

**Anam Cara Community**



## ***Waterholes: 7 October 2017***



Lake Narracan, Newborough . Photo Jane Macqueen

### **Welcome**

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 8th October 2017.

**Why this newsletter?** This newsletter is one of the ways by which we hope to promote community. The Anam Cara Community is intended to be much more than simply a group of likeminded people. We hope it will continue to grow into a community that is a sign of God's presence in and love for the world, a dispersed community of contemplatives whose lives and action bring peace and healing to all of God's children. We are a Community of Prayer, and believe that as we pray together, God calls us deeper into fellowship with one another.

**Who is welcome?** The Anam Cara Community is proud to welcome anyone, from any background or faith community (or none!). We are an open and inclusive community that affirms the dignity and worth of all humans, the value of the environment, and seeks to model a way of living with one another and the world that points to the love and care of God for everyone. Individuals who wish to formally join the Community are welcome to become associates.

## Coming Events

### QUIET DAY - NEXT SATURDAY!

Don't miss out on a day to rediscover:

Simplicity and stillness

Come, rest, reflect, renew, refresh...

**Led by Dean Susanna Pain**

**Saturday 14th October 2017**

9.30am - 3.30pm

St Paul's Cathedral, Sale.

**Please RSVP to help us with planning the space.**



***God help us to live slowly:***

***To move simply:***

***To look softly:***

***To allow emptiness:***

***To let the heart create for us.***

***Amen***

**Michael Leunig**

What to bring: your lunch, pen & notepad.

Tea/coffee/water & Morning Tea provided.

Donations welcomed nil - \$15 depending on means.

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## For your prayers

Part of the joy of the Anam Cara Community is the gift of being called to pray for others. If you would like the Community to pray for you, or for someone else, please email or call Jane ([0411 316 346](tel:0411316346) or [jemacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:jemacqueen@gmail.com)) who will add them to the prayer list, and ensure they are included in our roster of prayers.

At present, your prayers are asked for:

- Bishop Kay in her ministry and leadership, giving thanks for her ministry amongst us and for her calling to be Archbishop of Perth.
- The registry staff, Brian, Annette, Kellie, Sue and David.
- Dean Susanna and Kate Campbell as they prepare for the Quiet Day next Saturday and for all who will attend.
- Edie Ashley, the Abbey Chapter and all who are joining in retreat with St Clare and St Francis this weekend.
- Associates who have asked for prayer: Norma, June, Chris Venning, Joan Smith.
- For all suffering following extreme weather events.
- For those grieving and experiencing suffering as result of senseless violence.
- For peacemakers in our world. For political leaders in their discussions and decision making.
- For all refugees and asylum seekers across the globe.

### Prayer of the day.

Almighty God,

your Son Jesus was the stone rejected by the builders,

and, by your doing, he has been made the chief cornerstone:

grant that, by the power of his Spirit working in us,

we may become living stones

built up into your dwelling place,

a temple holy and acceptable to you;

through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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# Reflection

*The Rev Christopher Venning, Uniting Church, Bendigo*

## WE JOURNEY WITH JESUS

Exodus 20.1-4, 7-9, 12-20   Psalm 19   Philippians 3.1-14   Matthew 21.33-46

My musical journey as a child and young adult was, like my reading, catholic and eclectic. Along with hymns and choruses, I listened to and sang along with Elvis and Buddy Holly, the Beatles and Abba, with some country and classical music added to the mix. There was also the disco gospel music of Boney M, whose *Rivers of Babylon* included the lyrics 'Let the words of our mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight here tonight' - based on the final verse of today's Psalm.

*Today's readings guide us through Law and Gospel as we seek to journey with Jesus.*

We begin in **Exodus 20** with the classic form of the Ten Commandments given to, and through, Moses. David Manton describes this passage as 'amongst the most important parts of the tradition of Israel, for it defines how the people are to relate to Yahweh as well as to each other' (*With Love to the World*, Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 42). Manton reminds us that it also forms the foundation of our own civil law. Luther saw the Law as a schoolmaster that brings us to Christ that we may be justified. Freed from having to keep the Law in order to gain salvation, it becomes again positive rather than accusing us of sin. The Law becomes again what EF Kevan called 'the outshining of God's nature', a guide for faith and life.

**Psalm 19** is surely among the richest of the Psalms. It opens with one of Scripture's most poetic passages about creation (v1-6), describing how the sky reveals God's glory, and comparing the sun to a happy bridegroom and an eager athlete. I recently stood outside a Sea Lake farmhouse with my host to gaze on the rose blush of the Aurora Australis, the Southern Lights. A short time later I joined well over a hundred Chinese visitors at Lake Tyrrell who were also eager to view the Aurora. On this occasion the sheets of light were white rather than the rosy pinkish colour I had seen earlier, but no less spectacular. The heavens/skies show God's glory in so many ways. Verses 7-11 praise the perfection and rightness of the laws of the LORD, and suggests they are 'more desirable than the finest gold' and 'sweeter than the purest honey' (v10). The final verse (14), to which I referred earlier, contains the prayer that the psalmist's words and thoughts may be acceptable to Yahweh, the LORD.

I've chosen to use Paul's letter to the **Philippians 3.1-14** as today's Epistle rather than beginning at 3.4b like the lectionary. Some major themes are joy, union with Christ, and perseverance in the faith. In our reading, the Apostle exhorts his readers to 'be joyful in [their] union with the Lord' (v1) and in v3 writes '[we] rejoice in our life in union with Christ Jesus'. Paul underlines his external credentials, including his bloodline and zeal for the Jewish Law as both a Pharisee (v5) and persecutor of the church (v6). But all this he counts as 'mere garbage' (GNB) so that he may

gain Christ and union with him (v8). He has gladly surrendered any claim to righteousness by keeping the Law in order to have the righteousness that comes from God through faith in Christ (v9). Philippians 3.12-14 mirrors the psalmist's image of the sun as 'an athlete eager to run a race' (Psalm 19.5). Paul compares himself to an athlete striving toward the prize which is resurrection in Christ Jesus. In the verses that follow our reading, Paul urges the Philippians to imitate him in this, and to persevere in the faith.

The Gospel in many ways echoes the message of Philippians. We have traversed from the Law in Exodus 20 and Psalm 19 to Gospel in the preaching of Paul and the teaching of Jesus. In **Matthew 21.33-46** we encounter the Parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard. Many of the parables are addressed specifically to the 'chief priests and Pharisees'. Verses 45-46 make clear that the Jewish leaders recognised Jesus was referring to them as the disloyal, rebellious and violent tenants who beat or killed the vineyard owner's servants and even his son. Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God was accompanied by a welcome to many that the religious leaders viewed as obvious sinners. In contrast to many such sinners, the Pharisees' conviction about their own rightness and righteousness blinded them to the free forgiveness and liberating love of God present in Jesus' Messianic ministry.

A long-time friend Rowland Croucher tells a story of speaking to a conservative Evangelical congregation and listing the positive characteristics of the Pharisees. He wrote on a board that they were 'Bible believing', 'lived moral lives', 'tithed their incomes', and so on. There was complete silence, and Rowlie turned and asked, 'Is there something wrong?' One of the congregation blurted out, 'But that's us!' We need to take care that we do not – or have not – become the Pharisees of our generation. God's Law at deeper than a surface level - as we find in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount - challenges our morality. But likewise, our all too ready self-rightness and self-righteousness challenge the genuineness and depth of our dependence on God's love and righteousness through Jesus Christ. Paul reminds us in his Letters that God's grace in Christ is the sole foundation of our forgiveness and justification. I love Luther's mantra: 'Always a sinner, always repentant, always righteous!'

As Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and the Scriptures themselves repeatedly remind us, our life on earth is a pilgrimage, a journey of faith. Among its many transitions is the one we have glimpsed in today's readings and reflection – from Law to Gospel, that is, from relying on our own efforts to gain God's acceptance to yielding in faith to God's gift of righteousness in Christ. Again to quote Luther, 'Faith is the empty hand that receives the finished work of Christ.' One of the many paradoxes we meet in the Christian life and the Bible is that having taken this step of faith, we can embrace God's Law as a friend and guide - while constantly reminding ourselves it ought not again to become a distraction from God's free gift in Christ.

*Above all else, we journey with Jesus!*

Of course, under God in Christ and the Holy Spirit, we have many teachers in the faith. In the latter half of my life many of the Celtic saints have been valued mentors, not least on the theme

of journey or pilgrimage. One of my favourite Celtic prayers is attributed to St Brendan the Navigator who, along with St Columba of Iona, was one of the so-called 'Twelve Apostles of Ireland', sixth century monastic saints who studied with St Finian at Clonard Abbey and then took the gospel far and wide in the world of their day:

"Help me to journey beyond the familiar and into the unknown.

Give me the faith to leave old ways and break fresh ground with you.

Christ of the mysteries, I trust you to be stronger than each storm within me.

I will trust in the darkness and know that my times, even now, are in your hand.

Tune my spirit to the music of heaven, and somehow,

make my obedience count for you." AMEN.

## Photo Reflection



All things in due time... This last fortnight I have watched as my neighbours tree has exploded with thick beautiful spring blossoms. During this time the crab apple tree that sits in the corner of my garden has remained stubbornly bare. Finally I noticed the first tiny green leaves, followed by some tight buds, and the first small flat flower. Not an extravagant display of double white blossoms like my neighbours tree, but delicate flowers opening in due time.

It is good to remember not to compare my life with others, either in timing or appearance/fruitfulness. Some things will take a little longer to blossom, and what a wonderful thing that is. Jane

# Further opportunities for Spiritual Nurture

## 1. St Paul's Cathedral, Sale.

AWAKEN Spring Festival - Speakers with ideas to stretch stimulate and nourish

[Saturday 21st October 1.30pm - 5pm](#)

**The Earth is the Lord's** - Listening to God in Scripture and Creation

**Graeme Garrett and Jan Morgan**

## ROBIN MANN Concert

[Wednesday 22 November at 7.30pm](#) in the Cathedral...

Robin's been leading and writing songs for over 40 years, and he hopes to do some more yet. While he's best known for songs like *Father welcomes*, *Comfort comfort* and *May the feet of God walk with you* (and more recent ones *God. Version 1.0* and *For you, deep stillness*), he also performs some 'non-singalong' songs, especially for groups who didn't get the 'community singing' gene.

## Christian Meditation

- [7.45am - 8.15am](#) every [Wednesday](#) AND

- [5.30 - 6.00 pm](#) every [Thursday](#)

Christian Meditation is a spiritual wisdom and a practice leading from the mind to the heart. It is a way of simplicity, silence, stillness and openness to God. It can be practised by anyone, wherever you are on your life's journey. It is only necessary to begin – and to keep on beginning.

Contact: Susanna Pain [susanna.pain@gmail.com](mailto:susanna.pain@gmail.com)

This practice is in the tradition of the World Community for Christian Meditation <http://www.wccm.org/>

Evening Prayer with focus on intercession 5.15pm Mondays

## 2. Meditation - the Chapel of St James, Traralgon

A group of people who are exploring the inner journey regularly meet for prayer and meditation together. We meet twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Monday mornings [at 10 am](#). During the hour we spend together we share the reading of scripture, prayer and music. There is a long period of silent meditation. To sit in silence together before God helps us to recognise God in the complexities of our lives. In the depth of our being there is always a sanctuary filled with God's presence. We can go there in silence to be and to listen. All are welcome.

### 3. Bass Hill Hermitage

#### Thinking about making a silent Retreat?

Bass Hill Hermitage is on the Bass Coast, near Phillip Island. The Hermitage has its roots in the traditions of Christian Spirituality. It is a perfect place to reflect, pray and deepen your relationship with God. Beginners, as well as experienced retreatants are welcome. They offer **directed and self-guided retreats as well as on-going Spiritual Direction and Supervision.** The Hermitage can also be booked for a 'Quiet break' or some 'Time Out'. Visit the informative website:

[www.basshillhermitage.com.au](http://www.basshillhermitage.com.au) for more information.

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### Support on the journey

The Anam Cara Community's ministry is to be a support to those who are on the inner journey into God. Each person's journey is different, and we recognise that there are some for whom the Christian tradition is difficult or not supportive. We're committed to finding ways to hear the needs of each Associate, and support them as we can.

#### Contacts:

- *Website:* [www.anamcaragippsland.org](http://www.anamcaragippsland.org)
  - To subscribe to or unsubscribe from the mailing list contact Jane
  - *Soul carer (Community Leader):* Jane ([0411 316 346](tel:0411316346) or [jemacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:jemacqueen@gmail.com))
  - *Secretary / Librarian:* Sue [03 5182 5542](tel:0351825542)
  - *Treasurer:* Kate
  - *Postal mail:* Anam Cara Community c/o PO Box 928, Sale, VIC 3850
  - *Diocesan Director of Professional Standards (to make complaints or express concerns about our ministries):* Ms Cheryl Russell [0407 563 313](tel:0407563313), [cheryl@gippsanglican.org.au](mailto:cheryl@gippsanglican.org.au)
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Love and prayers

Jane Macqueen

On behalf of the Servant Leaders