

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. ¹³ And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.
1 Thessalonians 3:11-13.

MARMINGATHA

Stories to Inspire

FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2021



St Philip's Deep Creek

COVID CARE COMES IN MANY FORMS

Like all churches, we have found the recent vaccination requirements for attendance at our main services challenging - for our sense of community inclusion and outreach capabilities. However, we didn't expect to be too badly affected at Deep Creek, as we offer a streamed service and haven't had many in our congregation choosing to remain unvaccinated.

We still prepared to offer an extra service on two Sundays for those who did not wish to disclose their status, not knowing whether anyone would attend. The first Sunday, no one came, which was not a surprise. We maintained our plan to run it the following Sunday.

That morning, a new visitor arrived at our main 10am service, and disclosed that he had not been vaccinated. I was called by the ushers to come and ask him to leave which is our policy so that volunteers don't have to do the awkward stuff. It was such a tough moment, because a guest literally walking in off the street is so rare (even before Covid), and it was devastating to tell him he couldn't come in. Matthew (we'll call him) was very understanding and was keen for a chat, and it became clear that he needed a lot of social support as well as spiritual. He was new to the area and likely in Department of Housing accommodation (again, reasonably rare for our congregation - and a heart's desire of many, to make a difference to those in need.) It was so disappointing to not be able to introduce him to others and make him feel welcome.

I told him that there was a 5pm service for unvaccinated people that evening and he said he'd come. I made some hasty arrangements to ensure that I wasn't the only one attending with him - which meant getting child minding for our daughter so my husband could come.

Matthew turned up really early at 4:30pm and the three of us were able to have a good chat and a cuppa. As it approached 5pm, Matthew commented that there mustn't be a service on. We assured him there was but that it would be small... and then another woman from the church turned up unexpectedly. It was an incredible moment of grace, because if anyone has a missional heart, it's this woman. She's great with a range of folk from diverse backgrounds.

The four of us sat around the Communion table in the auditorium, and Phil shared some reflections from 1 Peter 4 around suffering for being a Christian and doing good. Again, an incredible moment of grace as it resonated very strongly with Matthew. We shared a simple Lord's Supper and prayers.

As the service was ending, my disappointment grew again. I explained to Matthew that I was very sorry, but we were not able to offer another mixed status service for quite a while, because of other events on the church calendar. He was very keen to talk about the vaccine and shared his spiritual concerns about it being connected to "the mark of the beast." The three of us shared why we were comfortable with vaccination and why we felt it was spiritually acceptable and safe.

To our enormous surprise, Matthew listened and responded, "I'm just going to go and get it then!" He said he'd been beating himself up about it, believing that God wouldn't want him to put it in his body - but that he really wanted to be able to get out and meet people in the area, and be involved in things at the church as well, so he would get it straight away!

The next Sunday, he turned up at 10am again - and he'd had his first vaccine! He knew he couldn't come in but enjoyed saying Hi and being brought a coffee on the stairs. We hope to see him at our men's breakfast in a few weeks' time, and we look forward to seeing what the Lord will do through this amazing moment of connection where our disappointment was turned upside in God's grace.

- Rev Megan Curlis-Gibson



PROJECT OFFICER, SAFE AND THRIVING CALD ANGLICAN COMMUNITIES

An exciting opportunity has become available within the Diocese Prevention of Violence against Women Program team.

Applications are now open for a **Project Officer, Safe and thriving (CALD) Anglican communities**. This is a newly created role that will work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Anglican communities in Greater Melbourne and Geelong to prevent violence against women.

This is a part-time (0.6 FTE), three-year fixed term contract reporting to the Program Manager, Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW). For more information, please see our advertisement on Eternity Jobs by clicking [here](#).

Applications close midnight Sunday, 12 December 2021 and can be made directly via Eternity Jobs or by sending a resume & cover letter [here](#).

If you would like a copy of the position description or have queries related to the position, please contact Grace Lococo [here](#).

so that we
remember.



Ray Barraclough's daily journal of massacres in Australia's colonial and post-colonial history has now been published as a Blog.

You can take a daily journal of reflection on the past with the blog which is a painstaking and dedicated curation by Ray with illustrations by the Revd Canon Glenn Loughrey.

You can see it [here](#) and subscribe for monthly updates.

ADVANCE NOTICE

Marmingatha Episcopate ReTreat & Conference

23 – 25 May 2022

Foothills Conference

Centre Mooroolbark

Optional reTreat

Monday afternoon until Tuesday Morning

Episcopate Conference

Tuesday afternoon until Wednesday afternoon

Anglican Diocese of Melbourne Ministry Conference 2023

9 – 11 May

Location to be advised

Dear Colleagues,

The epistles set for Advent are Paul's prayers as he looks to the coming of Jesus. Last Sunday from 1Thessalonians 3 we see him pray for the church to become a place where love abounds - love for each other and love for everyone. As we experience the joy of what Paul longed for - being together face to face (v 10) - I want to thank you for the love you are showing. Working through with the people in your care what it means to provide ministry for all and all that means for this time as we come to celebrate Christ's birth.



Click here for this weeks' video message from the Archbishop

Come Lord Jesus, come
+Génieve