

Presbyterian Church to buy All Saints' College

❑ Merger assures strong ongoing Protestant/Anglican education option in Bathurst

The Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW has agreed to buy All Saints' College, the last remaining school owned by the Anglican Diocese of Bathurst.

While school leaders have assured their respective school communities there will be no major changes in the short term, the purchase is expected to lead eventually to a merging of All Saints' College and The Scots School Bathurst.

The executive body of the Diocese of Bathurst, Bishop in Council, has accepted the Presbyterian Church's Expression of Interest.

In a joint statement to the school community last Tuesday afternoon (August 29), Bishop Ian Palmer (Chair of the All Saints' College School Council) and Mr Steven O'Connor (Headmaster of All Saints' College) said that this "unique opportunity to bring together the two leading Protestant and Anglican schools in Bathurst as one, is an aspiration that many individuals in our two churches and our two school communities have hoped for and prayed about, for a long time".

The statement went on to assure the All Saints' College community and The Scots School community that the "desire to combine the best of our two schools together into one school is one which will glorify God, and of which present and future generations of students will be proud".

The statement said that the All Saints' College Council and the Board of The Scots School believed that the sale would benefit the students, staff and parents of both schools, and expand educational opportunities in the City of Bathurst.

The Presbyterian Church and All Saints' College will be working through a due diligence process over the next few weeks, but in the meantime the school leadership has offered the following assurances to the students, parents and



CHANGING HANDS: Historic Esrom House, administrative hub of All Saints' College. It is expected that the sale will be finalised by the end of this year.

staff of both schools:

1. We are committed to the continuity of education and the staffing structures of both schools for 2018. Parents of current Year 10 and Year 11 students can be assured of the continuity of their children's subject choices for the HSC without change.
2. The student leadership of both schools will not change in 2018.
3. We will form a working group with representatives from both schools to develop a change management plan for 2019 and following years. This will include review of the name of the combined school, structure, and a myriad of other decisions that will naturally arise from the bringing together of two schools.
4. Although the Presbyterian Church cannot promise, their strong preference is to maintain and operate two campuses for current and future generations of students, and the purchase of All Saints' College will not require the sale of any property.

"While this announcement may cause

some parents, students and staff, some anxiety in the immediate short term, we of All Saints' College wish to assure you that there will be a measured and considered approach to the governance and combined structure of the two schools," the statement continued.

"As far as is possible no one will be rushing into decisions, but will be seeking to facilitate a close working relationship involving representatives from both the school communities as we plan for the future.

"We believe the merger of these two respected schools in Bathurst will provide students with a wider choice of subjects and co-curricular opportunities at every level of their education and will provide students of both schools with enhanced opportunities to develop their interests and character."

Bishop Ian and Mr O'Connor agreed that the coming together of the two schools would show that Bathurst, as a leading regional city in NSW, will be

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Anglicare: NILS faces challenge

❑ No Interest Loans Scheme urgently needs sponsorship

On a visit to the Dubbo NILS office on August 18, Anglicare's General Manager – Mission & Community Engagement, Ian Couatts told staff he regretted that the current funding arrangements for the loans scheme would expire at the end of September and so far Anglicare had been unable to make alternative arrangements.

Good Shepherd Microfinance has been providing generous support for the scheme over recent years, but has said that the level of funding will be reduced at the end of this month.

"This is a significant prayer point for us right now," Ian Couatts told Anglican eNews. "Obviously the situation is a great concern for the staff, and already one member has taken up alternative employment, but it will also cause considerable uncertainty in the community."

Ian Couatts explained that through NILS, Anglicare offered loans for people who were unable to access mainstream credit.

"NILS involves small loans of up to \$1200 to enable people to purchase necessary household items such as furniture and white goods, or to renew a car registration, or for essential services such as dental and optical care," he said.

Cheques are made out to the business that the client is dealing with, and handed to the client.

Ian Couatts said the scheme had been working very well for some years, and in the 2015-16 financial year Anglicare's NILS agencies had approved 265 loans.



NILS TEAM: Anglicare General Manager – Mission & Community Engagement, Rev'd Dr Ian Couatts (centre) with the Dubbo NILS team: Bernadette Gregson, Therese Garnsey, Jenni Powe and Noelle Fogarty.

Loans through NILS incur no interest and no setup fees are required. Clients are only required to repay what they borrow and repayment plans are tailored to suit individual circumstances.

However, the reduction in funding has meant that Anglicare has had to seek direction from NSW Fair Trading, as to what services NILS can offer in future.

"The support of the church has helped make the NILS program work," Ian Couatts said. "In helping clients handle short-term financial emergencies, it's built connections between churches and people."

Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd records on the move

The Rector and the Parish of Holy Trinity Dubbo have granted to BGS the occupation of a room in Brotherhood House for the storage and display of its memorabilia.

The room is to be known as BGS/CGS Heritage Centre and it is hoped to

be dedicated and opened in November this year.

Anyone who has items related to BGS suitable for inclusion in the display is invited to contact the Chair of BGS, Austin Jupp, at the Holy Trinity Parish Office (6884 4990).

In particular the Council has discovered there are three copies of the *Bound Bush Brother* magazine missing. They are Vol 2 1905-6, Vol 4 1907-08, and Vol 12 1905-16. Austin Jupp said he would appreciate any copies of these magazines.

All Saints' College (continued from page 1)

well served by its schools in the State, Roman Catholic and Protestant/Anglican sectors.

"This should give present and prospective parents of students the assurance that their children will be educated in a way that suits their abilities and, develops their potential.

"Again, on behalf of the Anglican Diocese of Bathurst, and The Scots School Bathurst Board, we wish to assure all staff, parents and students of our commitment to the education of our students to the highest standards, within

a Christian worldview. This College will continue with the strong Christian values of faith, hope and love.

"We give you an assurance that we will work diligently to secure the completion of the sale process in a professional and speedy manner and we will continue to support and work for the good of both schools in this Bathurst community."

In response to enquiries from parents, Steven O'Connor has also given an assurance that All Saints' will continue to offer high quality boarding facilities.

Anglican

e-News

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Editor:

Lew Hitchcock 62 6331 1722

email:

anglican.news@bathurstanglican.org.au

Web:

http://www.bathurstanglican.org.au/

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BCA evangelist shares his passion

❑ Spreading the Good News, one farm at a time

James Daymond, a Bush Church Aid Society evangelist based in Narromine, shared some interesting insights into the joys and challenges of taking the Gospel message to rural residents in the Narromine and Trangie districts when he addressed a fund-raising afternoon tea at Perthville in the parish of South Bathurst last month.

Speaking to an audience of 26 people seated around a sumptuous afternoon tea in the home of South Bathurst parishioner Marion Sharwood, James and his wife Brittany spoke of the connections they have been able to make with country people in the last six months, as they have begun a two-year program to travel every country lane and visit every property in the Narromine area.

As well as their plans to visit country people, James and Brittany are using their time in the Narromine parish to train others in evangelism, and recruit parishioners to help in their door-knocking program.

James told the gathering that he has been very encouraged by the response he has found so far, and illustrated this with several stories of encounters with interested people.

"We're finding that many people want to hear about Jesus," he said.



PROGRESS: James Daymond shows the progress he is making in his plan to visit every property in the Narromine and Trangie districts over a two-year period.

Hostess of the afternoon tea, Marion Sharwood, said her original idea was to hold a simple afternoon tea for a few parishioners to raise some money for the Bush Church Aid Society (BCA).

Bishop Ian suggested that James Daymond might be available to speak at

the gathering, so he encouraged Marion to widen the invitation to include the Cathedral parish.

The resulting response filled Marion's family room to capacity, and raised \$840 for the mission society.

James Daymond concluded his presentation by asking people to pray for his ministry, and particularly to pray for open doors and open hearts among the people he meets.



SUPPORT: The BCA afternoon tea brought together people from the parishes of All saints' Cathedral, South Bathurst and Holy Trinity Kelso in a strong show of support for the ministry of the Bush Church Aid Society and particularly for the work of James and Brittany Daymond.

Synod meets in Kelso this month

The annual meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of Bathurst will be held in the Kelso on the weekend of September 15-17.

Synod will commence in All Saints' Cathedral with a Eucharist at 6.30pm on Friday 15th, and will continue at 8.30 on Saturday morning at the Kelso Parish hall and Community Centre.

During the Synod Eucharist, Bishop Ian will be making the Bishop's Registrar, Karen Trafford, a Lay Canon of the Cathedral. He will also commission the Reverend Tim Fogo as Diocesan Ministry Development Officer and make him a Canon of the Cathedral.

Preacher at the service will be Archdeacon Frank Hetherington, who retires as Diocesan Archdeacon at the end of the Synod.

A response to the Postal Plebiscite

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Government has announced a postal plebiscite and Australians are being asked to decide whether to change the definition of marriage.

This will lead into a vote in the Federal Parliament. Whatever the outcome, these debates about sexuality and gender are already reshaping how we regard human relationships in our society. It is important that these debates are carried out in a thoughtful, respectful way.

Some people are saying to me that the issue is marginal — about allowing a few thousand people the freedom to confirm their relationship in marriage.

Actually it's about changing the law of our Country and overturning an understanding of marriage that has been held for millennia. In the 1961 Marriage Act (Australia) there was no definition of marriage because there was no disagreement about the definition of marriage.

Again, when in 2004 the definition was inserted, no Member of Parliament voted against it. Today we see the politicisation of marriage with some Australian companies and even the ACT taking a stand for same-sex marriage without the consent of their shareholders or electorate.

Marriage: the coming together of a man and a woman in a life-long, faithful union is a fundamental building-block of human society. The practice goes back to the dawn of human relationships, crossing time and continents. It is pre-religious and pre-political. Over millennia this marriage of a man and a woman has been formalised, legalised, celebrated and institutionalised in many different ways.

Like the purpose of the Marriage Act in Australia, the institution of marriage has been to protect children and vulnerable people. Pope Francis writes, "The family is the foundation of coexistence and guarantee against social fragmentation."¹

As Anglican Christians we also trace our understanding of marriage back to the origins of human relationships. The Book of Common Prayer describes marriage as "an honourable estate, instituted of God".

More recent Anglican Prayer Books describe marriage beautifully as "a gift of God" and the "symbol of God's unending love." The Prayer Book affirms the complementarity of marriage — between a man and a woman, and puts in its own

words the message of Jesus in Mark 10:6-9. Here Jesus tells his disciples that marriage, the coming together of a man and a woman in an exclusive union, was how God graciously planned it from the beginning, so that in marriage we share in the eternal love of the God who reconciles difference, even if (the inference is) it has not always worked out like that.²

So the marriage of a man and a woman, whilst not owned by religion, is recognised as a God given institution whose purpose is to provide a secure place for the procreation of children and their nurture in a protected relationship with a mother and a father.

I am of the opinion that in a "Post-Christendom" culture, clergy should cease to be agents of the state in solemnising marriages.

The opposition of many religious groups to the redefinition of marriage to include the union of "any two people" is not a homophobic response. Under legislation passed through Federal Parliament in 2007-2008 Australia gave same-sex couples access to all the benefits that de facto heterosexual couples enjoy, except for the description of "being married".

This was widely supported by church leaders – including me. This means that the context for the present debate is different to that say of the US, Ireland or Britain. However, what has resulted from the redefinition of marriage in those countries has not been liberating but restricting. The law is now used to curb freedom of religious or conscientious expression, teaching and action.

It is important to affirm that all people are equal in God's sight, regardless of their sexual identity, but that does not mean to say that the same opportunities are open to all. Our choices open up or close down opportunities.

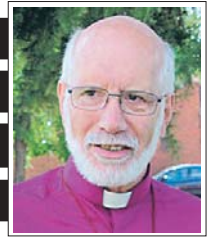
For instance I would not presume to march on ANZAC Day. My life's choices have taken me in a different direction. I am grateful to those who have served our Country in theatres of conflict, and glad to see that they are honoured, but I am no less a citizen because I have done

BY

BISHOP

IAN

PALMER



different things.

Many of us have family and friends who are in deeply loving same-sex relationships. We love them and want to see them treated with dignity and respect. It is in this context that I am putting these views; not to impose them, but to put at least some arguments for the "No" case in a measured and respectful way.

With this in mind, I am of the opinion that in a "Post-Christendom" culture, clergy should cease to be agents of the state in solemnising marriages.

The church should be pro-active in taking this step. This would mean that following the practice of the church in much of Europe, those who wish to seek God's blessing in a sacramental service of Holy Matrimony in church would do this in addition to the legal registration of their union.

If the present debate were about registering a civil union rather than "marriage", and it was to be an identical process for any two persons then I don't think I would be particularly engaged.

However, to summarise, this is about marriage. The voluntary postal vote is both a vote about same-sex marriage and something more than that. As I said earlier it is about altering the meaning of marriage in our language, society and at law. It has been said that it will be instrumental in "setting the parameters in which freedom of speech and freedom of religion are practised in Australia".³ So it's important we make our voices heard.

I encourage you to give prayerful consideration as to how you cast your vote. Warmly – in Jesus,

+ Ian.

- 1 Pope Francis *Not Just Good, but Beautiful* Plough Publishing Australia 2015.
- 2 Bishop N T Wright *From Genesis to Revelation: An Anglican Perspective, in Not Just Good, but Beautiful*.
- 3 Peter Westmore President National Civic Council *News Weekly* 17th August 2017.

Refreshment at the *Waterhole*

By Sylvia Hitchick

Finding my own "I am" in the great I AM was the theme of the Waterhole Retreat at the Vale Lodge, in the village of Perthville just outside Bathurst.

This annual retreat was again organised by the Waterhole Committee based at Parkes, NSW. The Retreat was led by Liz Palmer over two days from 21st July to 23 July.

Liz, as a trained and experienced Spiritual Director, provided the input sessions, before allowing us time to reflect, pray and enjoy time alone with God.

This was my first-ever weekend retreat, so I found it helpful when she started by explaining the concept of a retreat as a "drawing back, but not a running away, to spend time with the senses open and with the intention of taking time to listen to God".

Our leader put four questions to us during the input sessions:

- ♦ How did I get to be me? ... where we looked back over our life journey.
- ♦ How do I see God? ... where we looked at six images of God we might have grown up with.
- ♦ What is so attractive about Jesus? where we looked at the "I am..." statements of Jesus from the bible, and reflected on our personal responses to who Jesus said he was.
- ♦ Who am I in God? where we looked at how we see ourselves, and contrasted that with how God sees us.

There were reflective challenges before each two-hour period of silent retreat. I found the balance over the weekend of retreat and then sharing as part of a caring community just right for me ... socially, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Finding my own "I am" in the great I AM" was an opportunity to take a fresh look at life for each of us who attended. Liz Palmer provided opportunities to stop, listen, reflect, pray and share as much as we felt comfortable at the time.

By the end of the two days I felt I knew myself better, and I felt like I knew my God better as well. I think that we all felt really refreshed by spending time at the Waterhole.



LIVING WATER: At the 'Waterhole' retreat at Perthville last month, retreat leader Liz Palmer (front left) facilitated an exploration of the theme, "Finding my own 'I am' in the great 'I AM'".

Workshops for Lay Ministry Conference

The Diocesan Lay Ministry Conference being held at Holy Trinity, Orange, on **Saturday November 4** will be open to all lay people with a ministry in the church - not only Licenced Lay Ministers.

Diocesan Ministry Development Officer Tim Fogo has said that the conference will feature a range of different workshops, where people can develop an existing ministry or explore a new one.

As the church adapts to the massive social changes of the last few decades, we are depending more and more on lay ministry to continue to serve the communities in which we live.

However, lay ministry is not new: the New Testament church clearly understood that every baptised Christian has a ministry, and it is only when each of us recognises and responds to our particular calling that the church can function as God intends.

Participants at the conference will be able to choose any two of six different workshops, with one session before lunch and another in the afternoon.

Workshop topics will include:

- ♦ **The Final Farewell** - led by Tim Fogo, parish priest at Holy Trinity Kelso. The focus will be on how to talk with and pastorally care for grieving families, and to prepare a dignified and meaningful funeral.
- ♦ **Turning so what? into now what?** - Bishop Ian Palmer will give some practical hints on preparing a sermon that will have meaning for a broken world.
- ♦ **Welcome to the Church of God** - Rector of Dubbo Brett Watterson will outline his approach to working with families who bring children for baptism into the Church of God.
- ♦ **Revealing the Life in the Living Word** - Liz Palmer and Sylvia Hitchick

have some practical guidance on reading the Bible in church services in a way that holds interest and conveys the meaning.

- ♦ **When you haven't got a prayer** - Lew Hitchick looks at leading the prayers of the people during worship services, with a focus on praying specifically for people and situations.
- ♦ **Your part in the Great Commission** - BCA Evangelist James Daymond shows some easy ways to bring Jesus into everyday conversations.

Application forms for the conference will be distributed to parishes shortly, and will also be available at Synod at Kelso on the weekend of September 15-17.

Details are still being finalised, but it is expected the cost of the day will be in the order of \$25 including morning tea and lunch.

Book Review: A discussion for our times

The Bible's Yes to Same Sex Marriage – an Evangelical's Change of Heart

Mark Achtemeier, Westminster Knox Press, 2014

ISBN 978-0-664-23990-9

Reviewed by Frank Hetherington, Archdeacon of Bathurst

Formal debate about human sexuality for the Anglican Church in Australia reached a new level in the General Synod in 2000 when *Faithfulness in Fellowship* was discussed.

It contained essays written by people from different theological and pastoral standpoints from across the Australian church. The book was later released in simplified form as a discussion booklet.

Now debate in society and within the church continues, often with deeply polarized views.

Same sex marriage is now an important discussion politically.

I am glad that a friend gave me a copy of Achtemeier's book.

The author is a distinguished biblical scholar and pastor within the Presbyterian Church (USA). It details a very personal story of a gradual reversal of attitude.

He writes with "grace towards those who don't agree with him," whilst answering a number of very important questions out of human thoughtfulness, humility and a deep respect for the Scriptures.

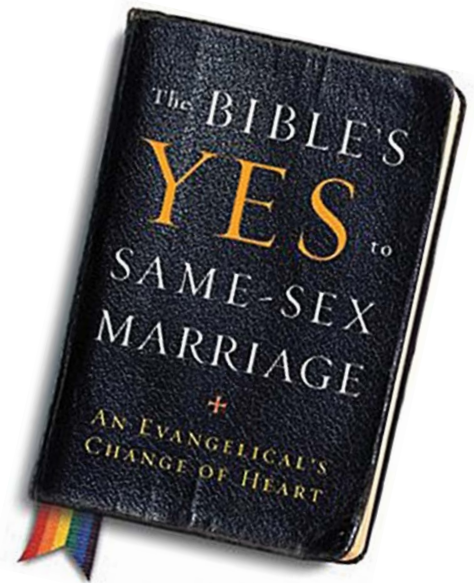
This is My Body (chapter 4) contains one of the most beautiful summaries of the gift of human sexuality that I have ever read. It should be a must read for all people, particularly for all those preparing for marriage.

As the back page says,

In lucid, accessible prose, the author makes plain what remains obscure for many: God's purposes for marriage, love, and sexuality according to the Bible. His book helps clear away many harmful confusions, and it leaves in their place a rigorous sexual ethic this both faithful to scripture and inclusive of committed gay couples. It is an

excellent introduction for those open to changing their position and his witness is a worthy model to follow.

This was for me a very helpful read, helping to frame my thinking about a complex and potentially divisive subject.



Cursillo Notes

Well, what a great Diocesan Ultreya we had in Parkes!

Over 60 people taking part, a very encouraging Witness Talk from Doug Healey, an inspiring Spiritual Response from Bishop Ian, uplifting praise and singing (thanks to James Whalan), a magnificent spread of food for morning tea and lunch (thanks to all who contributed) and the day ran quite smoothly (thanks to MC Bruce Lindbeck).

It was good to see so many new Cursillistas and team members from Women's 48, taking the opportunity to use the Ultreya as a reunion for their weekend. All told, the day did just what an Ultreya is supposed to do - it encouraged us in our faith and strengthened our connections with one another.

And of course, we have the opportunity to do it all again in Rylstone on Saturday October 14, when the Rylstone-Kandos Cursillistas host our second Diocesan Ultreya for the year. I look forward to catching up with quite a few friends there.

On the weekend of September 22-24 I will be accompanying Bishop Ian to the National Cursillo Secretariat meeting in Adelaide, to consider future

directions for the ministry of the Cursillo Movement in the Anglican Church of Australia.

It's important that we all keep in mind that Cursillo is simply a tool through which we are encouraged to serve the Body of Christ, the church - and as a church, serve others in our communities. Cursillo should never be seen as separate from the church.

One of the challenges facing the Cursillo Movement in our diocese is the rising cost of hiring venues for three-day weekends. We are struggling now to keep the cost below \$300 per person - a barrier for some potential candidates (and team members).

Of course, we will never turn anyone away because they are unable to pay the full cost, but at the same time the Cursillo movement has to stay viable.

A couple of parishes have a fund from which they can subsidise candidates, and we are encouraging Cursillistas in other areas to consider setting up such a resource in their own parish.

Even being able to offer a candidate \$100 towards the cost would be a great encouragement to them as they consider attending a Cursillo, and it

demonstrates our commitment to the goals of the Cursillo movement and the mission of the church.

Please pray for the Cursillistas in the Rylstone-Kandos parish as they prepare to host our Ultreya, and also continue to pray for Doug Healey as he forms the team for Men's 45 Cursillo.

Pray too for guidance in sponsoring candidates for that Cursillo, which is being held in June next year.

Lost the plot

Anyone who has served on a team with Gary Neville as Spiritual Advisor will know that Gary always brought along a collection of very entertaining skits for use (if required) on the third night of the Cursillo.

Gary says he lent his scripts to last year's Men's 44 team, and hasn't seen them since. As he doesn't have spare copies, he would very much like to get his originals back again, so if you have ended up with any scripts, please contact Gary on 0429 958 052.

Ultreya!
Lew Hitchick,
Diocesan Lay Director.

