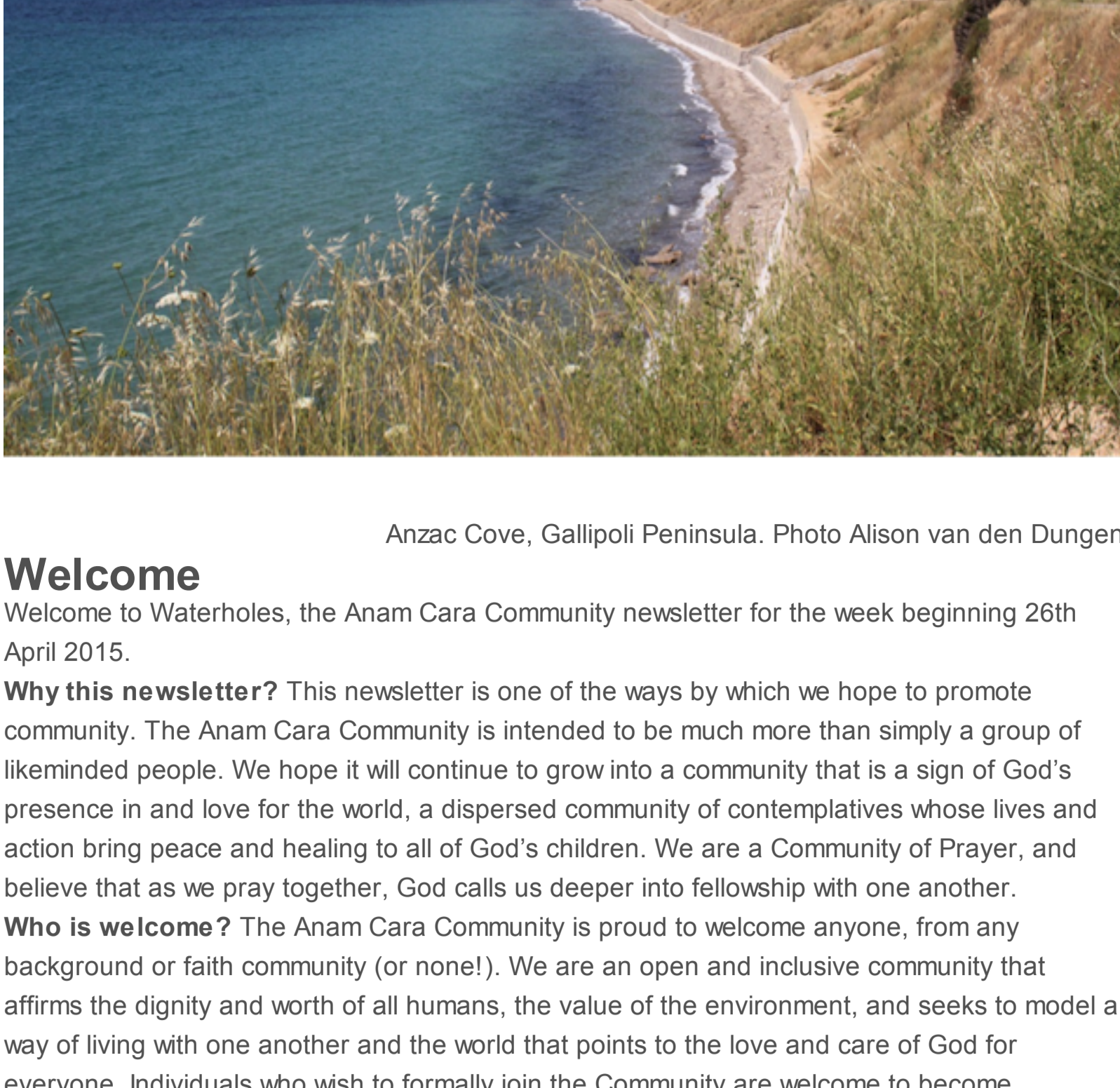


Anam Cara Community



Waterholes: 25 April 2015



Anzac Cove, Gallipoli Peninsula. Photo Alison van den Dungen

Welcome

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 26th April 2015.

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 Community Events

Quiet Day - Praying with Icons

- **Saturday 20th June 2015**
- at Greenmount Retreat Centre near Yarram
- Reflections led by The Rev'd David Head

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) 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:

- The European Union and all who are working towards a compassionate solution to the tragic deaths at sea of the many immigrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East.
- Peace and an end to all war. Safety for all who join in ANZAC celebrations in Gallipoli, New Zealand and all around our nation.
- Leaders and families in our Muslim community as they care for their young people to inspire lives of peace and life and not terror and death.
- For all refugees and asylum seekers. For just and compassionate policies particularly in our own country.
- Andrew Chan, Myuran Sukumaran and all prisoners on death row in Indonesia and their families and friends. For the efforts of all who work for mercy and an end to the capital punishment around the world.
- All families around the world touched by tragedy as a result of the inhumane actions of others, the people of Yemen, Pakistan, Nigeria, Syria, Iraq, hostages and prisoners and those suffering who are known only to God.
- Bishop Kay and the Registry staff as they prepare for Synod.
- Associates who are unwell and have asked for our prayers: Barb Logan, Sue Hopkins, Norma and June.
- Chris Venning as he discerns the next stage of his ministry.
- All who mourn the death of Joyce Elliot especially Ray and family.

Some of our Associates are in a place where we are privileged to offer ongoing prayers for them:

- Anne Turner as she faithfully continues her ministries of soul care and prayer and journeys with her deteriorating body.
- Larissa Dial and her family as Larissa continues to struggle with relapsed ovarian cancer and receives palliative chemo.

A Prayer on Anzac Day.

God of love and liberty,
we bring our thanks today for the peace and security we enjoy.

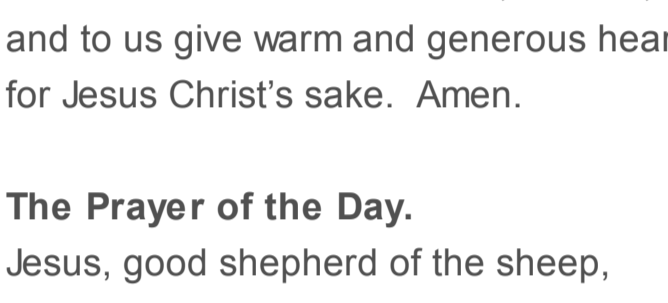
We remember those who in time of war
faithfully served their country.

We pray for their families,
and for ourselves whose freedom was won at such a cost.

Make us a people zealous for peace,
and hasten the day
when nation shall not lift up sword against nation
neither learn war any more.

This we pray in the name of the one who gave his life
for the sake of the world:

Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. **Amen.**



A number of parishes in our Diocese are seeking new incumbents. I include this prayer to encourage us in our prayers for the diocese and for wisdom and discernment for all clergy appointments advisory boards.

A prayer at the time of choosing an Incumbent.

Bountiful God,
give to these parishes faithful pastors
who will faithfully speak your word
and minister your sacraments;
an encourager who will equip your people for ministry
and enable us to fulfil our calling.
Give to those who will choose, wisdom, discernment and patience,
and to us give warm and generous hearts,
for Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen.**

The Prayer of the Day.

Jesus, good shepherd of the sheep,
by whom the lost are sought
and guided into the fold:
feed us and we shall be satisfied,
heal us and we shall be whole,
and lead us that we may be with you,
where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Scripture Reflection

4th Sunday of Easter

From Associate, Retired Priest, the Rev'd Joan Smith of Canberra

The Good Shepherd

Psalm 23

It seems to me that I have always had a special affinity with the description of Jesus as "The Good Shepherd", possibly dating back to the first bedtime prayer my mother taught me (and prayed with me until I knew it off by heart:

Jesus, tender shepherd, hear me, bless thy little lamb tonight.
Through the darkness be thou near me, keep me safe till morning light. Amen

This led to an appreciation of the parable of the lost sheep which was reinforced many years later by a lovely image on his shoulder, surrounded by rejoicing friends and neighbours. Then came what I want to share as my reflection for this Sunday: "The Basque Sheepherder and the Shepherd Psalm", given to me by my then Spiritual Director at a Retreat in daily Life about 10 years ago. It first appeared in the July 1950 Edition of The Reader's Digest and was reprinted some years later.

"Old Fernando D'Alfonso was a Basque sheepherder and a patriarch of his guild, the traditions of which have been handed down through 20 generations. The guild had adopted the 23rd Psalm as a lodestone to guide them. They reckoned that David and his ancestors knew sheep and their ways and that David had translated a sheep's musing into simple words, the daily repetition of which fills the shepherd with reverence for his calling. Many of his lines are simple requirements and actual duties of a Holy Land Shepherd, whether he lives today or lived 6000 years ago.

Here is his explanation, line by line:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Sheep instinctively know that before they have been folded for the night the shepherd has planned out their grazing for the next day. They do not worry whether it will be over the same path or to a new grazing ground. His guidance has been good in the past, and they have faith in the future because they know he has their well being at heart.

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

Sheep graze from around 3.30 am until about 10 am. They then lie down for 3 or 4 hours and rest. When they are contentedly chewing their cud, the shepherd knows they are putting on fat. So the good shepherd starts his flock out in the early hours of the rougher herbage, moving on through the morning to the richer, sweeter grasses, and finally coming to rest in fine green pastures, the best grazing of the day. Sheep resting in such happy surroundings feel contentment.

He leads me beside the still waters.

Every shepherd knows that sheep will not drink gurgling water. There are many small springs high in the hills of the Holy Land, whose waters run down the valleys only to evaporate in the desert sun. Although the sheep need water, they will not drink from these fast flowing streams. The shepherd must find a place where rocks or erosion have made a little pool, or else he fashions with his hands a pocket sufficient to hold at least a bucketful.

He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

In the Holy Land, each sheep takes his place in the grazing line in the morning and keeps the same position throughout the day. However, once during the day each sheep leaves its place and goes to the shepherd, who stretches out his hand and rubs the animal's nose and ears, scratches its chin and whispers affectionately into its ears. Meanwhile, the sheep rubs against his leg, or, if the shepherd is sitting down, nibbles at his ear and rubs its cheek against his face. After a few minutes of this communion with the master, the sheep returns to its place in the feeding line.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:

for you are with me, your rod and your staff comfort me.

There is an actual 'Valley of the Shadow of Death' in Palestine. It is south of the Jericho Road leading from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, and it is a narrow defile through a mountain range. Climatic and grazing conditions make it necessary for sheep to be moved through this valley for seasonal feeding each year. The valley is 4.5 miles long and its side walls are over 1500 feet high in places, while only 10-12 feet wide at the bottom. Travel through the valley is dangerous because its floor has gullies 7 or 8 feet deep, making it difficult for a sheep to turn around. It is an unwritten law that flocks must go up the valley in the morning hours down towards evening, lest the flocks meet in the defile.

About halfway through the valley, the walk crosses from one side to the other at a place where the path is 18 inches higher than the other; the sheep must jump across it. The shepherd stands at this break and coaxes or forces each one to make the leap. If a sheep slips and lands in the gully, the shepherd's rod is brought into play. The old style crook circles a large sheep's neck or a small sheep's chest and the animal is lifted to safety. If a more modern, narrow crook is used, the sheep is caught about the hoofs and lifted up to the walk. Many wild dogs lurk in the shadows of the valley, looking for prey. The shepherd, skilled in throwing his staff, uses it as a weapon. Thus the shepherd is there to protect to fear no evil, even in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, for their master is there to learned from harm.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

David's meaning is simple: when conditions on the Holy Land sheep ranges are known: Poisonous plants which are fatal to grazing animals abound. Each Spring, the shepherd must be constantly alert. When he finds such plants, he takes his mattock and goes on ahead of the flock, grubbing out every stock and root he can see. As he digs out the weeds, he lays them upon little stone pyres, some of which were built by shepherds in Old Testament days, and by the morrow they are dry enough to burn. When the pasture is free from poisonous plants, the sheep are led into it and, in the presence of their plant enemies, they eat in peace.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

At every sheepfold there is a big earthenware bowl and a large jar of water. As the sheep come in for the night, they are led to a gate. The shepherd lays his rod across the top of the gateway just above the backs of his sheep. As each sheep passes, he quickly examines it for briers in the ears, snags in the cheek or weeping of the eyes from dust or scratches. When such conditions are found, he drops the rod across the sheep's back and it steps out of line.

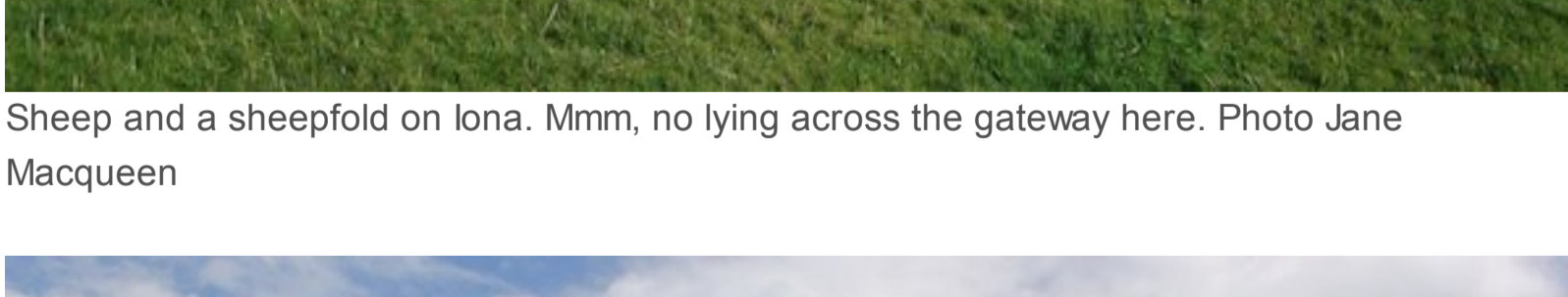
Each sheep's wounds are carefully cleaned. Then the shepherd dips his hand into the olive oil and anoints the injury. A large cup is dipped into the jar of water, kept cool by evaporation in the unglazed pottery, and is brought out - never half full but always overflowing. The sheep will sink its nose into the water up to its eyes, if fevered, and drink until fully refreshed. When all the sheep are at rest, the shepherd places his staff within reach in case it is needed during the night. Then he wraps himself in his woollen robe and lies down across the gateway to rest, facing his sheep.

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

After all the care and protection the shepherd has given it, a sheep may well come to this conclusion!"

Comment: While this may be a literal explanation, I believe it is able to inspire our trust in Jesus, the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for us, and continues to tend us as we come to him, totally confident in his care for us.

Photo Reflections



Sheep and a sheepfold on Iona. Mmm, no lying across the gateway here. Photo Jane Macqueen



Looking up from the beach at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli Peninsula. Photo Alison van den Dungen

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:

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- **Secretary / Librarian:** Sue [03 5182 5542](tel:0351825542)
- **Treasurer:** Kate
- **Postal mail:** Anam Cara Community, PO Box 708, 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), cherylr@gippisanglican.org.au

Love and prayers

Jane Macqueen

On behalf of the Servant Leaders

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