
COMMUNITY

Quarterly news magazine of St Paul's, Manuka, and St David's, Red Hill, in the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn

Special Issue

September 2018

“A new season upon us” **WELCOMING A NEW RECTOR**

At services on Sunday, 19 August, the Chair of Parish Council, Bruce Glendinning, read a letter from The Right Reverend Trevor Edwards, Episcopal Administrator, announcing that the Reverend Dr Benjamin Edwards, Priest in Charge of the Parish of Molong in the Diocese of Bathurst since 2009, had accepted his invitation to become the next Rector of the Parish of Manuka in this Diocese. Bishop Edwards said it was a very real privilege and pleasure to announce the appointment.

Bishop Edwards said that the new Rector had a distinguished academic record in History, Law and Theology. “Although he could have easily pursued many options he feels strongly called to mission and ministry as a parish priest in the broad catholic tradition of our Church”.

In Ben’s own words his approach to ministry will be “focused on gathering and leading the worshipping community, proclaiming the Gospel, and providing pastoral care”. In that respect, Bishop Trevor said, he had been assured Ben is an engaging, thoughtful preacher and a diligent, faithful pastor who has gained considerable all round experience in leading a rural parish for an extended period. He is also a very gifted musician and organist.

“I believe he is a very good fit for the present and future needs of Manuka, and in time I am sure he will make a valuable contribution to this Diocese as a whole”. Married with two children he will take up his appointment on a date to be negotiated towards the end of the year. Bishop Edwards thanked “the hard working members of the Clergy Appointment Board who have worked harmoniously, prayerfully and effectively together to achieve this splendid outcome”.

This special issue of *Community* extending a Parish welcome in cooperation with the participants in the appointment process profiles the incoming Rector, his background and his approach to ministry. The heading for this special issue, with its own symbolism for the Parish, was inspired by Ben’s observation that “while our family has immensely enjoyed our time in the country, a growing sense that a new season was upon us has now been fulfilled in this new and exciting opportunity for ministry at Manuka.” As he writes in his message to parishioners: “It is a great pleasure to greet you and to introduce myself to you and the wider parish community served by *Community*.”

Passing on the baton

To the Clergy, Wardens and Parishioners of St Paul's, Manuka, and St David's, Red Hill.

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am honoured to have received Bishop Trevor Edwards' invitation to become the next Rector of Manuka: it is a great pleasure to greet you and to introduce myself to you and the wider parish community served by this publication.

Made deacon in 2004 and ordained priest in 2005, I currently serve as Parish Priest at Molong, near Orange, in the Diocese of Bathurst, having commenced my ministry there in 2009.

Molong is a small service town in an area of mixed grazing, cropping and some vineyards. The Parish's formal origins are traced to 1860 with the establishment of a church-school, which is now the church hall.

My time at Molong has been very engaging. It has included significant refurbishment and restoration works on the church and hall, expansion of ministries to the elderly, young families and children, implementation of solar power systems, musical and liturgical development in the parish and initiatives such as a community garden and various concert series and special liturgical occasions to engage with the wider community. It has been a joy to celebrate and experience the love of Christ at work in Molong.

Previously I have served as chaplain at Orange Anglican Grammar School and in curacies at Holy Trinity, Orange and St Luke's, Mosman. Although the bulk of my ministry experience has been in a small, rural community, I also have experience of ministry in urban and regional contexts which I hope will serve me well in the 'Bush Capital'.

For those interested in book-learning, my academic background includes degrees in Arts (Ancient

The Rev'd Dr Ben Edwards



History), Theology and Law. I completed a PhD thesis in 2007 which was a study of the decline of Protestant-Catholic sectarianism in Australia, supervised by Dr Anne O'Brien and Professor John Gascoigne at the School of History, UNSW.

FAMILY

My wife, Kate, currently teaches Latin at Kinross Wolaroi School, which is also where our children, Timmy (7) and Claire (5), attend. We look forward to finding a school community in Canberra that will be as life-giving and enriching for them all as they have found KWS to be. Timmy's current special interests are magic, dinosaurs, the Beatles and playing the piano. Claire's are narrower: ballet and unicorns.

Music is also a very important occupation in our household. Kate has been involved in choirs since she began as a junior chorister at St Alban's Epping, going on to complete Honours in Musicology at the University of Sydney. She has very much enjoyed playing violin in the Colour City Chamber Orchestra based in Orange and in other local ensembles, and also plays the piano.

I play the piano – Beethoven is my 'go to' – and very occasionally I reach for the cello. I recently acquired a lute, which at this stage does little more than look nice in and of itself. The children are both learning piano and violin. We are very much looking forward to the richness of the musical tradition at Manuka.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND APPROACH TO MINISTRY

I try to place myself in your position at this time, imagining that at least some of you might be wondering what your new rector is like and what to expect of him. I offer the following to provide you with a sense of the formative influences and experiences that have shaped and continue to inform my approach to ministry.

I have been a practising Anglican my whole life. I don't have a dramatic conversion experience to share but I know that during my senior high school years I became personally invested in the Gospel that I had been imbued with throughout my childhood. I would say I was evangelised by the Prayer Book and have found theological and spiritual development in studying church history and in the works of writers such as Evelyn Underhill, David Adam, George Herbert, RS Thomas, Dom Gregory Dix and Richard Hooker.

And, although as a small child I demanded a vicar's costume for playing dress-ups – apparently I wore it all over the place to the bemusement of others – I first began to perceive a sense of call to ordained ministry while completing my undergraduate studies.

I strongly recall The Reverend John Cornish preaching on the subject of vocations one Good Shepherd Sunday at St Alban's, Epping, and feeling as though I were the only person in the Church that morning. It was from there that my journey into ordained ministry began

with theological study through St Mark's National Theological College.

My approach to ministry is very conventional: focused on gathering and leading the worshipping community, proclaiming the Gospel, and providing pastoral care. I see that the Church has a calling to be a place of community and hospitality, where people encounter the reality of God through the mystery of the sacraments and the proclamation and ministry of the Gospel, and where the faithful are to be encouraged to discover and equipped to exercise their baptismal gifts.

With experience as both an organist and priest, liturgical worship lies at the heart of my ministry and spirituality. I see it as an immense privilege and extremely uplifting to gather the people of God in worship and to celebrate the sacraments.

PASSING ON THE BATON

As a cradle Anglican, I deeply value and have been deeply formed by the Anglican heritage and tradition of Christian worship, theology and spirituality. It is this heritage of Anglican Christianity that continues to enrich my own spiritual journey and it gives me great joy to see others encounter the love and wonder of God through this living tradition.

At the same time, as someone with direct access to a Classics teacher, I am very much aware that the origins of our word tradition stem from the Latin word *tradere* – to deliver or hand over. I find this little bit of etymology informs my understanding of our role as the present custodians of this Anglican heritage.

We are holders of a baton, if you like, which we are called to hand over and entrust to a new generation of Christians. This is our mission: to hand on a living and life-giving tradition. I see it as an important

missional priority to celebrate and share the Gospel and the beautiful Christian heritage in which we worship is a powerful and timeless means of doing this.

In recent years I have found great joy in delivering this 'baton' of Christian faith and worship with children and their families through the medium of Anglican liturgical worship and its attendant spirituality.

I firmly believe that reverent, dynamic and creative liturgies are effective not only for the inspiration and spiritual life of the worshipping community, but that they are also invaluable resources for outreach and spiritual formation of the young and newcomers and as a vehicle for engagement with the wider community. This has been my approach to ministry in Molong these last ten years and it has been a great joy there to see the worshipping community become a truly inter-generational gathering.

LOOKING FORWARD

Our family has immensely enjoyed our time in the country, however a growing sense that a new season was upon us has now been fulfilled in this new and exciting opportunity for ministry at Manuka.

Naturally this time of transition is one of very mixed emotions for us as we begin the process of leave-taking in the Central West and prepare to embark upon this new chapter in ministry and family life. In September I will make a retreat at Lindisfarne off the north coast of England which will be a very timely opportunity for prayer and reflection in this time of transition.

We look forward to worshipping with you this Advent and beginning this next stage of our journey. Please keep us in your prayers as we will keep you in ours.



St John's Molong

Our incoming Rector comes from a rich liturgical tradition with an open welcoming invitation which he brings to Manuka Parish.

Whether you are a life-long Anglican, someone who has never been to Church before or someone looking for a new spiritual home, you are most welcome to come and worship the living God with us.



We seek to chart the 'via media', celebrating and the reformed and catholic dimensions of Anglicanism.

We are a "liturgical church": our form of worship is traditional and structured. We draw upon the rich heritage of centuries of Christian experience as well as the theological, musical and artistic insights of our own era so that ours is a living and lively tradition.

Above all, we seek in our worship to be touched by God, to know that God's forgiveness, love and mercy are real and open to all of us through Jesus, and to be spiritually nourished to go out into the week ahead of us loving and serving the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.

A History of Bathurst Diocese shaped by its environment

During his time at Molong, in his dual role as priest and historian, the Reverend Dr Ben Edwards co-authored with the late Ruth Frappell a history of the Bathurst diocese evocatively titled *Every Valley, Mountain, Hill and Plain*.

With warmth and objectivity, the history embraced the challenge of weaving the diverse strands of the Diocese into a unified history and the work of country parishes and pastoral missions to far flung settlements and the exacting demands of a century and a half of social change. It is a history of many people, widely spread in time, distance and outlook. It is their common encounters and shared aspirations that emerge as the source of the enduring strength of the Diocese.

Historian Dr Edwards, at the time of the launching of the book in 2010, spoke of the story of the life of Bathurst Diocese being very much shaped by the diverse terrain it inhabits. "Be it the arduous missions and visitations of pioneering figures, quiet bush churches in middle-of-nowhere paddocks, Bush Brothers journeying to administer the sacraments at remote stations, modern multipurpose church buildings in urban developments, or churches in villages now deserted, this diverse territory has

demanding creative and energetic responses from the Church."

Dr Edwards had gained considerable insight into the diocese over three years. During this period he had spent much of his time and energy working on an updated history of the diocese. Fellow historian, Ruth Frappell, had already developed an encyclopaedic knowledge of the diocesan history. Ruth died just a few months before the revised history could be published.

"Examining our history is by no means a fruitless, self indulgent luxury," Dr Edwards commented. It was timely to examine some of the important issues which have affected the Church. He said that looking back across our history, we are able to see ways in which the Church has both coped and failed to deal with the challenges it has faced during times of great social upheaval, theological change and the ups-and downs of the rural economy.

"Studying our history, we may discern how many of the challenges faced during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were the inevitable consequences of the geographical and demographic contexts of the Diocese. Distance, isolation, population drift, floods, drought, and the vicissitudes of the rural economy and mining sector have all shaped – and continue to shape – ministry within the Diocese of Bathurst.

"By the nature of the institution, the life of a diocese is interconnected with that of the broader church of which it is a member, at provincial, national and communion levels. It is also interwoven with the life of the local communities of its parishes as well as other entities and agencies. Its life is also economically, culturally, legally and politically interwoven with that of broader society".

Parish welcomes Rector's appointment

On behalf of Parish Council and the parish of Manuka, it is a great pleasure to welcome the appointment of The Rev'd Dr Ben Edwards as our Rector elect. Ben has provided us with a letter that helps us understand who he is, something about his family and his approach to Ministry. Much of this addresses the Parish Profile which can be found on the parish website. Parish Council is particularly pleased that we have clarity about our new rector in the same month as we farewelled The Venerable Dr Brian Douglas. This means we are not left in uncertainty as a community for a lengthy period. The Wardens will be liaising with Ben and Kate over the next few months to provide for their housing, assist in relocation and in settling in to Canberra. We hope to induct Ben as rector during advent.

Bruce Glendinning, Chair

Community

Produced by:	St Paul's Parish Council, Manuka, Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn
Serving:	St Paul's Manuka St David's Red Hill
Telephone:	02 62396148
Fax	02 62394079
Website:	http:// www.stpaulsmanuka.org.au
E-mail:	office@stpaulsmanuka.org.au
Rector elect:	The Rev'd Dr Ben Edwards
Locum:	The Venerable John Gibson
Assistant Priest:	The Rev'd Alipate Tuineau
Deacon Assistant:	The Rev'd Kay Pendlebury
St David's:	
Associate Priest	The Rev'd Canon John Campbell
ISSN 2207-8495 (Online)	