

# Golden Plains Anglican News

*Living the Gospel in Our Community*

✠ Inverleigh ✠ Bannockburn ✠ Meredith  
8th MARCH 2026—THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

## CHURCH GROWTH REQUIRES EMPATHY

*As we welcome people, perhaps the most important question about ourselves we can ask is 'What assumptions are we making?'*

I was recently at Walsingham (UK) and experienced a style and context very different from anything with which I am familiar. The rhythms of liturgy, the symbolism, the silence, the movement, the expectations of posture and response—all of it felt unfamiliar at first. And yet, within the unfamiliarity, I found a valuable reminder: this is how it can feel to be new.

At *Leading your Church into Growth* (LYCIG), we celebrate that we work across the breadth of church traditions with a diverse team.

We move between charismatic and contemplative spaces, informal gatherings and highly structured liturgies.

That diversity is a gift. But it also prompts an important question for those committed to church growth: How does it feel to step into our worship for the first time? When we find ourselves in an unfamiliar worship context, even as mature Christians, we can feel unsure. Are we standing at the right moment? Should we say these words? What does this symbol mean? Is everyone else understanding something I don't? If that is how confident believers feel, how much more disorientating might church feel to someone exploring the faith for the first time?

Difference itself is not the problem. The Church has always worshipped in many languages, cultures, and forms. The challenge is not variety but making assumptions.

Every church culture carries invisible assumptions: that people know the Lord's Prayer; that they understand what "communion" means; that they recognise why some kneel, cross themselves, or lift their hands; that they instinctively know when to speak and when to remain silent.

We rarely intend to exclude anyone. But when we fail to explain what is

(Continued on page 4)

## Parish Directory

5281 2553

Parish Office

Vicar

Revd Timothy Smith

0412 673 152

revdtrm@hotmail.com

Wardens

Darrell Blackman

0457 338 678

Carol Newlands

0409 654 527

David Bannister

0477 564 268

Parish Council Secretary

Carol Newlands

0409 654 527

Parish Treasurer

David Osborne

0419 398 455

Assistant Treasurer

Luanne Thornton

0437 667 011

St John's Op Shop

Naomi Peel

0418 346 484

Surprise Op Shop

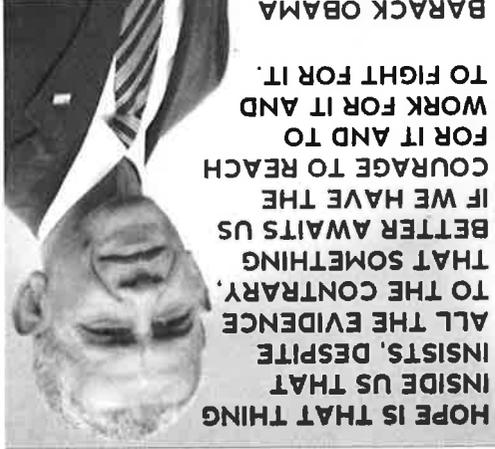
Luanne Thornton

0437 667 011

Pastoral Care

pastoralcare.gpas@gmail.com

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HOPE IS THAT THING

INSIDE US THAT

INSISTS, DESPITE

ALL THE EVIDENCE

TO THE CONTRARY,

THAT SOMETHING

BETTER AWAITS US

IF WE HAVE THE

COURAGE TO REACH

FOR IT AND TO

WORK FOR IT AND

TO FIGHT FOR IT.

BARACK OBAMA

If you boil a funny bone  
it becomes a laughing  
stock. That's humerus.



10th March

7.00 pm House Group

Teesdale

14th March

8.30 am Men's Breakfast

Parish Ministry Centre

4.15 Geelong v Fremantle

GMHBA Stadium

16th March

2.30 pm Army Chaplain Supervision

18th March

12.00 pm Deanery Meeting

Christ Church, Geelong

4.00 pm Wedding Interview

Curlewis

24th March

7.00 pm House Group

Teesdale

25th March

7.00 pm Parish Council

Parish Ministry Centre

26th March

7.30 pm Geelong v Adelaide

GMHBA Stadium

29th March

10.00 am Combined Parish Worship

Church of St Paul, Inverleigh

31st March

7.00 pm House Group

Teesdale

1st April

11.00 am Communion Estia Banno

6th April

3.15 pm Geelong v Hawthorne

MCG

7th April

7.00 pm House Group

Teesdale

## Parish Roster for March 15

Church Cleaning:

Inverleigh:

Debbie Shelley

Bannockburn:

Wendy Wood

Inverleigh:

Ivan Marselli

Banno Reading:

Christina Szabo

Communion Assistant:

Inverleigh:

Geoff Morgan

Bannockburn:

Ivan Marselli

**Worship Today: THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT**

**Sentence:** 'The water that I give,' says the Lord, 'will become in you a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' *John 4:14*

**Collect:** O God, the fountain of life, to a humanity parched with thirst you offer the living water that springs from the Rock, our Saviour Jesus Christ: stir up within your people the gift of your Spirit, that we may profess our faith with freshness and announce with joy the wonder of your love. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Readings:** Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

**Hymns:**

**Inverleigh:** 477 – Jesus calls us here to meet him; 648 – Help us accept each other; 439 – What shall we offer our Good Lord; 447 – Lord your almighty word **Bannockburn:** *Lord I come to you, Jesus calls us here to meet him; As the deer, What shall we offer our good Lord; Lord you have my heart; Your grace is enough; I believe in Jesus*

**Meredith:** *Lord I come to you, Jesus calls us here to meet him; As the deer, What shall we offer our good Lord; Your grace is enough; I believe in Jesus*

**Intercession:** *Jesus, Saviour of the world, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

**World:** peace in the Holy Land, Ukraine, Sudan, Iran and all places in conflict or war; all nations experiencing political and financial coercion; South Sudan and all developing nations; wherever there is terror, violence, injustice, loss of freedom, racism, hunger displacement and homelessness; all national leaders and law makers with responsibility to serve their people: may your kingdom come.

**Church:** that we will share the good news of God's kingdom in an uncertain world; Bp Sarah Archbishop of Canterbury, Abp Ric Thorpe, Bp Brad as he prepares for the Diocese of Adelaide; the outreach of our Youth and Family Community Cinema; grow our engagement with our communities for growth.

**Weddings:** Elise Craven and Luke Vucicevic (St Pauls, May 8)

**Baptisms:** Jeremiah Ateny Bol Ateny; Awhal Bol Ateny

**Naming:** Athok Bol Ateny (John)

**Confirmations:** Paul Nyieth Bol Ateny, Monika Akon Bol Ateny

**Community:** the Wadawarrung and all custodians of country on which we live and work, for reconciliation and treaty; for welcome and belonging as communities in diversity; those recovering from fire and floods; those facing interest rate and rental increases; those suffering food insecurity; for all farmers and graziers; for the community organisations of which we are a part.

**Those in need:** Matt Bellichambers, Shirley Musgrove, Melinda Gregory, Karen Schultze, Jenny Bannister, Margaret McLaren, Sarah Rees, Jayden Rees, Fay McFarlane, Jesse Osborne, Phil Dickson, Paul Duke, Josie Andrews, Josie Harvey, Steve and Stacey Copland, Mawut Gotbaal, Timothy Deng and Weng, Makat Majok, Judith Palmer-Howlett.

**LENTEN STUDY Joy Amid Suffering**

PRAYER FOR LENT

O God, our heavenly Father, you rejoice over your people with gladness; and in your presence there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. Though we do not yet see you, give us in this world inextinguishable joy of your Spirit, fixing your eyes on Jesus? What practical ways can help you keep off? What hindrances or sin do you need to cast away and discern what truly comes from God.

Pray for the wisdom of Gamaliel: pause, wait, and discern what truly comes from Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Sunday March 8**  
 For Daily Study  
 Read: Hebrews 12:1-3  
 Joy and pleasures for evermore. Though we do not yet see you, give us in this world inextinguishable joy of your Spirit, fixing your eyes on Jesus?  
**Monday March 9**  
 Read: Acts 5:33-42  
 Pray for the wisdom of Gamaliel: pause, wait, and discern what truly comes from Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Tuesday March 10**  
 Read: Acts 13:44-52  
 What gives you joy? Is it people of many nations turning to Jesus as they hear the gospel, the word of the Lord?  
**Wednesday March 11**  
 Read: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9  
 How does our ministry change when we focus on what we have instead of what we don't have?  
**Thursday March 12**  
 Read: 1 Peter 1  
 How often in our own use of language do we assume things are final, over, done with? Where do we see signs of hope—in our churches, lives, world—that are living?  
**Friday March 13**  
 Read: 1 Peter 4  
 How does God equip you to bear suffering for being a Christian with faith, hope, and joy?

**Saturday March 14**  
 Read: James 1:2-4  
 How can we foster the consideration of the good, the joy that hardships generate? For Weekly or Group Study

**Joy Amid Suffering**

1. What opposition do you face for being a Christian? Have you had experiences of joy in the middle of suffering?
2. Which texts of the daily readings and reflections have resonated most with you this week on the theme of joy amid suffering?
3. Hebrews 12:1-3 (Monday) urges us to shake off all sin and hindrances to faith. What hinders your faith and perseverance?
4. In 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 (Wednesday) we see that joy overflows in generosity, despite hardship. How do you explain the connection between joy and generosity? How generous is your church?
5. In the daily readings for this week we see Christians are to be joyful amid suffering, even persecution. In 1 Peter 4 (Friday) the reason for joy is given as 'because you share in Christ's sufferings'. What does this mean and how does this idea encourage and help you?
6. How does the example of Jesus encourage and/or challenge you amid suffering or trials?



AN INVITATION TO LISTEN, REFLECT,  
AND RESPOND TOGETHER

# Listening in Lent

## TAKE PART

Fill in the online questionnaire. It's open to everyone and every response is valued.



It takes around 10-15 minutes to complete.

**Bible Readings**

**Prayer for the week:**  
Lord God, our Redeemer, who heard the cry of your people and sent your servant Moses to lead them out of slavery: free us from the tyranny of sin and death and, by the leading of your Spirit, bring us to our promised land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Monday**  
Sister Emma (d. 1939) *Monastic Superior Society of the Sacred Advent QLD*  
**Morning:** Ps 21:1-22  
Jeremiah 32:1-15  
Hebrews 10:5-18  
Ps 22:23-32 & 23  
Genesis 46:26-47:12  
Luke 15:1-10

**Tuesday**  
**Morning:** Ps 25  
Jeremiah 32:16-35  
Hebrews 10:19-31  
Ps 27  
Genesis 47:13-31  
Luke 15:11-32

**Wednesday**  
**Morning:** Ps 28 & 29  
Jeremiah 32:36-33:9  
Hebrews 10:32-39  
Ps 30 & 32  
Genesis 48

**Thursday**  
**Morning:** Ps 31  
Jeremiah 33:10-26  
Hebrews 11:1-12  
Ps 33  
Genesis 49:1-21  
Luke 16:14-31

**Friday**  
**Morning:** Ps 35:1-17  
Jeremiah 34:(1-7)-8-22  
Hebrews 11:13-28

**Evening:** Pss 35:18-29 & 36  
Genesis 49:22-50:6  
Luke 17:1-19

**Saturday**  
**Morning:** Ps 34  
Jeremiah 35  
Hebrews 11:29-40  
Ps 119:17-40  
Genesis 50:7-26  
Luke 17:20-37



IF YOU THINK  
I'M TOO WOKE-  
TALK TO MY  
BOSS.

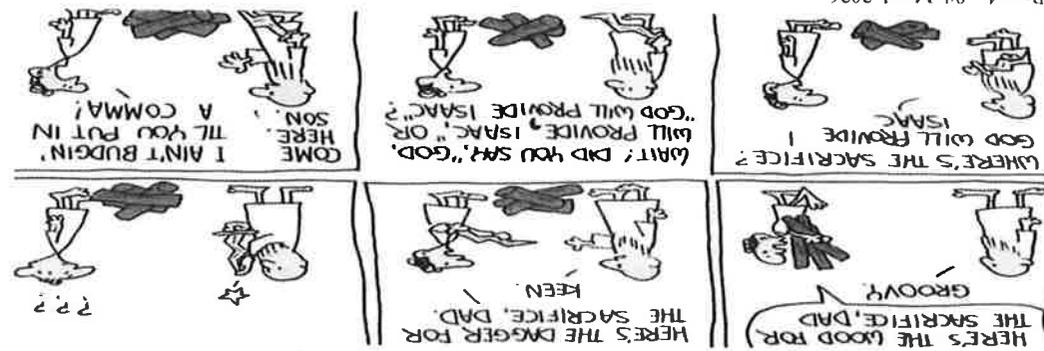
**Next Sunday 15th March**  
**FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**  
8.00 am Holy Communion  
Inverleigh  
10.00 am All-Age Communion  
Bannockburn  
5.00 pm Holy Communion  
Meredith  
**Readings**  
1 Samuel 16:1-13  
Psalm 23  
Ephesians 5:8-14  
John 9:1-41

happening, we can unintentionally reinforce the sense that this space belongs to insiders. For churches seeking growth, this matters deeply. Hospitality is not only about coffee at the door. It is also about interpretive hospitality: helping people understand what they are seeing and experiencing. Explanation does not dilute worship; it deepens it. A simple sentence such as, "We're about to share bread and wine as a way of remembering Jesus' death and resurrection. If you'd prefer to observe, that is absolutely fine," can lower anxiety immediately. Or, "You'll notice some people kneel during this prayer. Please feel free to join in, or remain seated." These small phrases give permission, They communicate, "You are welcome exactly as you are." This is especially important when working across traditions.

At LYCIG, where we collaborate across the spectrum of church practice, we are well placed to model this generosity. What is second nature in one tradition can be completely new in another. The more aware we are of this, the more accessible our gatherings become. If we want people to feel comfortable, we might ask ourselves a few searching questions. Are we aware of insider language? Words like "Eucharist," "anointing," or even "service" may need gentle explanation.

Do we give people permission not to know? It is liberating to hear, "If this is new to you, don't worry—just watch an listen." Is our tone warm and relaxed? Do we recognise that people engage differently—some through silence, others through song, some emotionally, others reflectively? Church growth does not require uniformity. It requires empathy. The gospel is constant, but its expression is always contextual. Our task is not to flatten traditions, but to remove unnecessary barriers to encounter.

My time at Walsingham did not persuade me that one style is better than another. Instead, it sharpened my awareness of how much we rely on shared knowledge and unspoken cues. Experiencing difference was a gift because it reminded me what it feels like to be unsure. As we continue to serve, perhaps the most fruitful questions we can ask are simple: What assumptions are we making? Are we explaining what is happening? Are we helping people feel at ease? When we do, we reflect the heart of Christ who met people where they were and created spaces where outsiders became family. And that is the heart of church growth.



**LENT APPEAL 2026**

**GIVE WATER, GIVE LIFE**

To Donate Online, please scan the QR code or visit [www.admission.org/Lent2026](http://www.admission.org/Lent2026)

### SYNOD REPRESENTATIVES

Archbishop's mandate has been received for the election of Parish Representatives to Diocesan Synod by April 26 to be registers May 1. 2 Lay Representatives and 1 Alternate Representative should one not be able to attend. Nomination forms from Revd Tim.

**INTRODUCING**  
The Right Rev'd  
Genevive Blackwell



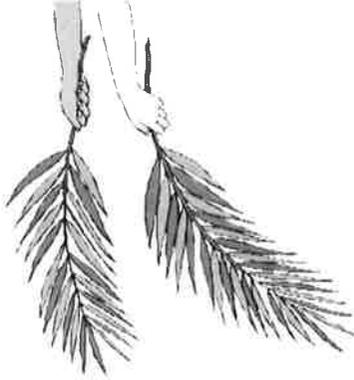
With Bp Brad taking up his role as Abp of Adelaide, Bp Genevive will now be the bishop overseeing for our Godthenong Episcopate.

## PALM SUNDAY

Bishop Phillip Huggins will be with us

**Palm Sunday**

**29th March**



To preside over

**Baptism**

**Confirmation**

(of some of our South

Sudanese Community)

and

**Reception into the**

**Anglican Church**

Although this is a fifth Sunday of the month because of the possible numbers

our combined Parish Worship will be at

**10.00 am**

**Church of St Paul**

**Inverleigh.**

If you would like to be

confirmed or received into the Anglican Church from another

Christian denomination,

please speak to Revd Tim.