



*The Anglican Parish of Warracknabeal  
140 years of Spiritual Service  
to the Community*



1886-2026



The Anglican Diocese of Ballarat

Acknowledgements:

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*Dearly beloved,*

*It is my privilege to introduce you to this 'snapshot' of history as we celebrate 140 years of prayer, praise and proclamation within the Warracknabeal region in March 2026 as part of the Anglican Parish of Warracknabeal's – "Project Regenerate: Explore. Rejoice. Give."*

*Spirituality within our modern social milieu is often misunderstood if indeed practised at all. The usual phrase that is spoken aloud in many corners of social discourse is, "You don't need to go to church to be a Christian."*

*I've never known a coal separated from the roaring fire to glow long into the night, and I think it is fair to say that while the church is not everyone's 'cup-of-tea' – it is our responsibility to find ways to enable a person's inner wellbeing to feel the warmth of the fire for longer through worship, prayer and service to our community.*

*With all its misgivings and sometimes clunkiness – the church remains a place of Hope that dispels despair, a witness that Love can overcome hatred and discord, and a living reality that God's Light banishes darkness. We have a courageous leader in the life, teaching, example, death and resurrection of Jesus – whom we follow.*

*The Anglican Church from my understanding has always found 'the middle ground' on the whole – and over the years has found traditional and sometimes unique ways to express how God 'works' in the world – whether through liturgy, fellowship groups and projects that invite God's people to grow and develop and create communities of strength and resilience no matter what life seems to throw at us.*

*Life was never meant to be easy (apparently), and over the last 140 years the Anglican Church of Warracknabeal has endeavoured to 'be there' – in times of celebrations or times of grief, when disaster or drought ravage our region, when the significant milestones of life allow families and friends to gather and honour all of life's mysteries.*

*In the pages that follow, I am grateful to Mrs Jenny Taylor who has compiled these 'snapshots' of activity and adventure throughout our Church's history. We are indebted to many who have made Christ Church a place of welcome, prayer and hospitality over the years, and while not exhaustive – captures a comprehensive overview that is worth celebrating.*

*With every blessing,*

*Reverend James Wood*

*(2017 until present)*



## **CHRIST CHURCH WARRACKNABEAL**

### **140 YEARS OF SPIRITUAL SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.**

( Brief summary and follow up to 'The Sure Foundation' – 1887-1987)

#### **HISTORICAL FACTS:**

- The Anglican church in Warracknabeal is the oldest church in the town. The foundation stone was laid by the Rev. Samuel Thornton, Lord Bishop of Ballarat in 1886.
- It was classified 'D' by the National Trust in 1970.
- 'Christ' Church' was built in 1886 by Messrs. De Largy- D'Alton Bros. & Fitzmaurice for 460 pounds.
- The first service was held on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1887.
- The old Rectory was demolished and the current one opened in 1955.
- The 'Parish Centre' replaced the old Sunday School in 1982.

#### **THE PRIESTS.**

- Rev. Frederick Arthur Booth - 1887-1892
- Rev. Tristan Dunstan - 1892-1911
- Rev. Fred Coupe - 1912-1918
- Rev. Colin Alexander Grant - 1918-1922
- Rev. George E. Menlove - 1923-1925
- Rev. Leslie Underwood Alley - 1925-1929
- Rev. Conway Crigan - 1930-1951
- Rev. Gordon Coad - 1951-1953
- Rev. Arthur Gray - 1954-1959
- Rev. Doug R. Stewart - 1959-1962
- Rev. Lawrence Hodges - 1962-1972
- Rev. Dallas Hinds - 1972-1977



*Reverend Conway Crigan  
Longest Serving Rector*

- Rev. Anthony Tamblyn - 1978-1983
- Rev. Canon Fred Phipps - 1983-87
- Rev. Norman Hart - 1987-1992
- Rev. Paul Cook - 1992-1996
- Rev. John Young - 1996-1998
- Father Keith Dalby - 1998-2002 ( Later: Bishop of the Murray)
- Father Michael Boyle – 2004
- Rev. Chris Archer - 2006
- Father Peter Lord - 2007
- Father Nagi Habib - 2012-2017 (Locum)
- Rev. James Wood - 2017-present.



*Rev James' Induction -  
February 2018*

Mrs Sandra Taylor compiled a photo album of previous incumbents and can be viewed in the Parish Centre.

### **OUTREACH CHURCHES.**

From the early days, the Anglican Parish of Warracknabeal has had to cover a wide area with many smaller district churches serving their community. The early services were held by the first rector who travelled on horseback and train to provide services to Sheep Hills, Hopetoun, Beulah, Brim, Lah, Cannum, Bangerang, Kellalac and Beyal (underneath a peppercorn tree).

St. Paul's church, Bangerang was opened in 1891 and upon its closure, in 1937 the stained glass window in memory of Herbert Albert Hewitt was installed in Christ Church, Warracknabeal.

The Sheep Hills church was opened in 1889. It closed in 1970 and was shifted to Halls Gap.

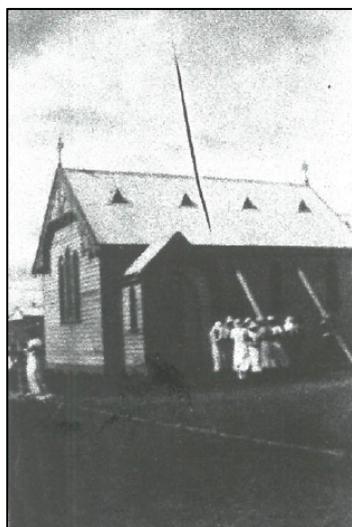
The Brim church was established in 1936 and closed in 2012.

The Hopetoun church was closed in 2010 and St Saviour's Minyip in 2016.

St Mark's at Areegra, was consecrated in 1920 and is the only surviving small church in the district. Services are still being held there on a monthly basis.

St Mark's celebrated 101 in 2021 on 07th November - the delay due to COVID.

Services are also regularly provided to Aged Care Facilities in the region at 'Dunmunkle Lodge' in Minyip, 'Corrong Village' in Hopetoun and 'Yarriambiack Lodge' in Warracknabeal.



*Bangerang Church*



*Old Sunday School Warracknabeal*

### **ORGANISTS and CHOIRS.**

The first minister, Rev. Arthur Booth was a very colourful character. A member of the local cricket and football clubs, a keen bird lover (& shooter) he provided music himself when he could not obtain an organist. A stained glass north facing window was donated in his memory by the Church & the Warracknabeal community.

Many devoted Anglicans have provided organ music over the years. Mrs. Roma Ross began playing as Roma Taylor (aged 14) and continued off and on for many years until the 1970's.

Mrs. Margaret Kennedy then provided music for many years, which included conducting choirs for church and other competitions. She retired in 2012.

*Mrs Margaret Kennedy with husband Bruce, receiving a certificate of appreciation from Parish Councillor, George Armstrong, 2013.*



Judy Marshman took over as organist and continued until her untimely death in 2018. Mrs Katie Ferguson and Mrs Gwen Holland provided music at the Brim church for many years filling in at Warracknabeal occasionally. The Powell Brothers of Areegra often livened up the music at church with their great Dixieland jazz.

Jenny & 'Curl' Taylor currently provide music for Sunday morning services at Warracknabeal. To move with modern times, 'Spotify' has also allowed a variety of wonderful music to be used in church liturgy to enhance prayer and praise.

## **CHURCH GROUPS.**

Over the years, many groups have existed within the church to support the work of the Rector and outreach to the wider community.

Such early groups include: C.E.M.S. ( Men's Society); and later, a Women's Society which among other activities conducted Empire Day services; G.F.S. – Girls Friendly Society; Young Wives Group; Caritas; YMD - Young Anglicans; and Men's Breakfast Group.

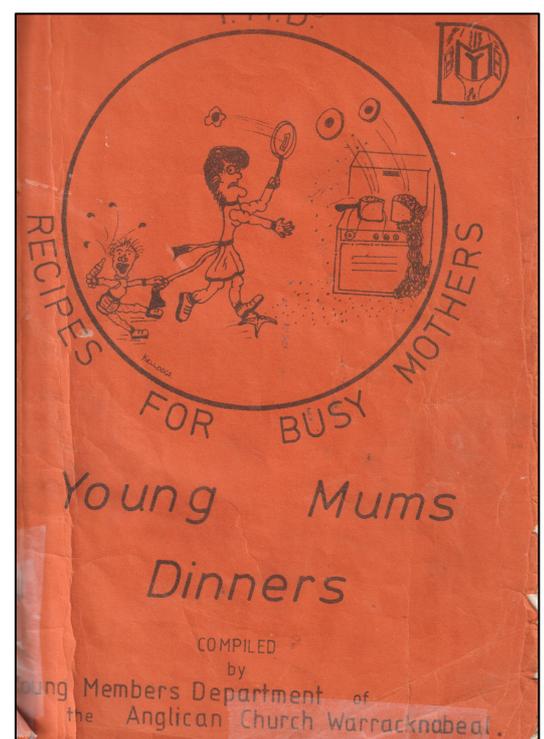
Long serving groups included the Anglican Guild and Mother's Union.

The former Vestry, now Parish Council, meet regularly and exercise good governance and provide guidance for physical and spiritual life of the church.

The popular 'YMD Recipe book' is still used by some congregation members. The recipe book was printed in 1982 and raised \$1,700 which contributed to the Hall Building Fund and the purchase of 130 chairs.

In more recent years, members of the church supported a Breakfast programme at the local Secondary School conducting a 'Breakfast Club' from 2008-2018 in partnership with Anglicare Victoria. Several representatives from other churches also assisted.

The current Anglican Catering Team provide a regular Parish Lunch for many people in the Warracknabeal region which will also champion local causes. Funds raised are forwarded to International, Nation and Local charities.



## **Mothers Union:**

This long serving group was formed in 1954 with 59 members and functioned at local level for 38 years.

M.U. supported special events in the church as well as having quiet days, guest speakers, and prayer circles. They were always there for palm cross making for Palm Sunday, Mothering Sunday cakes, and gifts for baptisms etc. A variety of fund raising activities included sale of frozen chickens to assist with the making banners. Dedicated members included Gwen Pickering, Rhonda Taylor, Margaret Dart, Kaye Armstrong, Judy Marshman, Margaret Thompson, Bett Golder, Phyllis Lynch, Ethel Mayberry, June Lang, Doreen Taylor, Liz Fryatt, Nola Browell, Lyn Woodward, Evelyn Maloney and Gwen Steinmeyer.

As numbers declined gradually over the years, it was decided to decommission this branch in 2020. A closing ceremony was held in the church conducted by Liz Fryatt who was the Diocesan M.U. President at the time.



*Closing Ceremony of Christ's Church Mothers Union Branch, 2020.*

## **Anglican Church Guild**

The primary purpose of this long serving group was fundraising to assist in all areas of the church. The annual fete was a major fundraiser along with regular stalls as well as catering for weddings and special occasions.

One highlight was their preparation of a Coronation Float in 1953 in the town procession to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

Declining numbers the Guild resulted in its closure.



*Church of England Coronation Float, Scott Street, 1953.*

*(L to R: Miss E. Lloyd, K. Streeter, unknown, Michael Boyle, R. Streeter  
Source: Warracknabeal Historical Centre)*

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

This was part of the church for many years, finishing in 1995, with declining numbers and a shortage of teachers.

During the 80's and 90's a variety of activities were part of a vibrant program, including Sunday school picnics at Bett Golder's, Dumbuoy and the Kellalac Cricket Ground as well as camps at Rocklands Reservoir and Stuart Mill.

There were regular bike rides, and concerts at Christmas time or at the annual Harvest Festival.

An after-school craft session was another activity which was very successful with the help of Wendy Verber and Yvonne Cook, wife of the resident Priest, Paul Cook.

Sunday School teachers during those years included Sandra & Jenny Taylor, Elspeth McDermott, Wendy Verber, Rosie O'Callaghan, Lorraine Witney, Jill Bibby, Lois Crawford, Noel Taylor and John Everitt, as well as the late Janine Edwards and Robyn Lipscombe.



*Harvest Festival – Christ Church, 1983*

*Left to Right:-*

*Back:-* Penny Golder, Erin Hewitt, Kelly Schulz, Andrew Miller, Matthew Witney, Jason Taylor, Chris Taylor, (*further right*) Chris Crawford, Joanne May, Yvonne Fryatt, Tracey Peachey, Kim March, Jacki Peachey.

*Centre:-* Marcus Everitt, David Phipps, Nathan Dart, Brooke Witney, Darren Taylor.

*Front:-* Steven Taylor, Helen Taylor, Lauren Hewitt, Ashley Taylor, Timothy Dart.

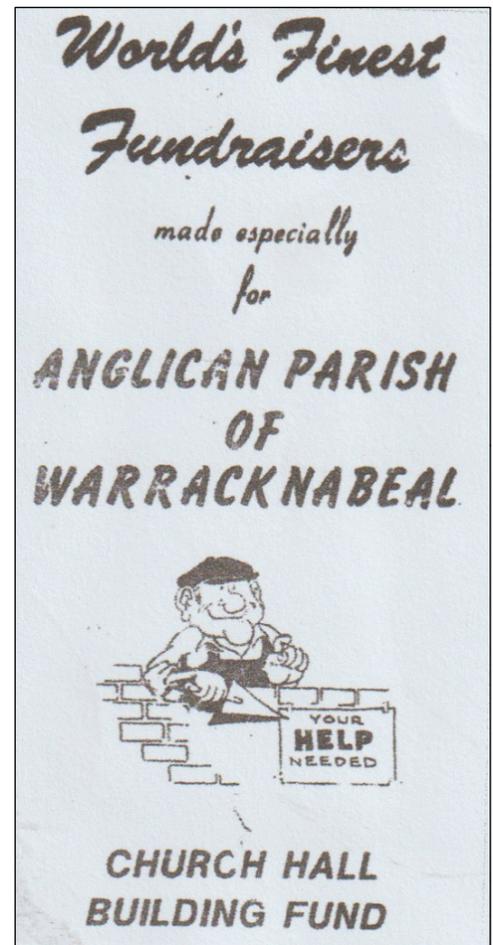
## The Parish Centre.

This was opened in 1982 on the initiative of the late Father Tony Tamblyn.

It followed a vigorous fund raising effort which featured '*Bertie the Builder*' logo for the fundraising Building Fund.

Since that time the Parish Centre has been well used for after church morning teas, funerals, fundraising dinners, community concerts and a recent Monster Book Sale.

As recently as February 2026, it hosted the local Lions Market Day, and stalls filled the church grounds and Parish Centre.



## 'Dancing With The Stars'

Another interesting event was the Community event, '*Dancing with the Stars*' held at the Town Hall in 2013.

A variety of community organisations participated with a dancing couple representing their group.

The Anglican Church was well served by Rhonda Glare and Dennis Mills who won the Community Award and acquitted themselves very well and raising \$8000 in the process for the church.

## THE PRESENT

Rev. James Wood who arrived in December 2017 from Queanbeyan (NSW) along with many faithful parishioners have rejuvenated the Warracknabeal Parish in recent years through the vision and implementation of what became - "*Project REGENERATE.*"

An ambitious five year plan to '*Renew People: Revive Projects: Restore Place.*' was implemented in 2020 to create purpose and plans for all the parish's activities and endeavours that sought to engage the Warracknabeal region and its inhabitants.

Many parishioners take roles of responsibility in the liturgical life of the parish regularly through worship on a Sunday including: Welcoming, Reading the Scriptures, leading Intercessions, as Eucharistic Assistants, Preaching and assisting in maintaining, polishing and cleaning the fabric of the church.

Recently, a parishioner took responsibility in making good and refreshing the hand painted Stations of the Cross hanging on the church walls.

The Anglican church takes part in the roster at the Christian Bookshop on a monthly basis and participates regularly in '*World Day of Prayer*' (March every year) and '*Prelude to Christmas*' (December every year).

Christ Church has also been fortunate some years ago to have the services of retired Priest, Fr Charles Helms and currently Fr Michael Boyle whose regular pastoral care at Yarri Aged Care and home visiting is highly valued.

We are also delighted to announce that local teacher and parishioner, Fiona Holland will be ordained in our church community in 2026 - exercising her ministry within the parish through liturgical leadership and pastoral care.

Along with the liturgical rhythm of the Parish and existing outreach activities, a number of significant projects were embarked upon.

### The Shed Project - 2018 to present

Established in 2018 in the Rectory garage, the 'Boys' Shed' (as it was formerly known) became a place of creativity and growth for local participants in simple woodwork projects that also build confidence and resilience through teamwork, problem solving and developing social skills with peers.

In collaboration with Parish Council, we sought to construct a purpose-built shed that would become a genuine community resource and outreach program for participants and mentors alike. As a keen cyclist, '*Revs Revolution*' was instigated in August 2020 to raise \$25,000 by riding 5000kms throughout the

year. With massive encouragement from the wider community and the generosity of individuals, local business' and general public support for this endeavour - all our goals were reached and exceeded!

The Shed Project was Officially Opened in November 2025 by Fr Michael O'Brien (Diocesan Archdeacon), Yarriambaick Shire Councillor Kylie Zanker, and past and present participants of the project with the cutting of a red-ribbon witnessed by approximately 95 people from the community.



*Opening of The Shed Project - Nov 2025*



*Coffee Van Project*

### Coffee Van Project - 2020-2021

Project REGENERATE sought to ensure that young people in Warracknabeal and region have meaningful opportunities to develop skills and make a significant contribution to the community to which they belong.

The Coffee Van Project provided interested and motivated young people an opportunity to learn valuable life skills in barista making, Customer service and community engagement by offering beverages during and after COVID-19 restrictions closed businesses in town. The Coffee Van was located in the main street of Warracknabeal every fortnight for 18 months.



### Walk of the Cross Pilgrimage - Hopetoun to Warracknabeal - 2019 to present

The Walk of the Cross Pilgrimage takes place biennially in three days of Holy Week leading up to Easter. Begun in 2019, Rev James has completed four pilgrimages and plans to walk a fifth in 2027.

Beginning at St Joseph's Hopetoun, Rev James and fellow pilgrims walk to Beulah - Day One; Beulah to Brim - Day Two; and, Brim to Warracknabeal - Day Three - to arrive in time for the Maundy Thursday activities. The stay at Brim includes a 'Bowls and BBQ' night at Brim Bowling Club.

### The Blue Tree Project - 2025

The recent 'planting' of the Blue Tree at the front of the church represents collaboration between the Warracknabeal Secondary College and the Anglican Church promoting mental health support.



*Anglican Parish Council - October 2025*

A grassroots movement that started in Western Australia in 2019 and has now spread around the world. *The Blue Tree Project* helps raise awareness and provide opportunities for conversations for better mental health outcomes within our community.

We believe it is an important symbol of hope that helps with positive and transforming attitudes to mental health and is relevant no matter age, creed or skin colour in our modern society.

The Anglican Parish of Warracknabeal  
is a welcoming community for people of faith and of none:  
for all seeking healing, for all offering gratitude,  
for all who seek to make the world a better place than we found it -  
through thought, Word and action!

You are welcome to join us at our regular service times,  
for Pastoral Services by arrangement, and for counsel or guidance to  
help navigate life's rich path of opportunity.

Please visit our website for up to date information  
on services, events and news:

[warrackanglican.org.au](http://warrackanglican.org.au)

