

The Big Blue Church

A perfect summer's morning greeted attendees to the combined church service in Riverside Park in Barham on Sunday.

Those of any faith were welcome to attend and watch the amazing talented artist, Lynton Allan. Lynton uses art to engage audiences from all walks of life, with live art and creative story telling.

Using a large art board, colourful pastels and a talented hand, Lynton produced stunning artwork, in less time than it takes to boil the kettle.

As the artwork evolves, Lynton's ability to story tell shines through. Lynton strives to take notice of all aspects of life, encompassing the wonderful to the ordinary.

"Art and storytelling are the language I employ to interpret what I see and reflect upon," said Lynton.

"Seeing is to have your breath taken away with the beautiful and wonderful dimension of life, not only in the grand and majestic, but also in the small and overlooked.

"Seeing is also to be

moved by the dark side of life. Art seeks to embrace suffering, to empathise with the pain of others, to stand against the injustices in this world and reach out with compassion."

The service itself was conducted by Bernard Blumel of the Koondrook Barham Baptist Church and Fr Neil Sommersby of the Barham Anglican Church.

Music was provided by the talented John Lace and Fr Neil, with Fr Neil belting out angelic tunes, while his fingers danced the keyboard.



Colin Barnes, Bernard and Linda Blumel, Graeme Cockroft.

It was the last service for the Blumels, with Bernard and Linda moving back to Melbourne after two years watching over the K-B Baptist flock.

"It's been a great time in the community," said Bernard.

Originally from South Africa the Blumel's emigrated to Australia and

eventually put down roots in Melbourne.

"We left Melbourne behind about five years ago, we were asked to go to Wangaratta first.

"I still think that was a great transition because Wangaratta I think was about 20,000 people or more, and was so much smaller than anything we had experienced.

"We got the call to go to Barham and thought, 'Well we've done small.'

"We weren't prepared for anything quite this small, but coming from South Africa we had been in one place smaller than Barham and that was a real eye-opener as to what community living is about.

"It's been great, but now we are going back to Melbourne. We don't go back with any agenda, but we do need to reconnect with our family after five years away, and a lot of our friends we haven't seen for a long time."

The Blumels were presented with a framed certificate of affirmation from the church community.

The frame itself was beautifully constructed by the Men's Shed, utilising redgum floorboards that

had recently been removed from the Baptist Church Hall, due to white ant damage. The termites attacked the building during the 2000s. The hall was built in 1956. A team from Mobile Mission Maintenance, aided by church community members, performed the repairs. George Rathbone then requested the Men's Shed to make the frame. Bernard and Linda have

been highly active members of the Men's Shed.

In the Blumel's time here, their list of achievements included combined church services, Vision Radio, church repairs via Mobile Mission Maintenance, garage sales, mens' breakfast, Know Your Bible group, Gannawarra Ladies Guild, kids' church, Murray Haven visits and more.



Lynton working his magic.



Fr Neale playing his magic.



A sample of some of Lynton Allan's works and publications.



John Lace joined Fr Neale in playing some tunes.