey is most grateful for the opportunity to work with our most disadvantaged and marginalised people whilst also continuing to serve in worship each Sunday.



# St George's Trentham marks 95 years in its brick building: *These Walls could Speak* launched

Peta Sherlock

**T**his book tells the story of God's people at St George's from its beginnings to the present. It was written by Peta Sherlock to mark the 95th anniversary of the opening of the present St George's Church in November 1927.

Michael Worthington, President of the *Trentham and District Historical Society*, launched Peta's book during the afternoon service on 20 November 2022. He commended her work warmly, the result of many months reading Parish Registers, Minutes, letters and more.

In response, Peta introduced "seven voices" from parish records covering 1882 to 2022. Readers included Geoff Proctor reading from his mother Norma's lively Ladies Guild Minutes, and Gwen Justice notes from her grandfather Ernest Wall. The service concluded, bubbly and Lions Christmas cake was enjoyed, with lively conversations amongst those who came.

Significantly, the book begins with a guide to St George's furnishings and memorials – hence the title – based on a booklet prepared for a display over the St George's Day-Anzac Day weekend in 2022. This places the book's focus on the Anglicans who served their Lord in the district, a focus strengthened by the inclusion of graphics, and dozens of photographs.

Bricks and mortar get their due, as do the clergy who come and go (on an average of just over three years in this parish). Some locals have worshipped at St George's during the ministries of more than 20 clergy coming and going! A list of ministers is provided in the book's Appendix: their dates become



**Launched:** Peta Sherlock with *These walls could speak*

a useful frame for understanding the changing life of the congregation over several chapters.

A further strength of this book is exploring how St George's folk play their part in the life of the town and district, from personal care to dreaming up the idea of Spudfest, and giving land to Hepburn Health for St George's units and Day Centre (now the town library). Special mention is made of the Ladies Guild, who raised thousands of pounds/dollars, not only for St George's, but also for community projects like the Bush Nursing Hospital.

Parish life is rarely a bed of roses, even in 'cool country' Trentham where roses thrive. The book documents times of difficulty, the harsh effects of war and weather, and the foibles of clergy and people. In doing so, it offers a wise resource for responding to the mission of God locally in the future.

*These Walls could Speak. A History of St George's Trentham 1864-2022* is a very good read, and not just for parishioners past and present. It is a model of a local church history, grounded in the ministries of all the baptized as the key aspect of church.





Share: The Parish of Kyneton hall ready to celebrate a Community Christmas Day lunch

## Community Christmas Day lunch shows God's love

Wayne Landford

**W**hen we think of Christmas, we often think of time together with family, of meals around the dining table filled with food, and of good company to eat that meal with.

For some, however, this is not the reality of Christmas, for some people family are a long way away, for some it is not possible to get together anymore due to separation or bereavement, for some, Christmas is spent alone, or with a much smaller group than usual.

At the Parish of Kyneton and Malmsbury we decided to hold a Community Christmas Day Lunch, inviting "Young, old and in-between, on your own, with friends, families – all welcome." It didn't matter if the people coming had never been to church, or never intended to come to church, what their background was, or why they wanted to come and have lunch with us, they were welcome.

We advertised in the local community houses, regional Facebook groups, and through the Kindness Collective Kyneton. Some church members donated food, some supported financially, others spent Christmas Eve and Christmas morning cooking, setting tables, preparing salads (I cooked four roast pork in the church kitchen while finalising my preparations for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services!).

The Kindness Collective Kyneton were wonderful, opening their food bank to us to supply pork and chicken to roast, eggs, potatoes, fruit, vegetables, salads, custard and 25 well stocked hampers for people to take home afterwards. Our awesome parishioners supplied turkey, ham, salads, candied sweet potato, bread rolls, meringue, trifle and a whole range of other great things to eat and worked tirelessly setting up the hall.

As at midday Christmas day in excess of 20 people had gathered in the

St Paul's Kyneton Hall for the meal, thanks was given for the provision of the food and the outstanding company and a fantastic lunch was enjoyed by all. There was more than enough food to go around, and almost everyone left a few hours later with full bellies and multiple meals tucked away in takeaway containers to pop in the fridge when they got home.

In Jesus, God has given us the best Christmas gift, a gift of unconditional love...how can we possibly keep that gift to ourselves? Our response should be to spread that love far and wide with no strings attached, no expectations of return. God's love is one Christmas present that is entirely appropriate to regift!

Thanks so much to everyone who contributed to our Christmas Lunch, and thanks so much to everyone who came to join us, I pray that you all experienced some of God's love on Christmas Day.











# Book Review

## Finding Jesus in the Storm

Peter Dyke

**T**hese statistics and my summary make for challenging reading. It leaves a difficult question for us: How can we understand and relate to the lives of Christians with mental health challenges?

Well known author, Professor John Swinton has written much about pastoral care. His latest book Finding God in the Storm is published by SCM Press and tackles this question in many helpful ways.

The text is very accessible and can be read in small bites. After the introduction, there are five parts: The art of description, Redescribing diagnosis, Redescribing depression, Hearing voices and Redescribing bipolar disorder. Each part is then divided into chapters. These are further divided into short sections so that the reader can choose any one topic quickly and easily. The conclusion examines aspects of healing from five points of view.

"The purpose of this book is to provide readers with rich, deep and thick descriptions of the spiritual experiences of Christians living with mental health challenges...This book is about how Christians living with severe mental health challenges experience their faith lives and strive to live life in all its fullness in the presence of sometimes deeply troubling experiences" (p. 2). Swinton starts from John 10:10 and argues that Christians with such challenges can live life well, faithfully and loving Jesus even through the most terrifying storms.

The book urges us to change our language and descriptions about mental health challenges in ways that can help us overcome misrepresentation

### Key statistics

- Over two in five Australians aged 16-85 years (43.7% or 8.6 million people) had experienced a mental disorder at some time in their life
- One in five (21.4% or 4.2 million people) had a 12-month mental disorder
- Anxiety was the most common group of 12-month mental disorders (16.8% or 3.3 million people)
- Almost two in five people (39.6%) aged 16-24 years had a 12-month mental disorder

These statistics were announced in mid-2022 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. They come from the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing 2020-2021. The figures refer to individuals who have a diagnosable disorder that significantly interferes with their wellbeing. A person does not need to meet the criteria for a mental disorder to be negatively affected by their mental health. Mental ill-health affects and is affected by many factors and impacts not only the individual but also their families and carers.

“Unlike happiness, joy is not a feeling, it is the fact of the assured presence of Jesus in our lives. It is that presence of Jesus that yields the fruits of the spirit, including joy, in our lives.”

and stigma. This new term replaces the terms “mental illness” and “mental health issues” because it “...focuses our attention on what enables us to remain healthy in the midst of psychological distress....The shift from illness to challenge offers a positive and forward-facing orientation” (p. 7).

For me this new term takes away the stigma by permitting us all to say that

we have such challenges from time to time, such as the bereavement process or the loss of confidence upon starting a new job or coming to terms with loss of physical and thinking abilities as part of the ageing experience.

The most common diagnosis globally is depression which can lead to suicide in some situations. Swinton recognises that these terms evoke anxiety, hurt and



fear in us and assures us from scripture that nothing "...will be able to separate us from the love of God..." (Romans 8: 38-39). Whilst God does not abandon those who are depressed or suicidal, the action of ending one's life is not part of God's very best for us. Suicide is a tragedy and a loss and is never to be encouraged or seen as a positive good.

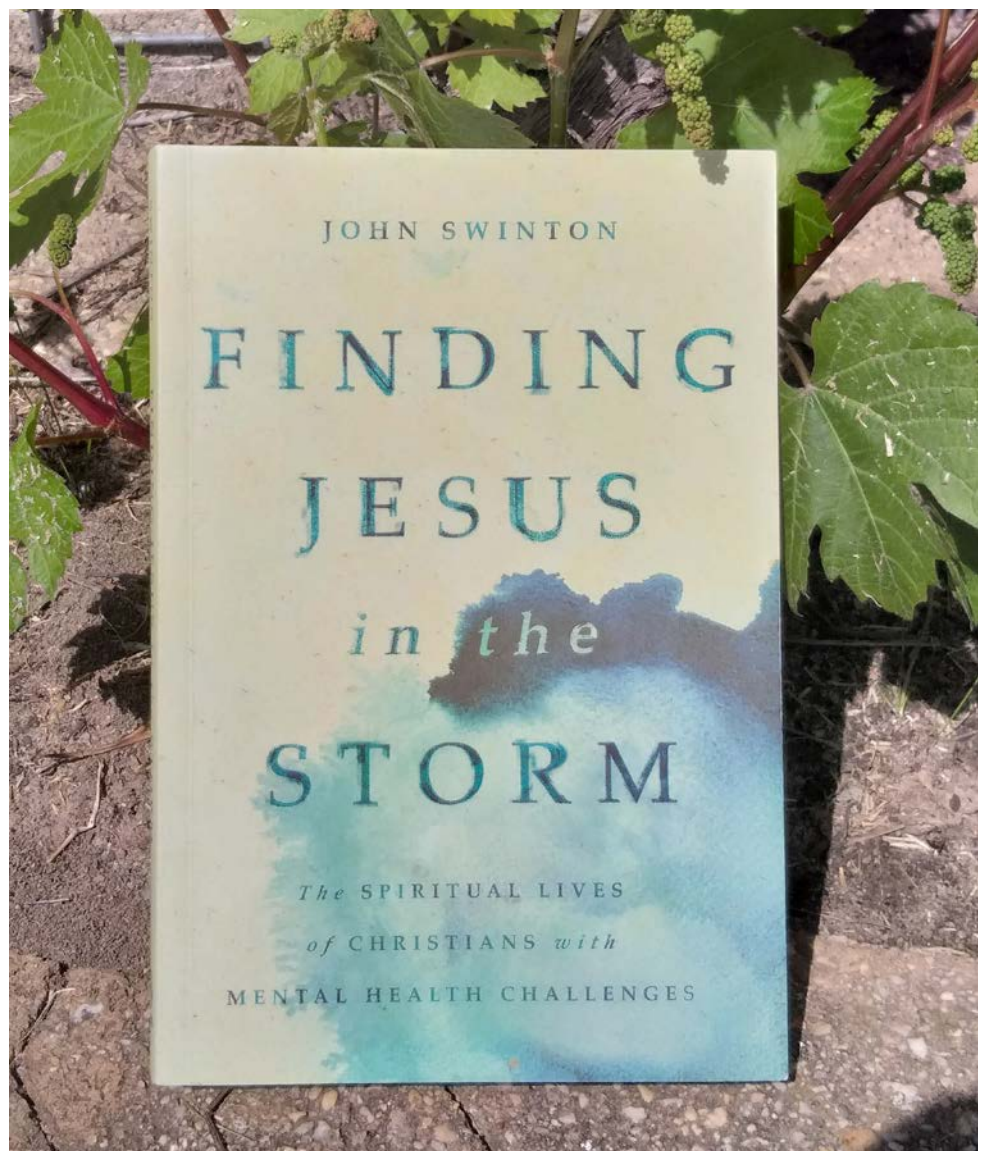
There is a risk of dual thinking here: if the death was due to someone's mind, then there is a spiritual problem, but if it has to do with the body, it is seen as a medical issue. Better then to start from God's point of view of loving all his creatures and providing them with resources like faith and joy to support them through life's sufferings.

Swinton suggests a different perspective on depression as not simply the absence of happiness. Starting from Paul's list of the spiritual gifts, he argues that joy is the exact opposite of depression and "...the joy of the Lord is our strength..." (Neh 8:10). He proposes that: joy is best not equated with happiness which is a passing emotion; suffering is an aspect of joy and major depression is not about sadness but an experience of a deep loss of joy. So, depression becomes a spiritual experience.

The author employs a definition of joy from William Jennings: "Joy is an act of resistance against all of the forces of despair. Joy is a work that can become a state which can become a way of life" (p. 80). Joy is not then some desired outcome but is the key to resistance within the struggle.

Unlike happiness, joy is not a feeling, it is the fact of the assured presence of Jesus in our lives. It is that presence of Jesus that yields the fruits of the spirit, including joy, in our lives. Joy is also a gift from God. The presence of Jesus does not pass, even for those experiencing mental health challenges. From this standpoint, Swinton argues that depression is not an absence of happiness, nor the presence of sadness, but is an oppressor in the ongoing struggle to find and cling to joy.

The chapter which particularly appealed to me was called "Finding God in the darkness - testifying to the presence of an absent God" because I enjoy the intensity and range of feelings described in the Psalms. Swinton examines some Psalms of orientation where God is in



**Read:** The spiritual lives of Christians with mental health challenges

his heaven and life is good. Then comes Psalms of lament, where the people cry to God in their lostness. Finally comes the Psalms of reorientation, where the writers move into a new mode of living.

It is in the Psalms of lament that the feelings run hot with numbness, pain and anguish graphically experienced. Add then a sense of abandonment by God and, like Job, it feels as if everything has been stripped away.

"Depression is a bewildering experience that tears away at our certainties about God, self and others and replaces them with...nothing" (p. 95). At that moment, a person experiences such an intensity of suffering that it is called affliction. "Affliction is a condition of the soul insofar as it seems to consume every aspect of one's life, leaving one with a deep sense of nothingness, a deprivation rather than a present thing" (p. 96).

This helps us to grasp why the desire to end it all can creep to the surface of a person's thinking. The Psalms then help the person to perceive God in a new way. God can be trusted and we can be certain of what we hope for and yet cannot see. Such trust shifts perspective and reorients our understanding of the presence of God even though he feels absent. Living faithfully means learning to live well with unanswered questions and to avoid the temptation to turn mysteries into puzzles. Only through trust in God and his promises do we find our hope.

Reading this book has challenged my attitudes and the ways I approach persons with mental health challenges. I recommend the book to those who offer pastoral care inside churches and into the wider community.

*Peter Dyke is a member of clergy and a registered psychotherapist.*



# Aboriginal Communities

## A fruitful mission: delivering goods to those in need

Shannon Smith

**A** whirlwind trip out to Robinvale on 23 February was had with an entire carload of non-perishable goods. With the wonderful assistance for St Oswald's Glen Iris we were able to make the trip feeling confident no-one was going to go without.

It was such a delight to meet the home community team, Amber and Anton who were introduced to us by Mary who I had been communicating with for several weeks before our first drop off.

The team appeared to be quite glad to learn of the diocese having an Aboriginal Community Support Officer and to hear that we are available to them whenever they need any sort of pastoral assistance. As the township of Euston is just a hop step and jump away over the bridge some of our relief will be distributed to the elders who are living on the New South Wales side of the bridge.

Our arrival with donations was so appreciated that we were invited to stay and join the home community team for lunch.

Many thanks to Revd Canon Glenn Laughrey for his offer to help us in our quest to assist our struggling communities. The team at St Oswald's has already started in their collection of food and bedding for our next run out to our Robinvale friends.

Peter and Judy made the trip from Melbourne bringing with them all the glorious donations. This certainly has lifted the pressure off St Mark's Golden Square with their generosity. What wonderful disciples of Christ!

Our next drop off is due to happen mid-May. If any parishes would like to make a donation to go towards our next drop off it can be left at St Mark's Golden Square. I can collect fruit along the way once I am past Swan Hill.



Revd Shannon Smith

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## Aboriginal Sunday and Newstead Live at All Saints

Darcy Vaughan

**O**n 26 January 1938 Aboriginal leaders, including Yorta Yorta man William Cooper, met for a Day of Mourning, seeking equality and full citizenship.

The Australian Churches were then asked to set aside the Sunday before January 26 as 'Aboriginal Sunday', a day for Christians to act in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples in light of the injustices being experienced. This tradition has persisted and more and more churches are recommitting themselves to the importance of honouring this ongoing call made by our Aboriginal leaders.

For All Saints' Newstead it just so happened that Aboriginal Sunday coincided with



the Sunday of the Newstead Live Music Festival, making it an extra special morning for our church. We welcomed Kathy Dadd to come and speak to us. Kathy works for Wycliffe Bible Translators and has a family connection to All Saints'.

Kathy partners with communities in Arnhem Land to translate the Bible into local languages and into a Plain English Version. We also had the local music group Platform Souls leading the music for our service. This included two hymns composed by Aboriginal communities from Arnhem Land taken from *Together in Song*, one of which was titled *Marrkapmirr*, which means 'altogether lovely, and worthy of affection'.

It was a special morning. We look forward to hopefully welcoming Revd Shannon Smith to come and speak with us as part of Reconciliation Week, and continue to commit ourselves to truth telling and partnership with our First Nations brothers and sisters.



# Youth and Families Ministry

## A word from George...

**W**hen 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**  
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*Going the distance*

## The Book of Acts

The book of Acts tells the history of the early church as the disciples sought to continue the work that Jesus had begun. It is often read in church during the season of Eastertide, the 40 days between Easter Sunday and Pentecost. Below are ideas for how your church or family can engage with the story of God's continuing mission.

### .....Nibbles

There are lots of incredible stories in the book of Acts, as God's people did incredible things as they went about telling people about Jesus. Pick one story and explore it together in creative ways. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch 8:26-40 works well as a short skit. There's an angel, Philip, the Spirit and the eunuch. There's travel between towns, including in a chariot. There is even an enlightening conversation about the Old Testament. Not to mention a spontaneous baptism!

After you've read over the story and adapted it to suit your family, practise together by imagining all of the various emotional states. For example, surprise, weariness from travel, relaxed reading, perplexed, confident proclamation, excitement, awe, rejoicing.

### ..... Bites

The good news of Jesus was carried around the world by his friends and disciples. Who were those courageous people? Pick one of the stories of the first disciples such as eg Mary, Jesus' mum (Acts 1:12-14), Peter (Acts 3:1-10), Saul/Paul & Ananias (Acts 9:1-19), Barnabas (Acts 9:16-28), Tabitha (Acts 9:36-42). Spend some time thinking about what they did and how they must have felt. What motivated them to keep going?

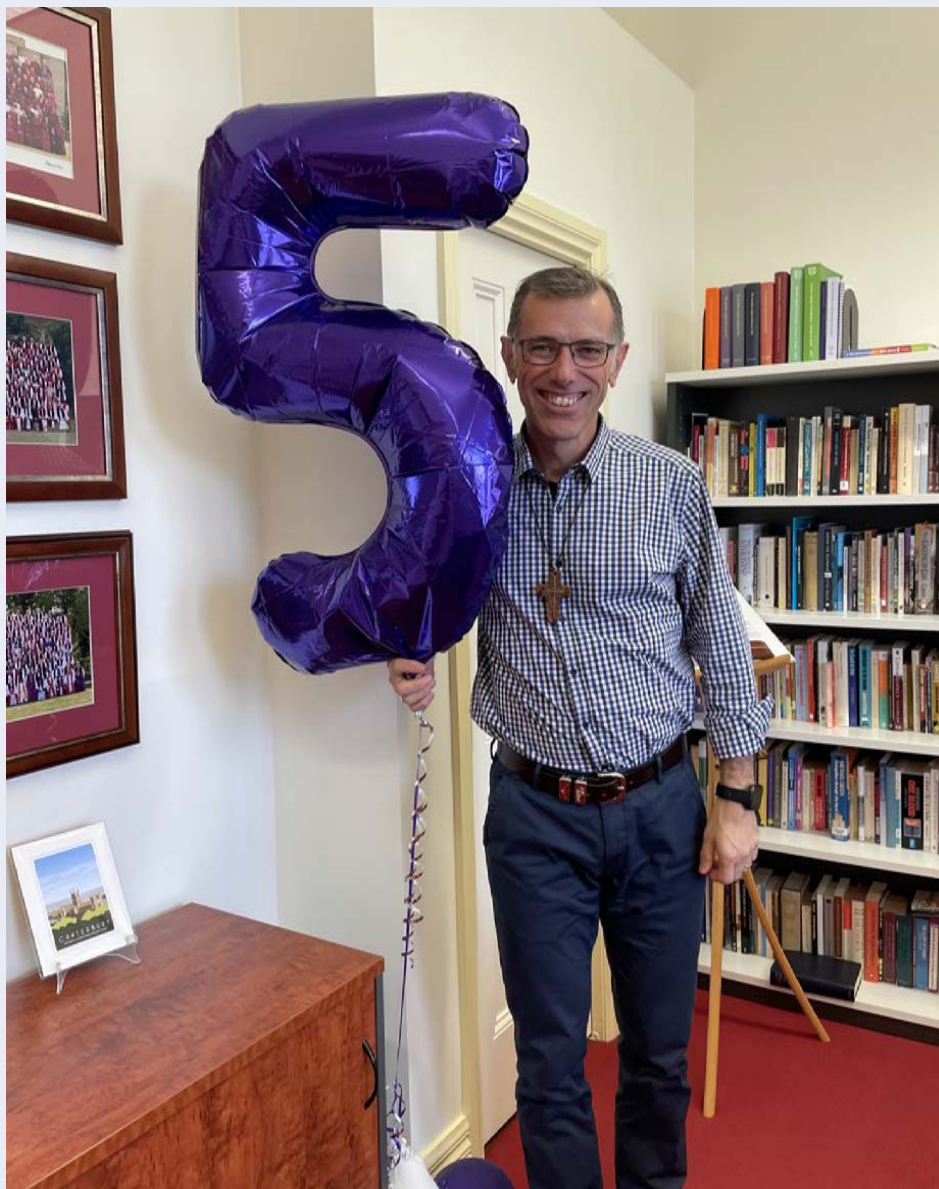
The book of Acts never ends, as God's people continue carrying on Jesus' mission even today. Find out about one of the missionaries your church or family support. Where are they? What are they doing? What motivates them to keep going?

We are also part of the book of Acts and the mission of God. Where has God called you? Who can you share the good news of Jesus with? What will help you to keep following Jesus?

### .....Chomps

There are 28 chapters in the book of Acts and 40 days between Easter and Pentecost. As a family, make a plan to read through the whole book together in that time. How will you track your progress? Marking it off on a calendar? Circling the places that are mentioned on a map of Acts? Assembling lists of the people, actions and places? First to 10 gets a box of smarties?! How might you celebrate together when Pentecost arrives, and you've read the whole book together?





**Anniversary:** Bishop Matt celebrates five years as Bishop of Bendigo

## Bishop Matt's fifth bishop birthday!

**B**ishop Matt celebrated his fifth anniversary as Bishop of Bendigo on 13 February 2023.

Bishop Matt, Rachael and their family came to the Diocese of Bendigo in

2018 from Canberra and have brought an enthusiasm and energy with them, along with a love for God's people here.

We give thanks to God for Bishop Matt and his leadership of our Diocese.

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May issue: Contributions due by 21  
April 2023.

*Photo of Bishop Matt on page 2 credit  
of Bendigo Advertiser.*

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