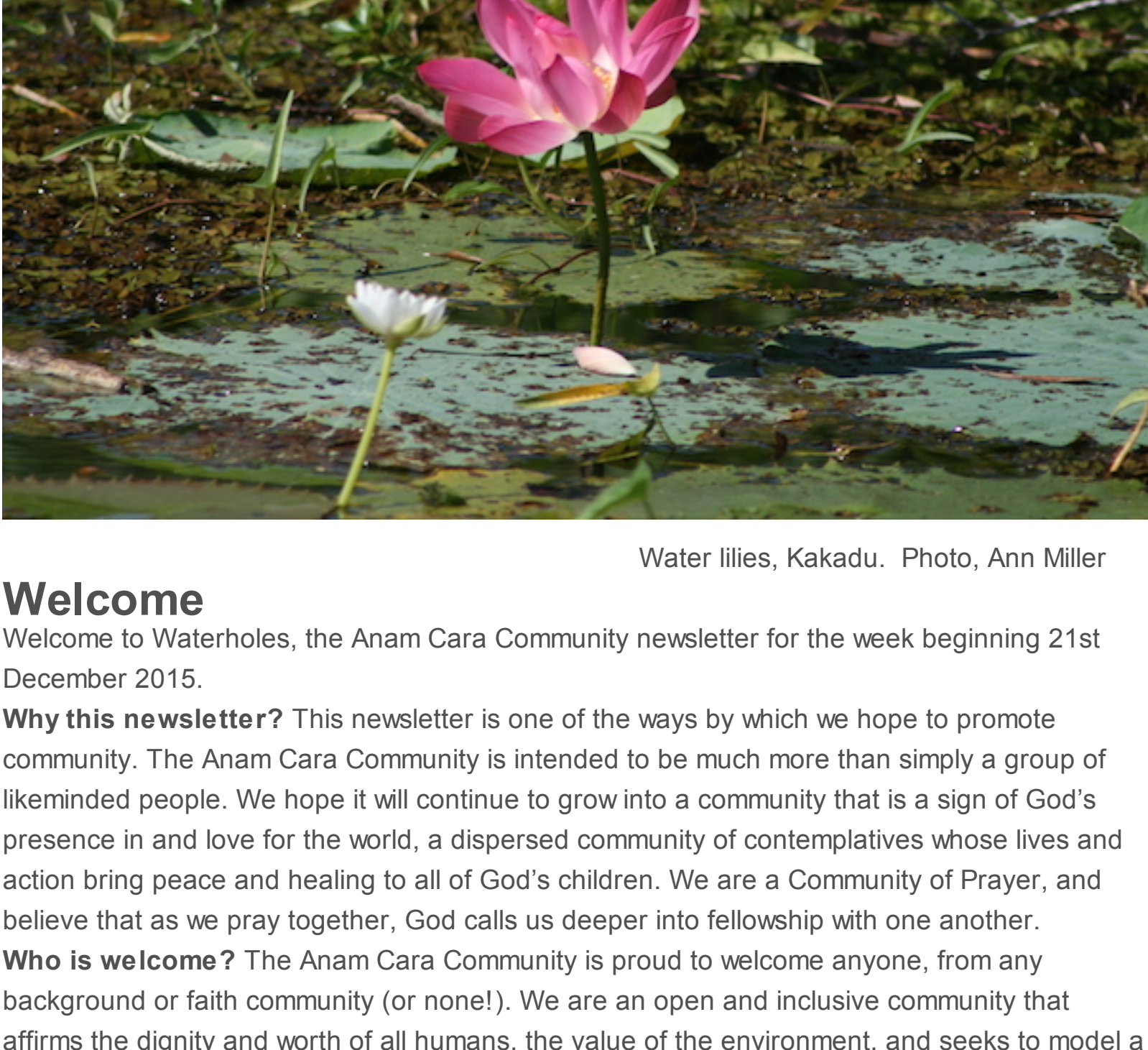


## Anam Cara Community

### Waterholes: 19 December 2015



Water lilies, Kakadu. Photo, Ann Miller

#### Welcome

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 21st December 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 open to welcome anyone, from any background or faith community (or none!). We are an proud 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.

#### Community News

##### The Season of Advent leads us to Christmas Day...

Throughout the season of Advent I have found the small booklet prepared by Anglican Overseas Aid, Anglicord very helpful in allowing me to reflect on what Advent means. It has been an invitation to enter into a reflective space and in the midst of the busyness of the final weeks of a school term for me (which have included the sudden death of a student last Sunday morning). It has been a gift to me and so I share some of this Advent reflection with you. The simple booklet led us through the traditional advent themes of hope, love, joy and peace. Week one we considered hope, an anchor during adversity that sustains us despite the trials and tribulations that life often throws at us. In week two the theme was love, reflecting the Christian understanding that God is love and considering sacrificial love. We read the words of Mother Theresa, "Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier." Week three was joy, the joy that comes from within and is not dependent on circumstances.

On this final week of Advent we consider the theme of peace. Something the ancient Israelites saw as encompassing the whole of life. They called it shalom. It was not just about the absence of conflict, but it was also about an inner contentment... the sense that everything is okay despite what we may see around us.

As we each prepare to enter the season of Christmas I pray that you are able to rest in God whatever your present circumstances and know hope, love, joy and peace in your lives. This is the final Waterholes issue for 2015 and I would like to thank all of those who contribute to this ministry through the offering of written reflections, photos and prayer requests. Waterholes will be in recess over January so please note the invitation below to attend a Piano Concert on 17th January to celebrate the retirement of Brian Turner from active parish ministry. Waterholes will commence again in February 2016.

I will leave you with the final reflection from 'Towards Christmas, An Advent Reflection' which is for Christmas Eve.

##### The Christ Candle

"The Christ Candle is lit on Christmas Eve to celebrate the imminent birth of Christ. It is where hope, love, joy and peace converge. Our waiting and anticipation is over; the salvation of the world has begun.

Take time to reflect and act on the themes of hope, love, joy and peace and how they relate to the birth of Jesus.

For example, perform a random act of kindness for someone, spend some time delighting in nature, or take time to simply be still and sit in silence."

Love and prayers,  
Jane

#### 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:

- The Cathedral parish and the ministry of The Rev'd John Stewart, locum priest throughout Advent and The Rev'd Amy Turner who will continue a locum ministry on Sundays throughout January.
- Bishop Kay and all Priests and Deacons as they share the Christmas message with their communities this Christmas season.
- Thanksgiving as Brian has received good news from his specialist, his recent scans show that the cancer is stable which is the best possible outcome at this stage. We pray that it remains stable and for he and Anne as they celebrate Christmas with family.
- Heather Toms and her mother Margaret as Margaret receives palliative care.
- Chris Venning as he recovers from surgery.
- Associates who have asked for our prayers: Sue Hopkins, Norma and June.
- Thanksgiving as Val Lawrence has had good results from both dental surgery and other surgery.
- For all mourning the death of loved ones especially in this Christmas season.
- For all who work and provide safety this holiday season, the CFA as they fight bush fires presently burning in Victoria, Paramedics, Police and health workers.
- For the ministry of the Anglican Cathedral church in Jerusalem and the people of the Holy Land. Grant them peace and the assurance of your presence in every act of love and forgiveness.
- Thanksgiving for the progress made for a political solution to the conflict in Syria with the UN endorsing a roadmap for a peace process. For strength for the United Nations negotiators and for leaders to be raised up who will seek and work for peace in the middle east and relief for the long suffering people of Syria.
- Thanksgiving for the adoption of the Paris Climate Change Agreement and prayers for all those across the world to have a growing heart and will to implement changes in policy. For our own nation may our leaders discern wisely our own response and its impact on policies.
- For the leaders of the nations as they unite. May they continue to work together to navigate a way to a political solution to the increasing terror and violence.
- For all refugees and asylum seekers and for those who are working towards a compassionate solution to the increasing numbers of people fleeing their homelands.
- The leaders of our nation, political leaders, leaders of the Muslim community, church leaders, community leaders, parents and teachers. That all may work together to find words of inclusivity, hope and a way forward for our nation that does not include violence and hatred.
- For all who live with the trauma of war in their homeland.
- For the people of India, Japan, Nepal, Vanuatu, Mexico and Myanmar struggling to recover from the devastation of natural disasters.
- All families around the world touched by tragedy as a result of the inhumane actions of others, all suffering following the terrorist attacks around the world. The people of Syria, Yemen, Pakistan, Nigeria, Iraq, Afghanistan, hostages and prisoners and those suffering who are known only to God.
- For all victims of domestic violence and those who care for them.

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.

##### Prayer of the Day.

Gracious God,

you have visited your people and redeemed us in your Son:

as we prepare to celebrate his birth,

make our hearts leap for joy at the sound of your word,

and meet us by your Spirit to bless your wonderful works.

We ask this through him whose coming is certain,

whose Day draws near,

your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

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

#### Reflection

##### 4th Sunday of Advent

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

##### *The Annunciation and the Magnificat* [Luke 1: 39-55]

One way or another, we are meant to hear both the Annunciation and the Magnificat on this fourth Sunday of Advent! We either read the longer Gospel reading or use the Magnificat in place of the Psalm. What a feast and what a foretaste of the meaning of Christmas, with a delightfully human twist! We are very familiar with Mary's encounter with the angel Gabriel, but we might sometimes miss the fact that his message to Mary includes the fact of Elizabeth's pregnancy.

So, as Mary takes in the magnitude of what she has assented to, it is very natural for her to set out to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Perhaps she was seeking reassurance from the older woman or at least the comfort of knowing they had both been chosen for special pregnancies! In a sense, she got both. No sooner had Mary entered Elizabeth's house than Elizabeth felt her baby leap for joy in her womb and she was filled with the Holy Spirit, which caused her to exclaim to Mary, "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb." At this sacred moment, Elizabeth realised that she was in the presence of someone "who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." What amazing faith these two women exemplify for us!

There may have been many times as her life and that of her son unfolded when Mary was inclined to question that word "blessed" which Elizabeth applied to both Mary and the child she was to bear. Mary lived to see Jesus falsely accused, beaten and brutally executed. She heard people laugh at his agony and watched as he died on the cross. Mary's life was full of pain – yet all generations have and do call her blessed! People from every age and station have been redeemed by that story. SO much has come from Mary's "fiat", her "let it be with me according to your word". If God could do that much with a story like hers, then how much can God do with the story of our lives? Can anyone look upon us and call us blessed? They can, and they will, when we allow them to see God at work in our lives, through our joys and our sorrows alike.

As Mary is blessed because she "believed there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord", she is also inspired to declare her song of praise which we call the "Magnificat" (after the first word in the Latin translation), the first of four canticles or hymns in the infancy narrative of Luke, which in part derives from the prayer of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1-10.

There also the birth of a child of promise was acclaimed as a personal vindication and as a triumph of God the Saviour over the high and haughty, the mighty and wealthy, long before this reality was evident. That child would judge Israel and eventually anoint David as King. Now Mary picks up the refrain, giving voice to the Spirit's word to Israel. Mary may be expressing things which are far beyond her, but she is speaking prophetically. Her testimony to the purposes and power of God is a revelation of the word of the Lord.

Nevertheless, Mary's words run contrary to all the things that we think promise us fulfilment in this world. Worldly wisdom and power and wealth and strength – these are what we crave and December is the time the world promises to deliver. It's not just the giving and receiving of presents – it's the promise that they will bring us together as happy families, sharing golden moments of joy!

But fulfilment will never come from the things we think we own. If we allow it, the world will keep us too busy even to look for a deeper satisfaction. But we cannot blame the world for our shallow lives. The problem is that we are not looking. God will always answer when we take the time to seek. The Christ child is still the answer to our longing – yet not even God can bring an answer to those who will not recognise their need. If you and I are ready to confess, then we are ready for the fulfilment that only Christ can bring.

*Acknowledgement: I am indebted to the publication "The Upper Room Disciplines" and to David L Tiede's commentary on Luke's Gospel for the ideas expressed about this Gospel reading.*

##### The Song of Mary. Luke 1.47-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord:

my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

Who has looked with favour on his lowly servant:

from this day all generations will call me blessed.

The Almighty has done great things for me:

and holy is his name.

God has mercy on those who fear him:

from generation to generation.

The Lord has shown strength with his arm:

and scattered the proud in their conceit,

Casting down the mighty from their thrones:

and lifting up the lowly.

God has filled the hungry with good things:

and sent the rich away empty.

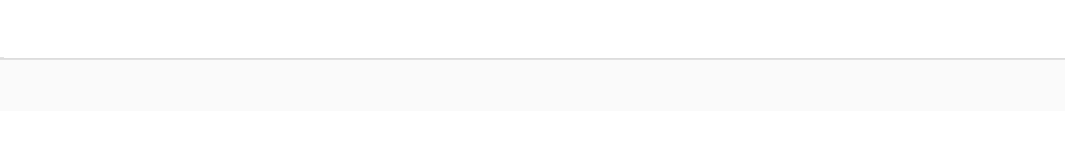
He has come to the aid of his servant Israel:

to remember the promise of mercy,

The promise made to our forebears:

to Abraham and his children for ever.

#### Photo Reflection



Picture from 'The Nativity Story'

God's purposes and plans are first revealed in a private meeting between two women on the edge of society. NT Wright.

#### You are invited to a: Piano Concert

##### To celebrate the retirement of the Rev'd Brian Turner from active parish ministry.

**When:** Sunday January 17th at 3pm.

**Where:** Gippsland Grammar Chapel and Performing Arts Centre

**Admission: \$20.00** - School children free

We will not have tickets, just pay at the door. Funds for the ministry of the Avon Anglican Parish.

**Who:** Featuring **Philip Johnston**- Philip is a concert pianist who has recorded as a solo artist for Warner Music. He is one of music educators best known and best selling writers, with his books in use by thousands of music teachers, students and universities around the world. After a ten year break from performing, in 2015 Philip started a project to record the complete works of Rachmaninoff as YouTube performances. (Search for Philip Johnston, Rachmaninoff to follow it).

##### Some words from Brian Turner:

*"Philip Johnston is my son in law. Over 24 years ago Philip honed his skills as a concert pianist when he and I toured central western NSW playing to audiences large and small on any piano we could find in churches, civic halls and homesteads. We raised over \$15,000.00 for Anglicare at that time.*

*This concert is the only item on my 'bucket list' as I celebrate my retirement from active parish ministry and prepare for the future. My thanks to Philip and the extended family, Gippsland Grammar School for the venue and piano and my Faith Community in the Avon Parish; all who have gently loved me into this new and different place and way of being."*

##### Please join us in this celebration of music and life.

#### 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, 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@gippsanglican.org.au](mailto:cherylr@gippsanglican.org.au)

Love and prayers

Jane Macqueen

On behalf of the Servant Leaders

APBA & NRSV portions, TIS hymns (Reprinted with permission.

Copyright Broughton Publishing Pty Ltd.'