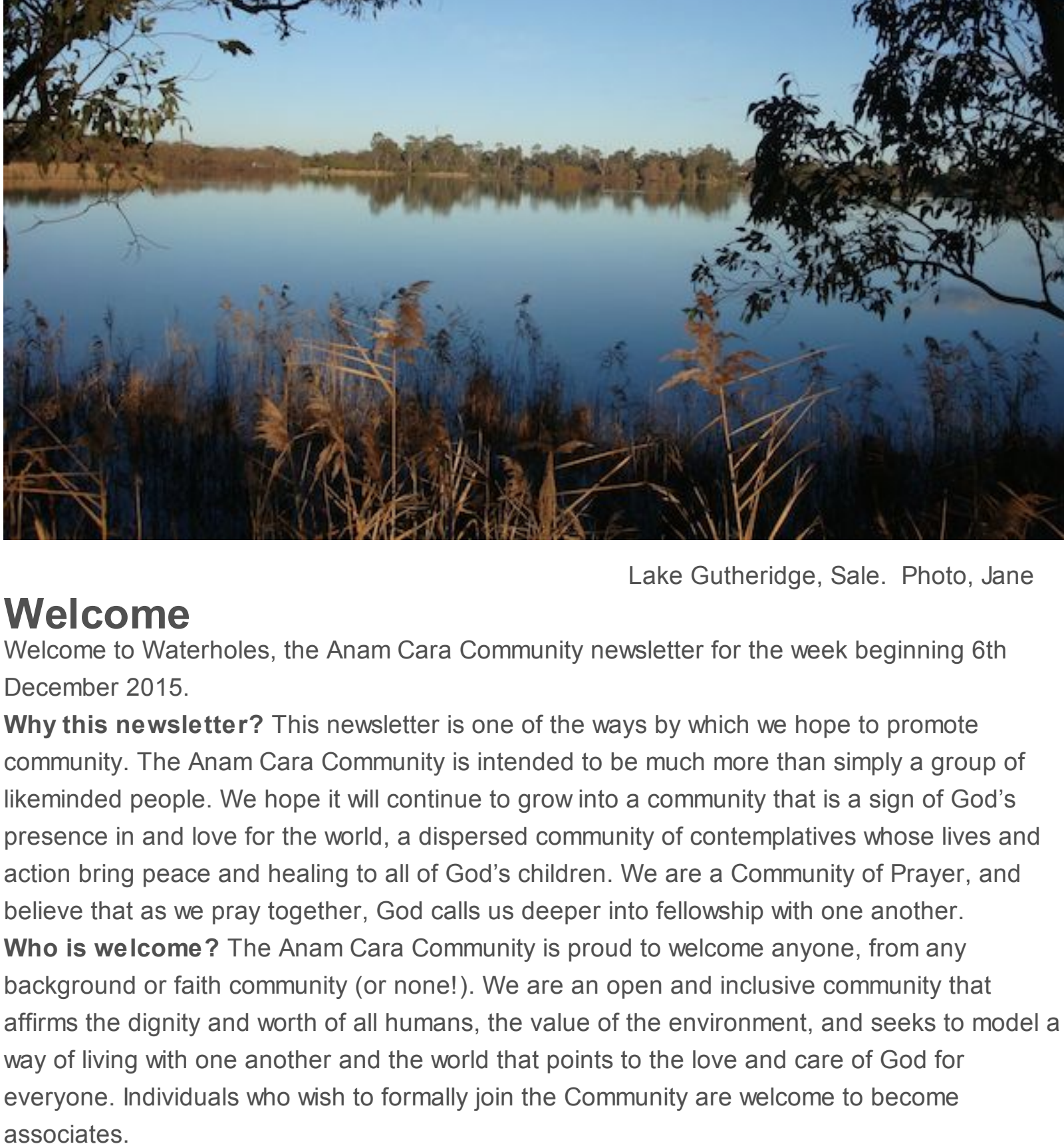


# Anam Cara Community



## Waterholes: 5 December 2015



Lake Gutheridge, Sale. Photo, Jane

### Welcome

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 6th 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 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.

### Community News

#### Photos for reflection

A number of Associates have told me that they find the photos for reflection helpful in our newsletter. You may notice that I am drawing on my own again regularly! Whilst I am happy to do this I am confident that others will have offerings that can be a blessing for us. This is also a small way in which we can grow in community as we share places, or things that speak to us. For *Waterholes* it is helpful if the photos can be taken in the landscape direction. As you will have noticed I use one to begin the newsletter with some 'water' in it. The second photo can be anything that speaks to you! Your emailed offerings will be gratefully received.

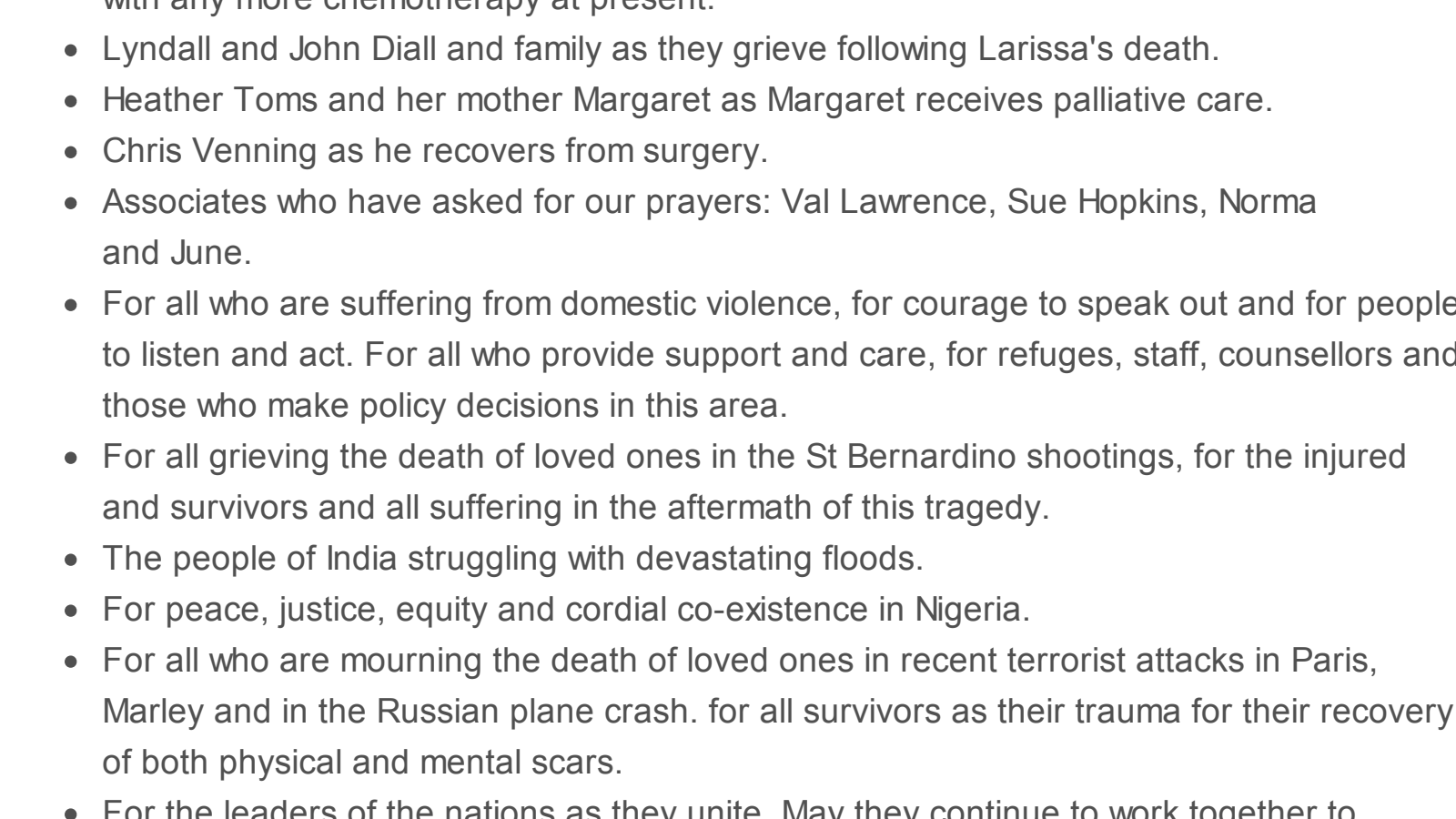
#### Annual financial Membership is now due...

**Thank you** to those Associates who have posted their subscriptions or renewed using the option of direct debit to the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland. Being a financial member of the Community is an encouragement for us in our ministry and we pray it is also an encouragement for you as we continue to pray together and continue to grow into a community that we pray is a sign of God's presence in and love for the world.

We trust that the Waterholes continues to be a life-giving addition to your inbox each fortnight!

#### Annual Thanksgiving Service

Thanks to Karena King for this photo of the Servant Leaders taken at the Thanksgiving Service in Morwell last month.



### 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 parishes of Bunyip, Churchill/Boolarra/Yinnar and Corner Inlet.
- The Cathedral parish and the ministry of The Rev'd John Stewart as locum priest throughout Advent.
- Bishop Kay and the diocesan registry staff Brian, Annette, Danielle and Kellie.
- Brian and Anne Turner as they move into the next phase of their journey. For Brian as he recovers from his first dose of chemo which made him quite sick. He will not continue with any more chemotherapy at present.
- Lyndall and John Diall and family as they grieve following Larissa's death.
- 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: Val Lawrence, Sue Hopkins, Norma and June.
- For all who are suffering from domestic violence, for courage to speak out and for people to listen and act. For all who provide support and care, for refugees, staff, counsellors and those who make policy decisions in this area.
- For all grieving the death of loved ones in the St Bernardino shootings, for the injured and survivors and all suffering in the aftermath of this tragedy.
- The people of India struggling with devastating floods.
- For peace, justice, equity and cordial co-existence in Nigeria.
- For all who are mourning the death of loved ones in recent terrorist attacks in Paris, Marley and in the Russian plane crash. for all survivors as their trauma for their recovery of both physical and mental scars.
- 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 and the global issue of climate change.
- For all refugees and asylum seekers and for those who are fleeing towards a compassionate solution to the increasing numbers of people working 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 Israel and Palestine, their leaders, all who feel driven to violence.
- For the people of Israel, 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, South Sudan hostages and prisoners and those suffering who are known only to God.
- 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.

God of our salvation,  
you straighten the winding ways of our hearts  
and smooth the paths made rough by sin:  
keep our hearts watchful in holiness,  
and bring to perfection the good you have begun in us.

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

Archdeacon Graham Knott, Anglican parish of Leongatha  
2nd Sunday of Advent  
Malachi 3.1-14; Song of Zechariah; Philippians 1.1-11; Luke 3.1-6

Words come and go in all directions especially at Christmas. If you still write cards there's trying to find fresh words to say. Then there are the letters that have all the news of the children who are rocket scientists, have won gold in every conceivable sport you can imagine and leave you feeling abject failures as parents! And now we sit through countless electronic cards. I still feel I'm cheating if I 'skip to the message at the end.' All sorts of Christmas parties, meals, Services, end of school year events. Words.

So words – Christmas is full of them. The first Christmas had astonishingly few. It began with Zechariah being struck dumb when he doubted God's promise of the birth of John the Baptist. Nine months of silence – you've got to wonder whether he looked back with a certain affectionate nostalgia on those days as he and Elisabeth became first time parents at great grandparent age! Then when he did speak he didn't say many words – strong words of praise to God and of promise over his son which we read today as the Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79) We hope he was spared the subsequent agony of seeing his son beheaded. That would have stunned a very elderly father into silence – no words. San Bernardino – no words; Paris – no words; Syria – no words; Southern Sudan – no words; Burundi – no words.....

John when grown would speak words in the desert – urgent, strident words – few but starkly calling people back to things that matter. Words in the desert – words that fill the empty silence – yet words that express a hunger and a longing for something more. After all why did people crowd out to the desert? Jesus, himself, would later ask the crowd that self-same question. (Luke 3:24-28) John was not simply a prophet – the person with God's words – he was more than a prophet. I find myself wondering what it is to be more than a prophet.

Clearly his words were challenging and incisive. The crowds seemed to respond positively to being called a brood of vipers! They may not have liked John's words but they apparently had authority and power. I wonder what the life style of John, and described vividly elsewhere in the Gospels, contributed in a large part to the authenticity and integrity of his words. He was clearly identified with every word he spoke. I find myself reflecting on some of those Christmas words - repeated to friends by me and from friends to me every year: 'Sorry we haven't been in touch much this year. We will make sure we do next' and nothing changes. Or, 'we often think of you' or worse; 'we pray for you' when truthfully once the envelope is sealed the words and the promise are forgotten. What if I genuinely gave myself to putting my sentimental words into practice – perhaps I would choose my words more carefully or perhaps I would change direction and live as if all these people God has blessed my life with are truly special. My words would become gifts of time in 2016.

Perhaps John was the gift of God's voice – perhaps John himself was not heard. Anthony Bloom described the way that John was free because he had attained mastery over himself and, through that freedom was able to speak what God spoke – now to a crowd, now to religious bigots, now to a King, now to be forgotten decreasing as Jesus's voice within me. Perhaps this is the call of Advent – to seek to realign myself with God's voice increase that I too become truly free.

Whenever time and space is created purely for God words take on a new freedom and effectiveness. Whenever God is truly contemplated humans are 'slow to speak' (James 1:19). Whenever God is truly held in mind, words take on an almost sacramental quality – a need to be transformed such that they are an acceptable offering to God: 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.' (Psalm 19:14)

Perhaps this is one way to reflect and prepare a way for the Lord – a highway in the desert. The word spoken by John prepares a way for the Word made flesh – God incarnate. Advent 2015 – a time to reflect on words spoken that should never have been thought; words unspoken that should have been cried from the top of the tallest building; words divine and human missed, words that must now be spoken before it is too late. Advent a time for silence to hear the voice from the desert afresh proclaiming the life of God.

Maybe the most powerful words are never spoken – they are born and revealed – maybe the longing, waiting, hoping, maybe the purpose, desire and realisation of all these other words are expressed in the birth of a baby – the one who will be called the Word made flesh. The interesting thing is that there is not one word recorded as having been spoken at the cradle of Jesus. People visited, they knelt and adored, they spoke afterwards, they could hear heaven's song in the background – at that moment of gazing on the baby Jesus they were apparently speechless.

I hope we find a silent space this Christmas – a place beyond the words to prepare, worship and adore. I'm reminded of these words by Matt Redman based on Ecclesiastes 5:2 -

You are God in heaven  
And here am I on earth,  
So I'll let my words be few  
Jesus I am so in love with You.  
*And I'll stand in awe of You,  
Yes I'll stand in awe of You,  
And I'll let my words be few  
Jesus I am so in love with You.*

The simplest of all love songs  
I want to bring to You,  
So I'll let my words be few  
Jesus I am so in love with You.

#### The Song of Zechariah (Benedictus)

Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel:  
you have come to your people and set them free.

You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour:  
born of the house of your servant David.

Through your holy prophets, you promised of old:  
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of  
all who hate us,

To show mercy to our forebears:  
and to remember your holy covenant.

This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham:  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship you without fear:  
holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High:  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,

To give God's people knowledge of salvation:  
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God:  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness  
and the shadow of death:  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace

### Photo Reflection



Glasgow. Photo by Jan McIntyre

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

Love and prayers

Jane Macqueen  
On behalf of the Servant Leaders

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