

**Anam Cara Community**



## ***Waterholes: 9 December 2018***



Dunkeld Arboretum with Mt Abrupe in the background. Photo, Ross

Byrne

### **Welcome**

Welcome to Waterholes, the Anam Cara Community newsletter for the week beginning 9th December 2018.

**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.

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## Breathing Space

Advent is a time of waiting. Sometimes it feels as if the world around us pulls us too quickly towards Christmas. The church is not exempt from the rush to Christmas and we can often struggle to find space amid all that needs to be done.

Dean Susanna offers us the opportunity to intentionally put aside some time during Advent as a Breathing Space. Each Monday to Thursday evening from 5.30pm - 6.00pm in the Lady Chapel at St Paul's Cathedral there will be time to listen, to reflect in the silence and to pray. She will be using resources from the ABM App '**Songs from a strange land**'.

All are welcome to drop in when you are free...

OR If you are unable to join with Susanna at the Cathedral, you may like to use the resource for your own personal Advent Breathing Space. I have found it very nurturing and thought provoking this week and I look forward to the continuing journey of Advent waiting...

## Advent Resource:

### Songs from a Strange Land - An Australian Advent Calendar

A new ABM app from ABM's **Celia Kemp** who wrote *Into the Desert* and *Deep calls to Deep*..

*Songs from a Strange land* starts on 1 December and takes you through Advent and Christmas, ending on the Feast of Epiphany, January 6.

Scripture readings, quotes, photographs, poems, cartoons and songs to lead you through the themes of Advent and Incarnation with a particular emphasis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christianity, the Australian landscape and creation theology.

**Download link for iPhone and iPad:** <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/songs-from-a-strange-land/id1442050436>

## Download link for Android

devices: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.abm.strangeland>



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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 Richard, Leanne and Rachel and Nicholas.
- The registry staff, Brian, Annette, Sue and David.
- For locums and lay readers in their ministries in parishes without clergy.
- Associates and friends who have asked for prayer: Norma, June, Fiona Barry, Chris Venning and Val Lawrence.
- For all programmes working to bring a change in culture and bring an end to violence against girls and women.
- For political leaders to form governments that are committed to justice, inclusion and compassion.
- For all who are suffering as a result of extraordinary weather events, fire, drought, typhoons, hurricanes, heatwaves. The people of Queensland.
- For our churches to be places of inclusion, welcome and reconciliation.
- For peacemakers in our world. For world leaders in their discussions and decision making.
- For all who suffer as a result of violence.

- For wise and compassionate counsel and some direction and hope for the future of refugees and asylum seekers across the globe.

### **Prayer of the day**

God of Peace,  
still our hearts this morning  
as we gather to prepare the way for your Child,  
Help us let go of what is weighing us down  
and open our arms to welcome Emmanuel. **Amen.**

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## **Reflection**

**Dean Susanna Pain, St Paul's Cathedral, Sale.**

**Luke 3:1-6**

The beginning of our gospel reading places us in a particular time and place. We know who the bosses are, who is in power, but we are in the desert, on the edge, in the Jordan river, the place of crossing over, a place to meet God, and John is urgently calling us to turn again, to take action, to be washed, to repent, to be forgiven, to prepare for the immanent coming of none other than God! This is a place and a time to meet God. John quotes an earlier prophet to etch his point deeply.. Prepare! Get ready! All of you are welcome, but don't muck around, get onto it.. our secular world might give a similar message about urgency, but they would be urging us to spend money. John is saying, get ready to meet God. How do we do that? We are here now, aren't we? How do we do this?

I share with you some reflections from Jan Richardson today. She writes:

'In his book *Anam Cara*, John O'Donohue...says,

*For years I have had an idea for a short story about a world where you would approach only one person in the course of your life. Naturally, one would have to subtract biological considerations from this assumption in order to draw this imaginary world. You would have to practice years of silence before the mystery of presence in the Other, then you could begin to approach.*

Richardson writes: 'I'm taken with O'Donohue's notion that to approach another person is an act of reverence that requires preparation. Most of us cross paths with so many people in the course of our life that we often forget that to encounter someone, to truly meet another, is a sacred act. Given how very many of us there are on this planet, and how frequently we allow the image of God in us to become obscured, it's easy to overlook the

way in which coming into the presence of another—a being who is created in the likeness of God—is a sacrament and a wonder.

This week, John the Baptist, along with his predecessor Isaiah, has been calling me to remember what it means to prepare to encounter another: in this case, of course, to come into the presence of one who is not just created in the image of God but who **is** God. In describing what the Baptist has come to do, Luke evokes the potent words of Isaiah, words that are full of an ancient hope for one who will come to restore and redeem:

*The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.  
Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'*

One can imagine that John the Baptist, this locusts-and-wild-honey-eating, camel's-hair-wearing prophet, must have spent his own time of preparation in the wilderness before he began to call people to prepare for the one who was coming. It was only by making himself ready—by straightening the paths within himself and smoothing out all that was rough in his interior landscape—that John was able to do the work that God had called him to do. And so we, too, are called in this season: to attend to and prepare our inner terrain so that we may welcome Christ in our lives and in our world.

But I have to tell you: this vision of straight paths, filled valleys, and mountains and hills levelled out—it rather gives me the willies. What Isaiah describes, and what John the Baptist is testifying to and working for, is a world that has undergone an apocalyptic levelling out. (Even Sale is not that flat!) What will be left, it seems, is a landscape marked by little but its even, unrelenting flatness.

I wonder at that, because I think that part of what God loves about us is the stuff that makes us complicated and complex—the things that give texture to our terrain. By and large, we humans are not simple, are not smooth going, do not make things easy. I have a hunch that God takes a shine to us because of this: God likes a good challenge. And so the prospect of a landscape that is uncomplicated, that is flat, that does not have any meandering paths that take me to places I had never imagined going yet where I find God nonetheless: this strikes me less as a heavenly vision than a vision of a place far removed from paradise.

And yet. And yet. As one who not infrequently is prone to making my life more complicated than it needs to be, I find myself pondering Isaiah's words, and pondering them again. In this season of preparation, Isaiah and John challenge me to consider:

amidst the complexities and complications of my life,

is there something I need to do to make it easier for Christ to enter my terrain and to be known in this world?

Is there some path through my soul that I need to straighten, to smooth?

Is there some mountainous obstacle that needs to be brought down—not to flatten my soul into a stultifying sameness, but so that Christ may meet less resistance within me?

It may be tempting to think that we should prepare ourselves more strenuously to encounter and welcome Christ than to meet anyone else. This season, however, beckons us to remember that the incarnation takes place anew each day, and that Christ comes in the form of those whom we meet on our path.

How are we preparing ourselves to encounter Christ in them?

How do we ready ourselves for this sacrament, this mystery, this miracle?

Amid the graced and necessary complexities involved in being who God has created and called us to be, how do we make a space for the One who desires to approach and meet us in this and every season?<sup>[1]</sup>

Jan Richardson offers a poem entitled 'Prepare':

Strange how one word  
will so hollow you out.  
But this word  
has been in the wilderness  
for months.  
Years.  
This word is what remained  
after everything else  
was worn away  
by sand and stone.  
It is what withstood  
the glaring of sun by day,  
the weeping loneliness of  
the moon at night.

Now it comes to you  
racing out of the wild  
eyes blazing  
and waving its arms,  
its voice ragged with desert  
but piercing and loud  
as it speaks itself  
again and again.

*Prepare, prepare.*

It may feel like  
the word is levelling you  
emptying you  
as it asks you  
to give up  
what you have known.

It is impolite  
and hardly tame  
but when it falls  
upon your lips  
you will wonder  
at the sweetness  
like honey  
that finds its way  
into the hunger  
you had not known  
was there.<sup>[2]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup><http://adventdoor.com/2012/12/05/advent-2-prepare/>

<sup>[2]</sup><http://adventdoor.com/2012/12/05/advent-2-prepare/>

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## Photo Reflection



Mt Abrupt. Photo, Ross

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## **Expressions of Interest sought by the Living Well Centre, Melbourne**

The Living Well Centre is a ministry of lay and ordained folk who hold the license of the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne.

They seek:

1. To provide opportunities for exploring the Christian Spiritual Tradition through seminars, workshops, lectures and retreats.
2. To encourage the exploration of spiritual practices and faithful living.
3. To offer the ministry of spiritual direction to all who seek it and to encourage the ongoing personal, spiritual and professional development of spiritual directors.

Cath Connelly and John Stewart are Co-Directors. Cath and John are seeking expressions of interest in two programs they are offering in 2019.

The first is the **Spiritual Direction Formation Program** - A course for those seeking



training and accreditation as spiritual directors. The second is a new program for 2019 – **A Personal Spiritual Growth and Formation Program.**

For more information about either program please contact Cath and John at [administration@livingwellcentre.org.au](mailto:administration@livingwellcentre.org.au)

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## Further opportunities for Spiritual Nurture

### 1. The Abbey of St Barnabas, Raymond Island

For further information contact The Abbey

Phone (03)5156 6580 Email: [info@theabbey.org.au](mailto:info@theabbey.org.au) [www.theabbey.org.au](http://www.theabbey.org.au)

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

- Christian Meditation

-7.45am - 8.15am every Wednesday

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/>

- Breathing Space - 5.30pm - 6.00pm Monday to Thursday during Advent
- Evening Prayer with focus on intercession 5.15pm Mondays

### 3. 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.

### 4. 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), [cherylrussell1@bigpond.com](mailto:cherylrussell1@bigpond.com)
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Love and prayers

Jane Macqueen

On behalf of the Servant Leaders

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