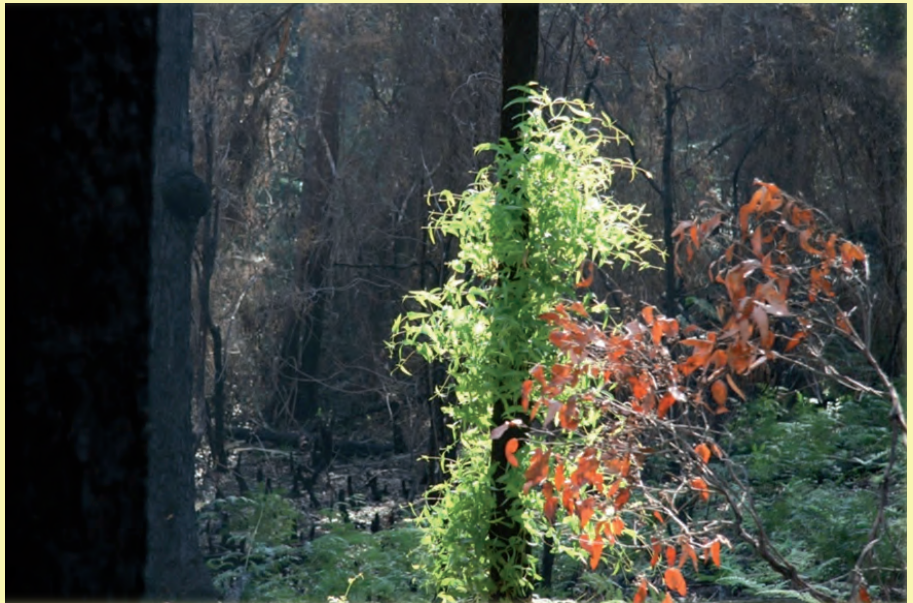


Re-Membering

Ecumenical Service

First Anniversary of the Gippsland Bushfires

7th February, 2010



“We have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed...”

2 Corinthians 4: 7-8a

Re-Membering

An Ecumenical Service
to commemorate the
First Anniversary of the
Gippsland Bushfires

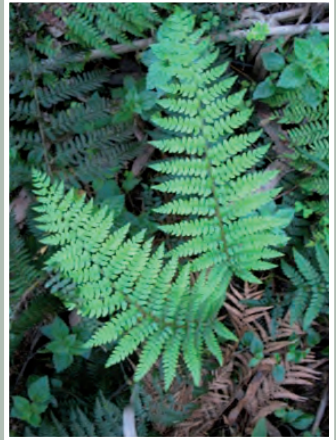
7th February, 2010

2.30 pm Live music by Deep Listening Band

3.00 pm Ecumenical Service

4.00 pm Light Refreshments & live music by
Strzelecki Stringbusters

Auditorium,
Monash University,
Gippsland Campus,
Churchill



Didgeridoo: Ron Murray... a call to order

Introduction

Barry Whitehead, Master of Ceremonies

Welcome to Country

Didgeridoo: ... a call to prayer

Song of Reflection

This is who we are¹ **Carol Abery**

1 I've seen the fires burning
 The dark and heavy skies
 I've seen the pain and mourning
 Reflected in their eyes
 But even in this nightmare
 I've seen another side
 The beauty of our love and sacrifice

Refrain: This is who we are
 This is what we show
 No matter what life brings
 No matter what life throws
 We stand here together
 And we give more than ever
 For here in Australia
 This is who we are

2 Our losses they are many
 Our bones are oh so weary
 Our hearts are clearly broken
 But our spirits remain open
 For who is there among us
 Who cannot see this pain
 But we will rise together again

Refrain

Bridge: And if loving your neighbour is divine
 Then I know that God is smiling now

¹ *This Is Who We Are: Text & Music: Carol Abery © Carol Abery, 20 February 2009. Used with permission.*

Opening Procession

Opening Prayer

Come among us, God of our hearts:
You, who hollowed out The Valley
and swept the Strzeleckis skyward
All: Come God, and meet us here

Come among us, God of our hearts:
You, who created the mountain ash
and the deep pools of shadowed fern.
All: Come God, and meet us here

Come among us, God of our hearts:
You, who fashioned the shy lyrebird
and the koala high among the gums.
All: Come God, and meet us here

Come among us, God of our hearts:
You, who groans with us in sorrow
and weeps with us in our deep loss.
All: Come God, and meet us here

Come among us, God of our hearts:
You, who stands beside us at the brink
and graces us with strength and resilience.
All: Come God, and meet us here

Come among us, God of our hearts:
You, who lures us out of isolation
and into the warmth of community.
All: Come God, and meet us here

Come among us, God of our hearts:
You, who calls us on toward the goal
with the sweet balm of hope in ourselves.
All: Come God, and meet us here

The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you;
He will quiet you with his love.
He will rejoice over you with singing. *(Zephaniah 3:17)*
All: Amen



Greeting of Peace

(Master of Ceremonies)

We come together today to remember,
to honour and to give thanks.

We have come alone, as family or in small groups.

We may not know one another, yet we are united in solidarity.

We may come as strangers but we leave as friends.

Please greet those around you and introduce yourself...

Perhaps let each other know what has drawn you here.

After some sharing...

Together let us re-member the events of last summer...

Visual Reflection

Images of **Re-mem-bering** by Laura Brearley with musical improvisation by 'Deep Listening Band'.

Recognition of Loss

Those who lost their lives are named:

Nathan Charles, Fred Frendo, Scott Frendo, Colin Gibson, David Gibson, Alan Jacobs, Miros Jacobs, Luke Jacobs, Annette Leatham, Gertrude Martin, Martin Schulz

The Gippsland communities that were affected are named:

Balook, Blackwarry, Boolarra, Bunyip, Delburn, Callignee, Callignee South, Carrajung, Carrajung Lower, Carrajung South, Churchill, Darlimurla, Delburn, Devon, Devon North, Drouin West, Gormandale, Hazelwood, Jack River, Jeeralang, Jindivick, Koornalla, Labertouche, Le Roy, Longwarry, Macks Creek, Mirboo North, Stacey's Bridge, Tarra Bulga National Park, Tarra Valley, Traralgon South, Tonimbuk, Willung South, Won Wron, Woodside, Woodside North, Yanakie, Yarram, Yinnar.

God's word for us today

The vessels containing the ashes from each community precede the Book of the Gospels... May the pain they represent be touched by God's Word for us today.

The Choir sings...

Bless the Lord, My Soul. ²

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads us into life.

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (8:35, 37-39)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.



² Text & Music: Jacques Berthier (1923-1994). © 1978, Taizé Community, Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, Ltd. Australian Agent: Word of Life International. Used with permission. Licence granted.

Response to the Word

Psalm 34³ Cantor, Choir and Assembly

Choir: The Lord hears the cry of the poor,
blessed be the Lord.

**All: The Lord hears the cry of the poor,
blessed be the Lord.**

Choir: I will bless the Lord at all times,
With praise ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the lord,
Who will hear the cry of the poor.

**All: The Lord hears the cry of the poor,
blessed be the Lord.**

Choir: Let the lowly hear and be glad.
The Lord listens to their pleas;
And to hearts broken, God is near,
Who will hear the cry of the poor.

**All: The Lord hears the cry of the poor,
blessed be the Lord.**

Choir: Every spirit crushed God will save;
Will be ransom for their lives;
Will be safe shelter for their fears,
And will hear the cry of the poor.

**All: The Lord hears the cry of the poor,
blessed be the Lord.**

Choir: We proclaim your greatness, O God.
Your praise ever in our mouth;
Every face brightened in your light,
For you hear the cry of the poor.

**All: The Lord hears the cry of the poor,
blessed be the Lord.**

3 Psalm 34. Text: Ps 34: 2-3, 6-7, 18-19, 23. John Foley SJ. © 1978, 1990, John B Foley SJ & New Dawn Music. Australian Agent: Word of Life International. Used with permission. Licence granted.

A Reading from the holy Gospel according to John

(14:1-7)

There are many rooms in my Father's house.

Jesus said to the disciples:

'Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God still, and trust in me.

There are many rooms in my Father's house;

if there were not, I should have told you.

I am going now to prepare a place for you,

and after I have gone and prepared you a place,

I shall return to take you with me;

so that where I am you may be too.

You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said, *'Lord, we do not know where you are going,*

so how can we know the way?'

Jesus said: *'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.*

No one can come to the Father except through me.'

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

A moment of silence

Didgeridoo to end the silence

Reflecting on the Word

Fr Hugh Brown, O.Carm,

Chaplain, Monash University Gippsland

Prayers of Intercession

Leader: Today, as we stop to remember the devastation of the fires one year ago, we ask our caring, gentle God to be with us in our memories of sadness, struggle and stories of survival and hope.

Choir: *Let my prayer rise before you as incense.... (repeated)*

Reader: For precious family members and friends that we have cherished and lost: that they have found peace and happiness with their loving and merciful Creator, we pray to the Lord:

We remember and give thanks ...

Reader: For those wounded and hurt: that the healing presence of God may give them strength and comfort in their recovery, we pray to the Lord:

We remember and give thanks ...

Reader: For those who are bereft of homes, property, pets and livestock, that the goodwill and practical support of caring communities may assist them to envision a new future, we pray to the Lord:

We remember and give thanks ...

Reader: For those of our family and friends whose energy and life has leached away and been depleted: that their compounded sense of loss and trauma may be gently replaced by the knowledge of the Lord's presence in the love of those close to them, we pray to the Lord:

We remember and give thanks ...

Reader: For ourselves: that our sadness, distress and trauma at what has been lost may be transformed into signs of resilience, new life and joy, we pray to the Lord:

We remember and give thanks ...

Reader: For our communities in Gippsland: that the caring, loving and solidarity that have been so richly evident in these past twelve months generate new buds of hope and vitality that continue to sustain us all, we pray to the Lord:

We remember and give thanks ...

Reader: For the emergency services personnel, bushfire recovery teams, church and charitable organisations, service clubs and all people of goodwill who have assisted in their own way: that they be may blessed for their goodness, compassion and gentleness to those in need, we pray to the Lord:

We remember and give thanks ...

Reader: For the gift of creation: that the hand of the Divine Renewer of all life be perceived in the regeneration of our burnt land, in the tender green tips of eucalypts, in the return of native animals and in the melody of birdsong, we pray to the Lord:

We remember and give thanks

Reader: For us and our communities throughout Victoria: may we be grateful for fresh signs of affection and life, take delight in the surprise of unexpected discoveries and rejoice in the nurturing care and love of those around us, we pray to the Lord:

We remember and give thanks

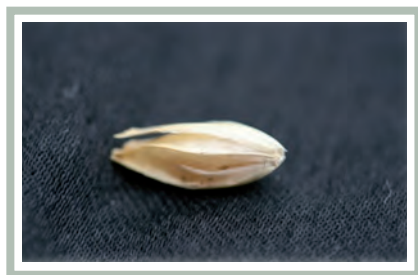
Choir: *Let my prayer rise before you as incense....*

Leader: God of consolation and kindness, comfort and reassure us as we remember all that we have loved and lost. Give us the confidence, courage and optimism to fashion a new future with our loved ones within the embrace of our communities. May we continue to give thanks for the renewal of our land and for the gifts of the plants and animals around us. We ask this in the name of the One who experienced death and new life, Jesus Christ our Lord and brother.

All: Amen

Guided imagery ⁴

Take the Bookmark in your hand and place your thumb and fingers over one or more of the seeds in the white bag. During this meditation we invite the image of The Lord. You may find that a significant other is evoked instead... rest with whomever presents in your imagination. Be at peace.



Silence a quiet moment to end the guided imagery

Choir

Nada Te Turbe/Nothing Can Trouble ⁵

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten;
Those who seek God shall never go wanting.
Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten;
God alone fills us.

⁴ Text: Joyce Rupp, taken from *Your Sorrow Is My Sorrow: Hope and Strength in Times of Suffering* © Joyce Rupp. The Crossroad Publishing Company, 370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017

⁵ Text: St Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), trans. The Taizé Community; Tune: NADA TE TURBE, Jacques Berthier (1923-1994). © 1986, 1991, Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, Ltd. Australian Agent: Word of Life International. Used with permission.

The Lord's Prayer

Leader: In unison and with hands joined in solidarity let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words Jesus gave us.

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours, now and for ever,
Amen,**

Prayer for All Present

God of our hearts,
we have stumbled the road from devastation and loss
in the presence of both deep sorrow and stoic resilience.
Courage and grace abound,
Capacity and strength swell,
Commitment and solidarity reassure.
Together we strive to create a future ripe with hope
and plump with possibilities.

Be with us as a new path opens before us:
Increase our commitment,
Strengthen our resolve,
Anchor our solidarity,
Forge our resilience.
We ask this through him
who knows the sorrows and joys
of what it is to be human,
Jesus, your Son, our Lord and brother.

All: Amen

Hymn: The Lord's My Shepherd ⁶

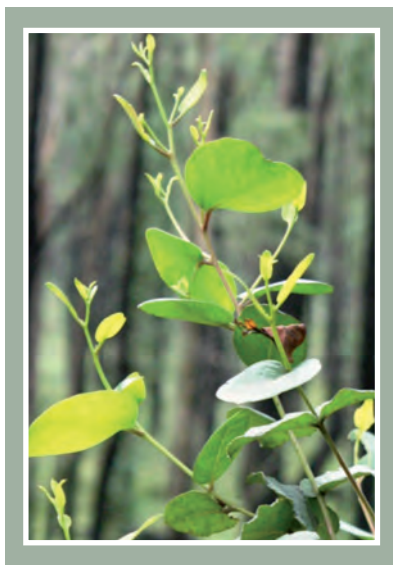
The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again;
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
Even for His own Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill;
For Thou art with me; and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house forevermore
My dwelling place shall be.



⁶ Text & Music: CRIMOND, Jessie Seymour Irvine 1836 – 1883, arr. David Grant. Public Domain.

Prayers of commendation ⁷

Leader: We have gathered at this place in the depth of memory. It is not easy to be here. The props of a mild summer are not so easy to call on. In the midst of this season's journey, we had the physical presence of those we love taken away from us.

We have been forced to say "goodbye." To feel the numb sadness, weariness and uncertainty, even as we trust those we love to the Divine Presence.

**All: We give them back to you, Sustainer of Life,
who first gave them to us.
Not as the world gives do you give, O Lover of Souls.
For what is yours is ours also, if we belong to you.**

Leader: Life is unending because love is undying,
and the boundaries of this mortal life are but an horizon.
And an horizon is but the limit of our sight.

**All: Lift us up, Jesus, strong face of God,
that we may see further!
Strengthen our faith,
that we may see beyond the horizon!**

Leader: And while you prepare a place for us, as you have promised,
prepare us also for that happy place: that where you are, we may
be also, with those we have loved, forever.

All: Amen.



⁷ Adapted from a prayer of Quaker origin

A Litany of Thanks

Leader: For all the memories of the times that we shared together:

All: We give thanks

Leader: For the times we laughed and the times we cried:

All: We give thanks

Leader: For the times that were difficult and the times that were fun:

All: We give thanks

Leader: For the love born within us and the love of others:

All: We give thanks

Leader: For the special stories we will tell each other and the memories we will treasure

All: We give thanks

Leader: Loving Creator, we honour the life and energy of all who have died in the fires.

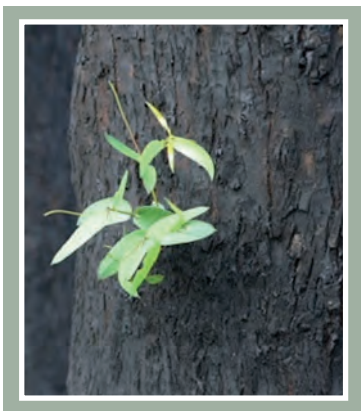
We are grateful to have shared the journey of their lives.

We have walked together.

We will never be the same.

We are blessed, and we give thanks.

All: We give thanks. Amen.



Prayer of Farewell

Leader: You have been taken
too soon from this life,
after times, after duties,
after separations.
May blessed soul friends guide you,
and the Gatherer of Souls call you.
May the homeward path
rise up under your feet
and lead you gladly home.

All: **You are all free spirits:
Into the freedom of wind and sunshine:
we let you go.
Into the dance of the stars and the planets:
we let you go.
Into the Spirit's breath
and the hands of the Star Maker:
we let you go.
We love you, we miss you,
we want you to be happy.
Go safely home to God.**

Blessing

Leader: Blessed are those who have died in the Lord:

*Charlzy, Fred, Scott, Stretch, David, Alan, Miros, Luke, Annette,
Trudy, Martin*

Let them rest from their labours
for their good deeds go with them.
Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

**All: and let perpetual light shine upon them
May they rest in peace.
Amen**

Leader: May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

All: Amen

Leader: May the love of God
and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ
bless and console us
and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Benediction

As the morning sun leaches darkness from a new dawn,
May your own days also become bright and luminous.

As the sun disperses the mist from the valley floor,
May the sharp edge of pain dissipate within you.

As green shoots nuzzle their way past old husks,
May new life unfurl within you and around you.

As the creatures creep back from the forest of the night,
May your own courage and resilience call you onwards.

May you know that absence is full of tender presence.
May you succumb to the life giving power of community.
May you listen deeply to this good earth and one another.

May Almighty God bless you... †
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen



Hymn

Amazing Grace⁸

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
that saved a soul like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.
2. As grace first taught my heart to fear,
so grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!
3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be,
as long as life endures.

Conclusion and Thanks

Master of Ceremonies

Invitation to Afternoon Tea and Live Music

Kellie O'Callaghan, Mayor of Latrobe City

⁸ Text: Verses 1-4: John Newton (1725-1807), alt. Verse 5: Anon. Tune: AMAZING GRACE, American folk hymn melody (19th century) (from *Together in Song*, Sydney: HarperCollins Religious, 1999) Public Domain.

18 Re-Membering Ecumenical Service First Anniversary of the Gippsland Bushfires

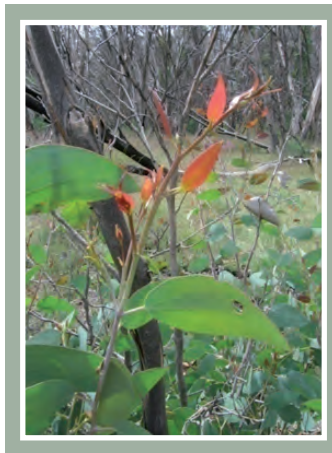
Out of Ashes ⁹

Fire in the forest leaves us ashes,
Ashes lie smoking on the ground,
All the old and dead wood lies in ashes,
But don't be sad don't let it bring you down.

For in the ashes new seeds are sown,
From the ashes new life will grow,
Leave the past in ashes, let the old things give way,
Start a fresh new life right here today,
In the ashes, from the ashes, out of ashes.

Now we leave our failings far behind us,
Leave them in the forest fire to burn.
All that's left behind are cold grey ashes,
And in the ashes now to God we turn.

For in the ashes new seeds are sown,
From the ashes new life will grow,
Leave the past in ashes, let the old things give way,
Start a fresh new life right here today,
In the ashes, from the ashes, out of ashes.



Acknowledgements

- Staff of Monash University, Gippsland
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- Salvation Army Band led by Band Master Anthony Wilson
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- Master of Ceremonies: Barry Whitehead
- Welcome to Country
- Sound System: Russell Proud
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- Music during afternoon tea: Strzelecki Stringbusters
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