

The Parish Magazine

Epping Anglicans

February to April 2025

Number 879



Saint Alban the Martyr,
3 Pembroke Street,
Epping

with

Saint Aidan of
Lindisfarne,
32 Downing Street,
West Epping

In Covenant with the communities of the Roman Catholic Parish of Epping and Carlingford
and the Uniting Church Parishes of Epping and West Epping

From the Editor

This edition of *The Parish Magazine* marks the beginning of my seventh year as Editor. Twenty-four editions. The last six years have been interesting, challenging, frustrating, and deeply satisfying. My sincere thanks are due to the many, many people who have contributed over those years; people willing to share an experience or an idea or an issue that has had an impact on their lives. When I hold a just completed magazine in my hands, I am excited that those experiences, ideas and issues are soon to be shared with readers. But where are those readers?

The Parish Magazine is distributed widely within the Parish and surrounding suburbs. Copies are emailed, and mailed, to a number of interested readers, some former parishioners who do not regularly attend Saint Alban's but are interested in the life of our Church. I have received emails of appreciation from readers in wider Sydney, regional NSW, Victoria and elsewhere in Australia, and in the UK. Readers find something that strikes a chord with them, and they write to me "Please tell the author of ... how much I enjoyed reading their article.". I have been told more than once that "I sit down with a cup of tea and read it from cover to cover."

May I suggest that it's time for you to make your favourite beverage and sit down to read the wide variety of articles by your fellow parishioners. Perhaps you have an idea for something you could share in the next edition of *The Parish Magazine*? In that case, please make your beverage and sit down to write.

Please contact me at julie.evans@ihug.com.au

Our vision:

*To be
"a city on a hill" -
a worshipping community,
loving Jesus
and
the people around us*

To contact us:

Contact Parish Administrator Tuesday - Friday on
(02) 9876 3362

The Parish Office is open Tuesday and Thursday 9.00am to
3.00pm.

Post Office Box 79, Epping NSW 1710

Email: office@eppinganglicans.org.au

Website: www.eppinganglicans.org.au

Our clergy may be contacted at any time:
The Reverend Phil Lui 0433 456 987

Saint Alban's Church is open for private meditation during the week, when the Parish Office is open. Our parish library is also available when the Parish Office is open. Meeting rooms, various sized halls and other facilities are available to hire. Please contact the Parish Office for details.

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The Anglican Parish of Epping

3 Pembroke Street Epping, NSW, 2121, Australia.

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The Parish of Epping is a parish in the Anglican Church of Australia. *The Parish Magazine* records recent events in the parish, gives details of parish activities and publishes articles of general interest and articles which set out opinions on a range of matters the subject of discussion within the Anglican Church community. It does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Clergy, Churchwardens or Parish Council.

The editor accepts contributions for *The Parish Magazine* on the understanding that all contributors agree to the publication of their name as the author of their contribution. Articles may be edited for space, legal or other reasons. *The Parish Magazine* is also available online at <https://www.eppinganglicans.org.au/parish-magazine>



As the year 2025 begins, many of you are probably wondering “*What’s the plan for this year?*”. The answer is that we have many plans to commit to the Lord and we will see which he will establish. Some of these plans might have more detail and shape than others at this point in the year, however my hope is that this Rector’s Letter will give you a strong sense about where we are going.

Familiar regular ministries will continue, and others will re-start after an interval where they have not occurred. Other new ministries will begin.

Let me tell you about plans for Saint Alban’s in 2025 and beyond.

Continuing Ministries

Liturgical Worship

In this new year, Saint Alban’s will continue to hold services in the liturgical style to which our community is accustomed. Our liturgy team has gathered to plan the liturgical year which will largely be the same. As we move towards Lent, I am hoping that we will have greater emphasis on individual and corporate Lenten devotion. I aim to introduce a Passover meal together on Maundy Thursday, to help to draw our minds to the Last Supper and to the work of our Lord over Easter.

Other Services

Our Thursday services with Prayers for Healing, both online and face-to-face, will continue, as will Taizé Services.

Ministry to Children and our Community

Our Sunday School Program (rebranded as *Spark*) will resume with the school term under the leadership of Kari Hewitt, one of our new student ministers. On Wednesday mornings in the hall our English Conversation Classes ministry will continue.

Restarting Ministries

Lately, as a church, I feel we have a shared sense of momentum and so we also want to think about what ministries we can restart.

Face-to-face Bible Study Groups

When our previous Rector Bishop Ross and his wife Jenny left the parish, we were unable to continue the Bible Study Groups that they had been leading last year. However, as the writer of Hebrews encourages us to spur one another on every day as we see the Day of Christ approaching, it is important that we not just have fellowship on a Sunday, but midweek as well.

Monthly Newcomers Lunches

Another ministry that we will be restarting is our monthly Newcomer Lunches. It is so important that we help those who come to our church to feel known and loved, and so Doris Awad, another of our new student ministers, will be hosting a Newcomers Lunch after church in Saint Alban’s rectory on the last Sunday of each month.

Youth Group

As has been stated many times before it is so important that we reach across the spectrum of ages and cultural groups in our area and so I’m sure you share my delight at having Kari restart a Youth Program on Friday nights.

Special Religious Education (SRE) in Local Schools

Within our parish boundaries Saint Alban’s has the responsibility for Anglican ministries within the schools of West Epping Public, Epping Heights Public School, Epping Public School and Epping Boys High School. Over many years we have not had much of a presence in these schools, but this year Kari will be going into Epping Boys High School to help with the SRE program there.

New in 2025

This then leads me to our final section, “*What new things will we aim for this year?*”

Elevate Leadership Program

Kari has developed a leadership development program for our Youth, so that those who want to grow and serve have a pathway to develop. What is unique in our Elevate program is that it aims to integrate with the Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award, so that the leadership training also contributes to participants achieving their Duke of Edinburgh certificate. We are hoping that this helps parents and youth from a wide variety of backgrounds to value and participate in this program.

Hope 25

This year the Anglican Church of Australia is encouraging our churches to participate in *Hope 25*, between Easter and Pentecost. I feel it would be positive to join with our wider Anglican communion in mission in this way. There will be more details to come about what we will do over this time. See <https://www.hope25.com.au> – for more information about Hope 25.

Facilities Upgrades - Heating and Cooling Projects

This year we are aiming to upgrade some of our facilities on site by addressing our heating and cooling issues. On this note I want to thank the Parish of Saint Anne’s Ryde for their generosity in offering to help us financially with the sum of \$12,000 towards the upgrade of our hall in this way. Certainly the project will cost more than this amount, and we will be hearing more about a special campaign for this in the coming year. I know many of you will look forward to being able to enjoy fellowship in our hall without being forced out by the cold.

Parallel Contemporary Service at 10.00am on Sundays

I want to take up a bit more space in this Rector’s Letter to elaborate on the vision and thought behind starting up a contemporary service, running parallel to our 10.00am liturgical service. Running the service at the same time will allow the services to share Sunday School and the people resources required. The two services will also be able to share the ‘second half of church together over morning tea and on some weeks the two congregations will share the Lord’s Supper. Church life at other times will be shared as a singular church, unified as the Body of Christ, in Bible studies, Men’s BBQs, Mothers’ Union events, Newcomers’ lunches, equipping events with invited speakers, and every area of shared church family life.

The vision is to grow both services through outreach and discipleship by providing a diversity of worship styles that are helpful to different groups of people. As it says in 1 Corinthians 9:22b “... *I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some.*” Over the years in various conversations, it has been clear to me that our traditional liturgical worship has been distinctly helpful for many of our brothers and sisters in expressing an appropriate reverence for God. However, for many of them, their spouse and/or children find a contemporary service more helpful in its emphasis on alternate ways to experience the nearness and closeness of Christ and so finding an appropriate church has been difficult as a family. Today, many of the younger generation are seeking connection and roots and so a historically rich liturgical service may in some ways be better placed to reach these young people, whilst a more informal service may be helpful for other people who carry a degree of religious baggage from previous experiences. Our aim is to provide avenues for the expression of diversity, where Scripture allows us freedom to serve the same Lord in a variety of ways.

I think we can offer something unique in this space as a Middle Church on a Sunday because of the many ways God has blessed us over the years, the inheritance of the saints who have gone before us and the work they have done; our location; our property; and the people he has called to be in his flock at the present day Saint Alban’s Epping. As we missionally seek out the Lord’s sheep in the area of Epping and surrounds, we want to ensure we are able to feed and build them up, which is why it is also so important to ensure that we have children and youth programs that are ready to receive and care for the young ones that God brings to us.

The motivation is to be a multi-generational church, where the emphasis is not about one style of service growing at the expense of the other, but together making something greater than the sum of its individual parts; to have a ministry portfolio where our liturgical services are a key missional feature of the parish of Saint Alban’s.

You might say to me that these plans seem rather ambitious, and they are. We need the Lord to provide the right people, including an assistant minister, the right opportunities and the financial resources. As with all plans made by humans, we can do nothing unless the Lord is at work. We need prayer, and as God’s people I ask for your prayers that God will continue to bless our plans for 2025 so that His name would be glorified. You might have questions or comments about this Rector’s Letter so please feel free to speak to me, or other Parish Council members that we might walk forward together in the 2025 that God has planned for us.

Our Services

Information about ways to join us in the church or on Zoom is in the Weekly Bulletin, which can be found on the Parish website <https://www.eppinganglicans.org.au>

You can also join directly just before 10.00am on Sundays by scrolling to 'Watch' on the Epping Anglicans homepage – the weekly Service Sheet with readings is also available there.

Baptisms, weddings and funerals may be arranged with the Rector.

For further information on Parish matters please telephone Parish Office: (02) 9876 3362

Our regular services

Sunday at Saint Alban's	8.00am Holy Eucharist with Hymns 10.00am Choral Eucharist – 1 st and 3 rd Sunday 10.00am Sung Eucharist – 2 nd , 4 th and 5 th Sunday <i>The 10.00am Holy Eucharist is also streamed via Zoom.</i> Sunday School 10am in The Loft (above the Main Hall) <i>During school terms</i> 6.00pm Taizé Service – Prayer with Songs from Taizé 2 nd Sunday of February, April, June, August, October and November
Thursday at Saint Alban's	9.30am Reading, Reflection and Prayers for Healing on Zoom 10.30am Eucharist with Prayers for Healing

February 2025

Sunday 2 February	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, Blessing of Students and Educators <i>Preacher: Dr Ruth Shatford</i>
Sunday 9 February	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Sunday 16 February	Sixth Sunday after Epiphany <i>Preacher: The Reverend Bruce Hunter</i>
Sunday 23 February	Seventh Sunday after Epiphany <i>Preacher: The Reverend Michael Aitken</i>

March 2025

Sunday 2 March	Transfiguration – Last Sunday after Epiphany
Wednesday 5 March	Ash Wednesday – Eucharist with Ashing 12.00noon and 7.45pm
Sunday 9 March	First Sunday in Lent – Litany and Ashing
Sunday 16 March	Second Sunday in Lent
Sunday 23 March	Third Sunday in Lent
Sunday 30 March	Fourth Sunday in Lent – Mothering Sunday <i>Preacher: The Reverend Paul Sampson</i> <i>10.00am Service will be followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Parish</i>

April 2025

Sunday 6 April	Fifth Sunday in Lent <i>Commissioning of Wardens, Parish Councillors and Nominators</i>
Sunday 13 April	Palm Sunday; Blessing of the Palms; Ecumenical Procession at 9.30am
Monday 14 April; Tuesday 15 April; Wednesday 16 April	Holy Week – Eucharist with Reflection 7.45pm
Thursday 17 April	Maundy Thursday – Serving one Another 7.45pm
Friday 18 April	Good Friday – 9.30am
Sunday 20 April	Easter Day – 5.30am and 8.30am
Sunday 27 April	Second Sunday of Easter; ANZAC Remembrance

Children at Saint Alban's

Amy Taylor, Children's Ministry Worker



In the usual Sunday School spirit, we ended 2024 with a bang consisting of the Christmas Pageant, the Term 4 theme of G.O.A.T (Greatest of All Time) – a series on some of the greatest stories, lessons and works of God in the Bible, and, since it was my last term as Children's Ministry Worker and there would be ample recovery time, attempting craft projects I have been too scared to approach over the past six years.

We began by looking at Jeremiah 17:7-8, which encourages us to take heart. Like a tree planted beside a stream, it doesn't fear when heat comes because its roots are fixed in the life-giving waters. We painted plant pots and sowed our own seeds to nurture as we would our faith. Another favourite topic was 'Finish the Race' where we watched a scene from the Pixar movie *Cars*. Just like Lightning McQueen learnt, it's more important to God that we finish the race well, and in His Spirit, rather than finish the race first by cheating or acting in the ways of the world.

RIGHT: Hand painted flowerpots and plants which will (hopefully) produce strong leaves



For our final topic, we heard the parable of the builders. Jesus is our rock and firm foundation. When we build our lives on Him, we will be able to weather any storm. We decorated gingerbread houses, and the children learned first-hand the importance of having a strong foundation as only half the houses remained standing by the end of the morning.

BELOW: Some houses withstood the storm better than others, but unlike the man who built his house on the sand, there were no tears



RIGHT: The Sunday School children showed their gingerbread houses to the congregation



We presented our Christmas Pageant on 8 December 2024 and the children did a phenomenal job. Some of the children read aloud for the first time and they were dedicated to knowing their lines. They were enthusiastic and the rehearsals had the usual mix of hilarity and chaos which I have come to love. A few moments that will stick in my mind are Calvin telling me very seriously that he would only play Joseph if he could have a chainsaw, and Reuben carefully arranging all the props in the chapel so he would be 'ready for anything'.



Mary and Joseph with the Baby Jesus



The Angel Gabriel



The children powered through the hot weather, remembering all their lines and instructions, while it was all too much for some of the shepherds

Over the year, I have received many donations of lollies, gadgets and little novelties for the Sunday School, and I made up 'goodie bags' for the children to have AFTER the pageant. So, on behalf of them, thank you to everyone who donated anything over the year - they went down a treat.

During the service, I had the opportunity to pass over my leadership of the Sunday School to Kari Hewitt. I would like to express my gratitude to The Reverend Phil Lui for the kind, touching and generous vote of thanks he gave me on behalf of the congregation. While it will undoubtedly be hard to let go of some aspects of the Sunday School, it is time for me to step away and I leave knowing it is very safe in Kari's hands.



Amy Taylor addressing the congregation



Members of the congregation laid their hands on Kari as The Reverend Phil Lui (obscured) blessed Kari and his future service to Saint Alban's

I was glad to have been able to express my own gratitude to the congregation for the indescribable support they have given me over the years. Since the pageant, I've had a chance to reflect on my past six years of leading the Sunday School and the thing that stood out most to me is how honoured I feel to have been offered this ministry. The previous Rector, The Right Reverend Ross Nicholson, asked me to lead when I didn't feel as if there was anything for me at church, and Sunday School compelled me to keep coming along, keep learning about God and after half a year my interest and faith grew exponentially. I have learned so much about the Bible, who I am as a Christian, and how important and precious it is to be a part of a church community.

I want to reiterate my thanks to every member of Saint Alban's for their support, love and friendship - not only during the past six years but since I began coming along as a four-year-old. I don't believe there is anyone who hasn't offered me a kind word of encouragement, baked for a stall, donated something, assisted with Fun-Days or stepped forward to offer their support to me in any way they can. I am incredibly blessed to be able to call Saint Alban's my home and its congregation my family. I couldn't have led Sunday School without you, and I hope I can now be for you what you were for me, a blessing.



Amy Taylor pictured with the Reverend Phil Lui and Kari Hewitt, the new Children and Youth Ministry Worker at Saint Alban's

“Thank you” to Amy Taylor - Children’s Ministry Worker



Children with their gingerbread houses Christmas 2024

At the 10.00am Service on 8 December 2024, The Reverend Phil Lui spoke on behalf of the whole Parish when he thanked Amy Taylor for being the Children’s Ministry Worker and teaching the Sunday School over the last six years. Over these years, Amy saw the children through COVID, providing Sunday School via Zoom and craft activities delivered to the children’s homes. She grew the program to over 25 children, though numbers vary from week to week, and the greatest strength of her tenure has been how much she has loved each and every one of these children and impressed on them a love for God. Amy is not leaving Saint Albans but will be joining the 10.00am congregation. We thank God for Amy and pray for God’s blessing on her and all her future endeavours.



Photo of all the actors before the 2024 Christmas Pageant

The Parish of Saint Alban’s Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday 30 March 2025 after 10.00am Service

Introducing Doris-Day

Doris Awad

Editor's Note: Doris Awad has joined our Parish as a student minister. It is common practice for students at Moore College to attend two different churches over the course of their studies. What the student minister contributes may vary from parish to parish and according to the interests and skills of the individual. Doris will be a part of our Sunday morning services, helping Saint Alban's to build a mid-week fellowship group and she will manage the Rectory tenancies.

Doris writes:

I wanted to begin by thanking all at Saint Alban's for your welcome and support, and for allowing me to be a part of the ministry team here at Saint Alban's for the next two years. I thought it might be a good idea to share a little about my journey to Saint Alban's.



In case you were wondering, yes, my Dad named me Doris-Day after the American actress. And no, I have never seen any of her movies, but I am partial to the song she sang, *Que Sera Sera!*

My family moved to Australia from Egypt when I was four years old in search of opportunities, safety, and freedom to express their faith without fear of persecution. We left behind a large extended family and as I reflect on the brief memories I have of before we left, we were surrounded by family around the clock, then moved to a place where we were strangers.

I am thankful that my parents and my grandma raised us to fear God, to love his word and be involved in church. While I loved the church I was a part of growing up, I was always asking more questions than I felt church could answer. During my university years, I was involved with the Christian university group (where I met Becky Lui!) that changed everything for me. For the first time in my life, I experienced genuine Christian fellowship and a sense of belonging. But more than that, what I learnt was how to read and understand the Bible. Don't get me wrong, I knew a lot about the Bible. I (foolishly) prided myself on the number of Bible stories I knew, and the extent of the knowledge that my church had provided to me. But I distinctly remember this moment at the Christian University Groups' annual conference where the proverbial penny dropped. I could see all the pieces of the puzzle come together and reveal this one incredible story of how God was saving people across time through the death and resurrection of Jesus the promised Messiah. Every part of the Bible was pointing to this.

It's not a surprise then that this girl who fell in love with books and literature, who was studying English at university, was excited to study God's word with greater clarity and understanding. The wit and cleverness of Austen or Shakespeare seemed limited – finite compared to the eternal significance of the weightiness of Scripture. Dickinson seemed as brief as her dashes in light of the life that God's word breathed into humanity.

During my time as a high school English teacher, the drive to pursue opportunities, safety, freedom, and my love for the written word pushed and pulled against this desire to use all the things I had been trained to do at university: to read the Bible with others, to lead small groups, to tell people about Jesus! I was still hungry to learn more about God's word, so I enrolled at Moore College in 2017 part-time, slowly chipping away at the first year of a theological degree. Unwilling to let go of the desire for more ministry I was also unable to let go of fulltime work and the sense of security it offered. There was never enough time to do it all and the more opportunities I had to succeed at work, the less time I had to serve God.

After discussing this tension with a college lecturer in February 2023, she challenged me that I couldn't have it both ways. I needed to decide between finishing my theology degree or dropping down to the diploma and giving up the idea of full-time ministry. I chose the diploma. It made no sense to continue doing a degree that I had no plans on using. I would try to find contentment in serving God at church as a bible study leader.

Two weeks later at an engagement party of someone who had been in my bible study group, I had a strange conversation with Danny and Debbie Mullins. Danny and Debbie had been missionaries with the Church Missionary Society in France. Danny is the Campus team leader of the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students staff team that worked with the Christian Union at Macquarie University. He told me how he needed more women to come and work with him to read the bible with the female students and care for them. I half-jokingly suggested that perhaps it was something I could do? But it was too late, both were talking, asking me questions, helping me make plans to see how we could make it happen. I left the party excited and confused. It was a conversation I couldn't shake. Maybe I had made up their enthusiasm? Even mine? The next weekend, I saw him again and he was even more serious.

Over the next five months I prayed and lived in the tension of the push and pull of staying at work or jumping into the unknown of full-time ministry. When I asked people for advice, I framed it with "Tell me this is a terrible idea...". No one did. Not even my parents, who I thought would remind me that I would be giving up the opportunities, safety, and freedom for which they had left their families and a world that they knew. So, I finally put in my application to work with AFES (Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students) and got the job. I thought I would at least give it a year.

For the last six months of 2023 I tried to hold on to my teaching career with everything I had, but through difficult circumstances God firmly shut that door. I quit teaching in January 2024 and started working with Danny at Macquarie University.

Over the last twelve months I have had a front row seat to God's transformative power through His word. My days were filled with reading the Bible with students, training them to understand it well and teach it to others, and walking alongside them as they shared the gospel with other students. It has been a joy and privilege seeing students comprehend the gospel of grace, watching it transform their hearts and minds and being blown away by their love for God and a desire to tell others about Him. It wasn't all easy. God had a lot of work to do on my heart too. As a teacher, I was proud of how my work was able to get students to love words. As a ministry worker, I needed to step back and trust God and his word to do all the work.

One year in and I recognise that I have so much to learn and while I'm nervous to be going back to full time study to (finally) finish my theological degree, I am reminded by the words Paul speaks to Timothy about what it takes to be a good servant of Christ:

If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe.

1 Timothy 4:6-10

Please pray that over the next two years, as I serve beside you at Saint Alban's, that I am well trained in God's word, good doctrine, and godliness.

Your sister in Christ
Doris

Safe Ministry

The Parish of Saint Alban's with Saint Aidan's Epping NSW is committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, particularly within its own community.

If you have any questions or concerns you can contact the Rector, The Reverend Phil Lui
on 02 9876 3362 or email phil@eppinganglicans.org.au

You can also contact the Diocesan Safe Ministry Team
on 02 9265 1604 email info@safeministry.org.au
or to report abuse 1800 774 945 email abusereport@safeministry.org.au

The Sanctuary and the Altar after the All Souls' Service
Tuesday 29 October 2024



The Reverend Paul Weaver was the Preacher at the All Souls' Day Service

Christ the King

24 November 2024



The Choir and Sanctuary Party are pictured with the Rector, The Reverend Phil Lui, and The Right Reverend Glenn Davies, who was the guest preacher at the Festival of Christ the King

Guest Preacher The Reverend Brett Hall 27 October 2024



The Reverend Brett Hall, Executive Assistant to the Bishops of North Sydney and South Sydney, was the guest preacher at Saint Alban's on Sunday 27 October 2024

Guests at Saint Alban's 22 and 29 December 2024



The Reverend Bruce Hunter was the guest preacher on Sundays 22 and 29 December for both the 8.00am and 10.00am Services. and Aleks Mitsios, a previous organist at Saint Alban's, returned to play the organ for these Services and for 5 and 12 January also



The Readings:

Isaiah 25:6-9, Psalm 24, John 11:32-44, Rev 21:1-6a

During my childhood, my mother always drew attention to All Saints' Day, 1 November. This was because my grandmother had been confirmed on that feast day in All Saints' Cathedral, Bathurst, probably in about 1899. What are the origin and purpose of celebrating this festival? The forerunner of it was a festival celebrating all Christian martyrs on 13 May. In the 7th century, Pope Boniface IV established All Saints' Day on that date, broadening out to the recognition of every believer, known and unknown, martyred or not, who had gone before, to include all the faithful who had died. In the eastern churches, the day is celebrated on the first day after Pentecost. Often in the west, there is a triduum, a sequence of three holy days celebrated, All Hallows' Eve on 31 October, All Hallows or All Saints on 1 November and All Souls on 2 November. I look with sadness at the way Hallowe'en has been derailed and commandeered by commercial interests, distorted, and rendered no longer recognisable as a Christian festival.

We are a little out of sequence celebrating All Saints' Day today, after we have already marked All Souls' Day, but both festivals fit into the season that follows the season of Creation, now called by some the season of Remembrance. That gives us a broad context for these days, not omitting Reformation Sunday, the last Sunday in October, especially important to our Lutheran brothers and sisters and Remembrance Day on 11 November. But, back to All Saints' Day.

In three of our four readings today, we have weeping. Today we are allowed to weep as we remember those we have loved and lost, but we are also urged towards hope rather than despair. Jesus said to the grieving Martha *"Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"*. Some say that Christians have an uncertain relationship with grief and tears. Until that day comes when mourning and weeping will be wiped away, we hold in tension the deep grief we feel and the rejoicing that those we are mourning are rejoicing on the other side. They have become part of that great cloud of witnesses. Jesus resigned himself to walking towards death to meet it in our place. The good news is that in Christ, our griefs are gathered into His griefs and in His grief and weeping, He is offering himself for the life of the world. Sinners we may be, but God makes us His saints through the redemptive work and love of His Son, Jesus Christ. We need now to consider how we shape our lives in response to this identity of sainthood.

In the 12th century in Europe, when very few people could read, there was much teaching of the faithful through sculpture, painting and stained glass. I refer now to the magnificent cathedral of Chartres, not far south of Paris. When we think of the communion of saints, we can picture the faithful in that cathedral so long ago, people who are connected to us through our common faith across the ages and into eternity. One of the enormous rose windows is inspired by the book of Revelation. Christ is depicted at the centre surrounded by concentric circles of angels and saints encircling the throne of God. So, the message comes through to us that these saints are those whose lives are centred on Christ. They are in a harmonious alignment with each other, each playing a musical instrument, in the great symphony of praise to God.

Directly below this rose window are lancet windows, those very tall, pointy windows, showing four of the great prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel and above them, effectively on their shoulders, the four gospel writers. It is a pictorial message to us that with the revelation of Christ, the gospel writers can see so much further than the Old Testament prophets did. It is an invitation to us on this feast day to consider on whose shoulders in the faith we are sitting. Whose influence or example has helped form the foundation my life or yours is built on?

These people will be some of the saints we give thanks for today. Another way of looking at it is inspired by the nearby Jesse window depicting the lineage of Jesus as a family tree, Jesse being the father of his ancestor David. Who would be the main figures on our faith family tree if we drew one, our spiritual ancestors, for whom we give thanks today...family, friends, former parishioners or clergy, teachers, influencers? And as we give thanks, remember we are commemorating saints who have begotten saints, and we give ourselves in openness to God to be used by him to beget other saints. We are aware of many saints recorded in our church calendar, but there are so many more saints known just personally to us or perhaps even just to God alone.

Some groups have their favourite local saints. I was both moved and inspired earlier this year to visit a site of several acres in Brittany in France, now known as the Valley of Saints, where local sculptors continue to add representations of local Breton saints, some as tall as four metres, carved out of local granite. It is an audacious project, bridging history and legend, past and future. A walk among these saints, mostly unknown, is quite moving and must be like a pilgrimage to local people for whom the saints of their childhood stories are brought to life for them. They are encouraged to follow these saints as models, and to seek to centre their lives on them to become godly, to become saintly. Saints begetting saints, a work of the grace of God. As we seek to follow closely in the footsteps of those who have gone before and inspired us, I am moved to learn that the Russian word for 'saint' also means 'very, very like'. What do we aspire to in following in the footsteps of those we revere in gratitude?

When the nominators were preparing to search for a new rector, one of our early tasks was to provide the diocese with a parish profile to give to interested candidates. I have just heard of a London church, engaged in this task who among other descriptors, said they were "*part of the holy people of God*". I don't think we thought quite in those terms, but on this All Saints' Day, we would do well to adopt this mindset about our community. It fits well with our frequent assertion "*We are the body of Christ*". In our worship, we remember with love and gratitude those whose lives have inspired us, whose loving presence we still miss and mourn and through God's loving kindness, we continue on our journey with thanksgiving. In the creed we say "*We believe in the communion of saints*" and in the prayer of consecration, we say "*With angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, forever praising you...*".

The book of Revelation takes the idea of the Book of Wisdom, that the souls of the righteous are with God. The book is one of consolation, a vision of comfort for the distressed and persecuted. We are not just to look back in gratitude and forward in hope but are assured we can trust in God. It is about an uncompromising trust in God. This is the God who will destroy the last enemy, death, forever. God will make all things new. He declares of that time that the old order of things will have passed away. "*I am making everything new. Write these words down for these words are trustworthy and true.*"

Before he was ordained in 1615, John Donne, the English poet, later to become the Dean of Saint Paul's Cathedral, London, wrote among his so-called Holy Sonnets, one called '*Death, be not proud*'. Bear in mind that death had robbed him of his wife and five of his twelve children. I conclude with the first four lines and the last two lines of this fourteen-line poem.

*Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.*

*One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.*

May God give us the grace to follow all the saints in faith and hope and love.

Amen

On Saturday 19 October, the Saint Alban's Mothers' Union held a free brunch. Women from the Parish were invited to attend and bring a friend. There were approximately forty in attendance.

The guest speaker was Lisa Boyd who is the Chaplain at Westmead Children's Hospital. She is employed by Anglicare as a chaplain at the Hospital where she formerly worked as a nurse. She loves sharing the comfort, consolation and hope of the gospel with the people she meets there.

Lisa spoke about her role in supporting families in what is often the worst time in their lives. She said that her words, or merely her presence beside people, can assist them to manage the decisions and medical procedures they face.

Lisa impressed the audience with her gentle compassion as she spoke about those with whom she had worked.

Guests made donations to Anglicare for their Chaplaincy work and an amount of \$413 was raised.



Elizabeth Jenkins thanked Lisa for her presentation



The audience listened attentively to Lisa Boyd as she spoke of her Chaplaincy



The Mothers' Union Prayer Diary unites members worldwide in prayer and fellowship at midday each day. We approach God with confidence, knowing that He hears us and values our prayers wherever we are.

This article shows just one aspect of the work carried out by Mothers' Union in Burundi, officially the Republic of Burundi, a landlocked country in southwest Africa with a population of over 14 million. We can read below about the positive outcomes that have resulted from this project.

Saint Alban's Mothers' Union members invite women in the Parish to join us at our meetings on the second Tuesday of every month. You will find details in the Church Bulletin each month.

Literacy in Burundi

For two decades, Mothers' Union has been working to promote literacy and education in Burundi, with a particular focus on empowering women.

Over a twenty-year period, the programme in Burundi trained nearly 1,300 facilitators to work locally within communities and directly benefitted over 165,000 participants. Over 144,000 of the participants are now accredited as both literate and numerate. They can now access loans and save money due to the numeracy skills acquired from those in the programmes. The course promoted financial stability and expanded beyond the classrooms across the community.

In June 2023 Mothers' Union released a report that looks at the long-term impacts of our Literacy and Financial Education Programme in Burundi. There was coverage from *Church Times* highlighting the impact. The important impacts of the program are:

- **Gender equality and women's empowerment**
 - 86% of female and 90% of male programme participants reported reduced domestic and intimate partner violence
 - 165,400 participants, 77% women, have benefitted from the program
- **Financial empowerment**
 - 88% of female participants have increased personal income
 - 80% of women were no longer financially dependent on their husbands
- **Transformation of families**
 - 78% can afford higher education for their children
 - 96% can afford health insurance
- **Helping Mothers' Union deliver its mandate sustainably**
 - 6,650 of the Mothers' Union Burundi members have been accredited literate
- **Contributing to community development and nation building**
 - 98% of participants have improved relations with neighbours and community
- **Faith in action**
 - Nearly all the program participants reported that they can read the Bible for themselves.

One MU coordinator in the Diocese of Makamba notes: *"It opened the eyes of the participants ... they started to question some cultural values that hindered girls' education ... women are no longer powerless ... they have dignity."*

You can read the full report by visiting the website www.mothersunion.org/burundireport

The following Reflection and Prayer are included in the Mothers' Union Prayer Diary to encourage readers to pray for the Burundi Project.

A Reflection

A women's place in her society or culture can affect the potential power she might hold. Thousands of women and girls struggle to be educated and live with the threat, fear and consequences of gender-based violence; the root of this is gender inequality. Yet Jesus embodied empowerment. He related to women on equal terms and sought to transform the unjust structures of his society. With wisdom and compassion Jesus broke down the cultural barriers of His day, conversed with women, met their needs and included them as His followers and supporters. May we mirror His example, in our day.

A Prayer

May our championing of women's equality and empowerment provide women with the means to lift themselves up in their communities; highlighting God's restoration of human dignity in relationships, based on love and justice, not domination. Amen

Acknowledgement:

Mothers' Union *Prayer Diary 2024*, Halcyon Print Management Ltd, pages 78-81
Used with the permission of the Mothers' Union, Mary Sumner House, 24 Sufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB
www.mothersunion.org

WILLS AND BEQUESTS

Have you considered adding a clause to your will that will grant a bequest to our Parish?

Doing so is a very easy way of supporting the Parish in meeting its financial needs even though when the Parish will receive the benefit is usually unknown.

The Rector, Wardens and Parish Council invite you to give this serious consideration. If you are about to prepare a new will or would be willing to add a codicil to your current will, they ask that you include or add a bequest in favour of the Parish. It is important, of course, that your principal beneficiaries be made aware of what you propose.

The possible wording of a suitable clause to go into your will could read as follows:-

"I give devise and bequeath the sum of (amount in words) Dollars (\$xxxx.xx) to the Anglican Parish of Saint Alban of 3 Pembroke Street Epping in the state of New South Wales for its general purposes. I direct and declare that the receipt provided by a Warden or the Treasurer at the date of payment of the bequest to the Parish will be a full and complete discharge to my Executor."

To insert the bequest wording into your new will, or to add it to your existing will, you should consult your legal adviser.

Should you wish to discuss this in general prior to taking any action, please contact initially any of the Parish Wardens or members of the Parish Council.

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 7.45pm 22 December 2024



The Reading of the Gospel in the candle-lit Church

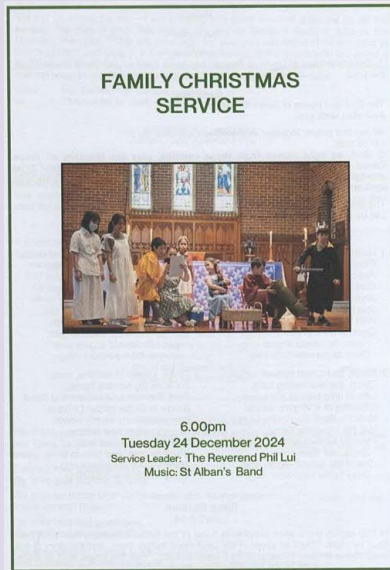
On Sunday 22 December 2024 a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was held at Saint Alban's. The Service began in a silent and dark Church with Isabel Li singing the opening verse of *Once in Royal David's City*. The congregation's candles were lit as the Sanctuary party passed down the aisle, and everyone joined in the singing. The congregation enjoyed other familiar Carols such as *O Come All Ye Faithful*, *Away in a Manger* and *Silent Night*. Saint Alban's Choir, under the direction of Music Director Chris Czerwinski, presented three beautiful items: *Bring a Torch Jeanette, Isabella* with music by Alexander Campkin, *The Angel Gabriel* arranged by Charles Edgar Pettman, and *Gaudete! Christus est natus!* arranged by Barbara Rusebridge. The organ accompaniment was by Saint Alban's Organ Scholars Isabel Li and Enoch Pan. A delicious supper followed the Service.



The Blessing at the end of the Service

Family Christmas Service

Tuesday 6.00pm 24 December 2024



Cover of the Order of Service



The Music and Carols Team led the service



Singing the Carol 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing'



The Nativity Scene in the Church



The congregation joined in singing the Carols
LEFT: The decorated Christmas Tree

Festival Choral Eucharist of the Nativity of Our Lord

Wednesday 8.30am 25 December 2024



The Advent Wreath

Each Sunday in Advent is marked by lighting a new candle on the circular Advent Wreath of five candles. The three purple candles are coloured for the season.

The first purple candle symbolises **hope** and is called the 'Prophet's Candle'. The prophets of the Old Testament waited in hope for the Messiah.

The second purple candle represents **faith** and is called the 'Bethlehem Candle'. Micah had foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

The third candle (pink) symbolises **joy** and is called the 'Shepherd's Candle'. To the shepherd's great joy, the angels announced that Jesus was born to save them and all people.

The fourth candle (third purple) represent **peace** and is called the 'Angels' Candle'. The angels announced that Jesus came to bring peace.

The fifth candle represents **light and purity** and is called the 'Christ Candle' symbolising the presence of Christ. It is joyfully lit on Christmas Day.



The Reading of the Gospel at the 8.30am Christmas Day Service

FABULOUS MUSICALS
A SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT OF MUSIC FROM THE GREAT MUSICALS
 Sunday, 20 October 2024 | 2pm | St Alban's Parish Hall, Epping

KAREN CALLAGHAN, *Soprano* | LACHLAN ROOTS, *Baritone* | PAUL WEAVER, *Piano*

1.	Overture	<i>South Pacific</i>	Paul
2.	"If I Loved You"	<i>Carousel</i>	Karen
3.	"Oklahoma"	<i>Oklahoma</i>	Lachlan
4.	"The Rain in Spain"	<i>My Fair Lady</i>	Karen & Lachlan
5.	"I Dreamed a Dream"	<i>Les Miserables</i>	Karen
6.	"The Phantom of the Opera"	<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	Karen & Lachlan
Interval (20 minutes)			
7.	Suite	<i>Porgy & Bess</i>	Paul
8.	"This is the Moment"	<i>Jekyll & Hyde</i>	Lachlan
9.	"No One Else"	<i>Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812</i>	Karen
10.	"Mountain Duet"	<i>Chess</i>	Karen and Lachlan
11.	"Bring Him Home"	<i>Les Miserables</i>	Lachlan
12.	"All I Ask of You"	<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	Karen & Lachlan
Audience Sing-a-Long			
13.	"Edelweiss"	<i>The Sound of Music</i>	Karen & Lachlan
14.	"Do-Re-Mi"	<i>The Sound of Music</i>	Karen & Lachlan

Concert Program

At 2.00pm on 20 October 2024, a concert featuring popular items from the great musicals was held in Saint Alban's Main Hall. The concert featured The Reverend Paul Weaver on piano, Karen Callaghan (soprano) and Lachlan Roots (baritone).

The program contained solos from each of the artists as well as sung duets accompanied by the piano.

There was also the opportunity at the end of the concert for the audience to sing-along. This was greatly enjoyed by those present.

Donations were invited to the House of Welcome for its ministry to refugees and asylum seekers. Cash donations could be made on the day, and the amount raised was \$583. Others donated through the House of Welcome website.

<https://www.houseofwelcome.org.au/donate>

This concert was repeated Sunday 3 November at Alan Walker Village, Carlingford and donations made there were given to Christian Community Aid in Eastwood. The amount raised on this day was \$1028.



LEFT TO RIGHT: The Reverend Paul Weaver, Karen Callaghan and Lachlan Roots

Sounds of Young Hearts Spring Concert 20 October 2024

Margaret Cummins



LEFT TO RIGHT: Geoff Dorman, Enoch Pan, Margaret Cummins, Isabel Li and Sue Dorman

The King’s School Music Centre Recital Room was the evening venue for the group of young musicians “*wishing to contribute to the community with their musical abilities and aiming to provide opportunities to those who share the same values to fulfil their mission*” (quote from the program).

Sounds of Young Hearts was founded by Jervis Lee, Isabel Li and Eukai Miao “*with a mission to support young musicians who have attained a high level of musical ability and who want to do more with music than just learn to play their instruments. Through hosting charity concerts, they hope to bring the wonder and enjoyment of instrumental music to the wider community. Profits from all events go towards foundations that support music education to young generation*”. (quote from the program).

Our Saint Alban’s Organ Scholars, Isabel Li and Enoch Pan, featured in the program, which ran from 6pm to 8pm on that Sunday evening.

Isabel played on the Xylophone, *Concertino for Xylophone and Orchestra* by Toshiro Mayuzumi and a second item on the timpani, - *Rockin’ Pauken* by Darin Kamstra. Enoch played a piano solo, *Capriccio in F minor, Op.28 No.6* by Ernst von Dohnanyi. There were seven other young people all around the ages of Isabel and Enoch who played the vibraphone, marimba, flute, French horn, and clarinet.

At the conclusion of the concert the participants were each presented with a Certificate of Appreciation, as a little gift to thank them for contributing to the concert. The Certificates were presented to them by Ms Suzanne Maslen, representing Ryde Eisteddfod, which was the recipient of \$500 from the proceeds of the concert. Suzanne sincerely thanked Sounds of Young Hearts for their generous donation, and she spoke warmly and encouragingly of their abilities.

It was a joy to be present and see the enthusiasm and talent of these young hearts. Incidentally Isabel was also the very competent compere of an otherwise male group of performers. Next time an invitation to one of their concerts appears in our pew bulletin please try and join the audience to give support and encouragement to these delightfully enthusiastic young hearts. You will be guaranteed to leave with a smile on your face and a song in your heart!



Enoch on piano

Isabel on timpani



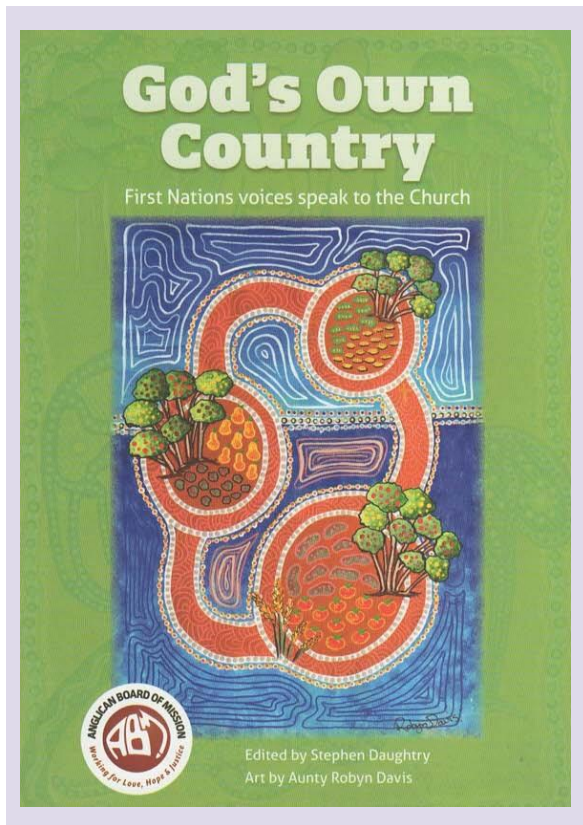
LEFT TO RIGHT: The Reverend Tracey Sutherland, Chaplain, Australian Defence Force, guest preacher; Robin Cummins who delivered The Ode; The Reverend Phil Lui who Presided at the Service, and Edward Lawn who played The Last Post and Reveille



Remembrance Sunday floral decorations in Saint Alban's

Book Review – *God's Own Country*

RLT Discussion Group



Editor's Note: The Discussion Group RLT was named after the first book this group met to read and discuss: *The Road Less Travelled* by M. Scott Peck. The books have been many and varied over the years, but the name remains. Thank you to Christine Murray for writing up the comments of the group on this text. See following pages 26-27 for the history of the RLT Group.

God's Own Country was ABM's 2024 Lenten Study text. It was designed to be read and studied during the period of Lent, however, the RLT Discussion Group used this text as the basis of monthly study throughout the year. In fact, it is appropriate that we completed our study of a book based on the Seven Days of Creation, in the Season of Creation for 2024.

Reading and discussing *God's Own Country* provided us with a way of accessing theological insights offered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of faith. Through the text we were helped to hear the voices of Indigenous peoples and learn about their perspectives.

We discovered new perspectives on the importance of Creation and found that we shared the emphasis on land, sea and sky with the Indigenous writers.

We enjoyed the invitation extended by Aunty Dr Rose Elu, a Torres Strait Elder and member of the General Synod Standing Committee in the Anglican Church of Australia. She invites other Anglicans to see that Torres Strait Islander Christians have their own ways of being Christian. She points out for example, that the Christian God is the same Creator God who made the Islanders custodians of land, sea and sky.

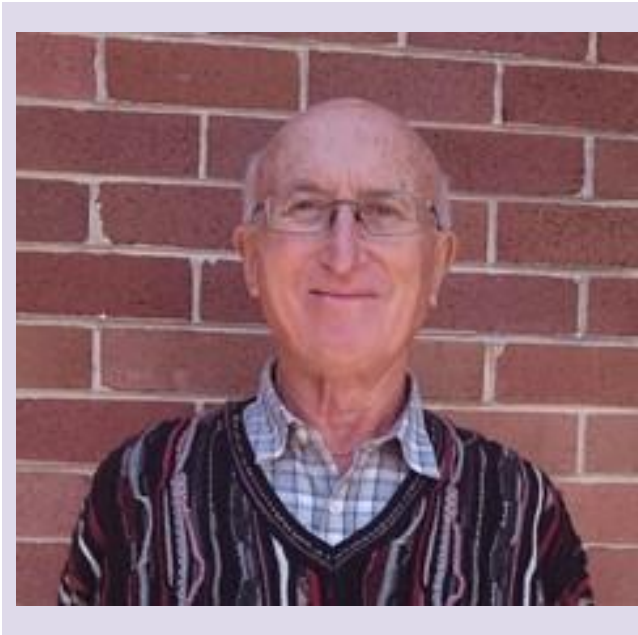
We also discovered new perspectives on the experiences of Indigenous Christians, particularly of their relationships with the Church. For example, the Reverend Cameron Burr, a Boandik man from South Australia writes of his cultural identity being at odds with God's calling in his life. Finding it difficult to walk between two worlds, he stepped back from his parish ministry to move into full-time chaplaincy to both Anglicans and First Nations people at the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

In our RLT discussions earlier in 2024 we were very aware of how recently the Voice Referendum had been defeated. This provided a special context for Aunty Dr Rose Elu's comments on the need for many Anglican clergy to be more intentional in their leadership and in publicly standing up for some Indigenous justice priorities e.g. constitutional recognition and truth-telling.

We particularly enjoyed the artwork used to illustrate this text, beautiful paintings by the Reverend Robyn Davis, a Wadi Wadi woman from the Balranald and Swan Hill area, depicting the Seven Days of Creation. She sees her art as coming from both her Indigenous heritage and her Christian faith. Our only criticism of *God's Own Country* is a constructive one. The layout of the text has the biographies of the contributors at the ends of the chapters. We found it much more useful to read these at the beginning of each chapter so that we knew the background of the writer.

The members of RLT recommend *God's Own Country* to those who wish to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglicans and the insights they offer to a developing understanding of God's relationship with the land and the people.

[The book available to purchase online in either a hard copy or pdf format at ABM's sales site: www.intothedesert.org]



We regularly see reference in the Weekly Church Bulletin to meetings of the 'RLT Group' and I suspect that many raise their eyebrows and wonder what that means. Is it some sort of secret society?! No. This is a group of ladies who have now been meeting regularly in our community for the last thirty-three years.

In 1992, Catherine Eaton [the then Parish Community Worker] decided she would start a study group for the specific purpose of reading and discussing the book *The Road Less Travelled* by M. Scott Peck.

Originally it was open to all, but twelve ladies arrived at Catherine's door for the first meeting of the study group which came to be known by the initials RLT. There are now five active members, three of whom were part of the original group formed in 1992. Eight other members are not now able to participate, two have died and The Reverend Catherine Eaton no longer lives in the Parish.

What follows is an abridged and edited article from *The Parish Magazine* June – July 2005 pages 7-11. The original writer was Virginia Braddock using information gathered by the late Mary Arnold.

*"In 1992 it was the title of the group that first caught my attention on Sunday morning on the Saint Alban's porch noticeboard. Catherine Eaton had mentioned that she was starting up a study group for the specific purpose of reading and discussing the book *The Road Less Travelled* by M Scott Peck. This book – the starting point of a group that has met continuously since 1992 – has been an inspiration for a number of us and it was never anticipated that it would continue past the initial six weeks originally planned. It is now in its thirteenth year!!*

Originally open to all, only one man enrolled in the opportunity, so it was with not too much surprise that it was a group of twelve women who arrived at Catherine's door on the first Thursday evening. We were, and still are, a diverse group of women with different backgrounds, experiences, occupations and interests. Perhaps that diversity is part of the reason we have stayed together for so long. Catherine's training and experience in running community groups undoubtedly played a considerable part in establishing a climate where trust and friendship could grow. We learnt a lot and laughed lots as we explored the meaning of life, the universe and everything and yes, there has been the occasional sob and tears.

That first meeting at Catherine's home was a revelation! Literally! We were asked to imagine where we stood on the road in spiritual terms but that night, in Catherine's home, where we stood, the 'road' stretched from the front door down the stairs and finished at the back door. I remember standing there and thinking "What is all this about?"

*In those first months we participated in various ice-breaking and getting-to-know-you exercises. This brought us closer as a group through a process of self-discovery and learning. In fact, it took us almost three months to read *The Road Less Travelled* which was to become our namesake.*

During those early weeks each of the group shared their lives and found they could talk about their faith, their fears and their life experiences together and still feel safe in each other's company. Perhaps it was this experience that made us decide to stay together and to read another book. We changed the book, and have done so many times, but we have always kept the name RLT.

Originally Catherine led each session, and the meetings were at her home, but it eventually became the practice to meet in different members' homes and the member in whose home the meeting was held would be the leader of the meeting.

From the beginning there were some women who took a leading role, either in terms of hosting, or liaising or organising the group or a combination of all three. Consequently, there are many who have made RLT a valuable part of the Parish family and their contributions should be appreciated. Once Catherine Eaton left to become a Deacon in Melbourne, Marion Martin shouldered the major responsibility. As a token of the esteem in which the RLT group held Catherine for her support and wonderful wisdom and guidance, RLT members commissioned a stole to be made to commemorate her ordination.

Each new member brought their own spiritual perspective to the group. They gifted their willingness to share their wisdom and experience acquired when any of us was in need of care over these thirteen years. It is the spiritual dimensions of the lives of these women, their prayer, their meditations, and their determination to continue together along the road to deeper insights and understandings that is at the heart of the group.”



The original members of the RLT group – early 1990s

BACK ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: Margaret Pearson, Lonza Jeffries, Pam Dyball, the late Eileen Armstrong

SEATED: Marion Martin, the late Mary Arnold, Ida Wilson, Deirdre Haywood, Jill Gumbley

FRONT: Ruth Jones with first grandchild for the group, Virginia Braddock and Catherine Eaton

The RLT group enjoying one of their weekends away late 1990s/early 2000s

LEFT TO RIGHT: Virginia Braddock, Margaret Pearson, Pam Dyball (at back), Jill Gumbley, Lonza Jeffries and the late Mary Arnold

STANDING LEFT TO RIGHT: the late Eileen Armstrong, Ruth Jones, Marion Martin

AT FRONT, SEATED: Catherine Eaton



Acknowledgement:

Thank you to Margaret Pearson for providing the photographs on this page.

Generous buskers donate to Saint Alban's

24 November 2024
by Kayla



LEFT TO RIGHT: Chloe, Kayla and Cherry

On the 24 November, Cherry, Chloe, and I went busking at Hornsby Westfield to raise money for Saint Alban's Church. Cherry was the violinist; Chloe played the guitar, and I played the marimba. This was a great experience as we had a crowd that could come and go as they pleased. It was encouraging to see them stay for most of the songs.

We played a variety of pieces ranging from classical solos and duets like 'Canon in D' (*Pachelbel's Canon*) to Christmas songs like 'All I want for Christmas is You'. We raised \$150 for the Church.

We thank Saint Alban's for being a great community and supporting us through 2024.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

These three talented young women are schoolfriends of our Organ Scholar, Isabel Li. Also, Cherry and Kayla have been reading regularly to the Sunday School children. Isabel, Kayla and Cherry will be part of the new Youth Group at Saint Alban's.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Cherry and Kayla



The Reverend Phil Lui, accepted the donation from Cherry, at left, and Kayla

Christmas Celebration for the English Conversation Classes

27 November 2024



LEFT TO RIGHT: Teacher Jess Li, teacher Sarah Weaver and regular morning tea volunteer Gill McLennan

Class members listen as one of the teachers, Sarah Weaver, tells the Christmas Story of the birth of Jesus



Each class member contributed a dish for the sumptuous feast which was enjoyed by all

English Conversation classes are held from 10.00am to 12.00pm on each Wednesday during NSW School Terms. New students are always welcome.



Visitors from Arden Anglican School
Sunday 8 December 2024



LEFT TO RIGHT: Justin Beckett, Principal of Arden, The Reverend Phil Lui, and The Reverend Graham Thomas, Arden Chaplain, who preached at the 10.00am Service

Two Special Birthdays in 2024



On 10 November, the Parish wished the Rector, Phil Lui, a very happy 40th birthday as he cut a cake made by Dr Ruth Shatford



On 8 December the Parish celebrated with Becky Lui, as she celebrated her 40th birthday, also with a cake made by Dr Ruth Shatford

Christmas Foods and Craft Stall

Sunday 15 December 2024

The stall was open for business after both the 8.00am and 10.00am services and thanks to the cooks and crafters of the parish, it offered cakes and slices; Christmas delicacies like shortbread, Florentines, Christmas cakes and white Christmas; jams; bags of chocolates; handtowels; dolls' dresses; gift cards; beautifully decorated journals and Christmas puddings. Over \$900 was raised for Church activities. We all hope that this becomes an annual event.



Elizabeth Jenkins [LEFT] and Licette Bedna sold delicious food and craft items



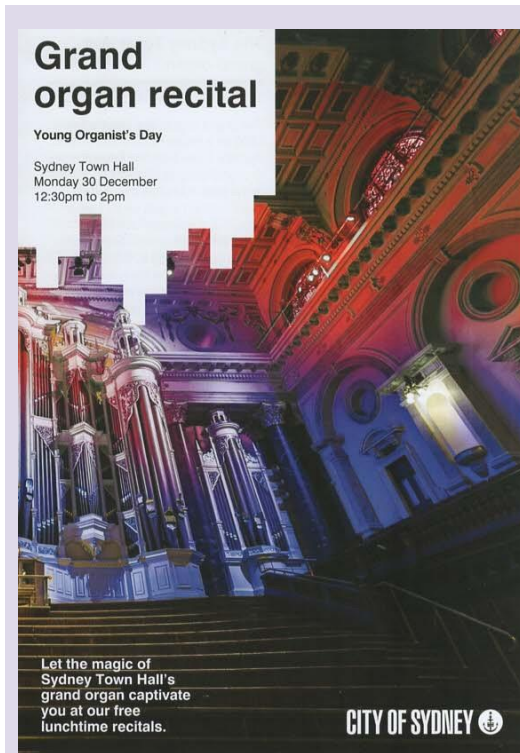
Barbara Meintjes sold her beautiful handmade earrings and decoupage shell ring holders



Rachel's stall offered Christmas fabric hair scrunchies, stickers, and 3-D printed toys

Young Organists' Day Concert – Sydney Town Hall Monday 30 December 2024

What a way to bring 2024 to a close! On 30 December thirteen young and talented organists, the students of seven dedicated organ teachers, entertained a very large audience gathered in the Sydney Town Hall for a Grand Organ Recital. The two Saint Alban's Organ Scholars, Isabel Li and Enoch Pan were part of the program. Their teacher is Saint Alban's Music Director Chris Czerwinski.



Cover of the Concert Program



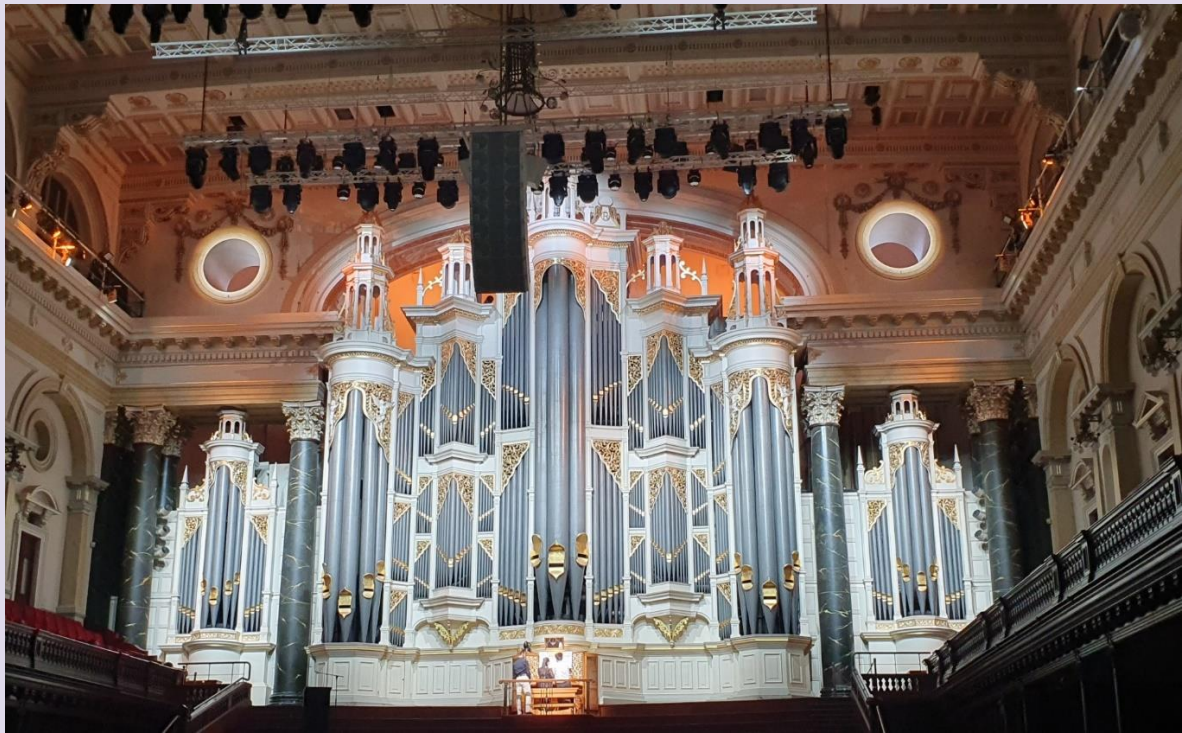
Isabel Li and Enoch Pan with their organ teacher Chris Czerwinski

Isabel and Enoch played the *Brandenburg Concerto No.1 in F major, BWV 1046: Allegro* by J S Bach (1685-1750) which was arranged by Chris Czerwinski. The arrangement was unusual in that it was for two organists. Chris explains:

"I was the Founder and Artistic Director of the Polish Baroque Orchestra for a few years before I moved to Australia permanently. This gave me the opportunity to work on some major orchestral works by Bach with professional musicians.

The 1st Brandenburg Concerto is one of my favourites and is written for a Baroque Orchestra with two hunting horns as concerting/ solo instruments. Because copies of Baroque hunting horns are relatively rare instruments these days and it is even more challenging to find musicians who can competently play the difficult parts Bach wrote for them, this concerto is not performed in concert halls or churches very often. I wanted to hear it live again so I started to search for an organ arrangement of it. After a while, I found an arrangement by one of the famous neo-romantic composers for two pianos, and one by a contemporary organist from Europe for an organ duet. Unfortunately, the organ duet had no pedal part and was just for four hands.

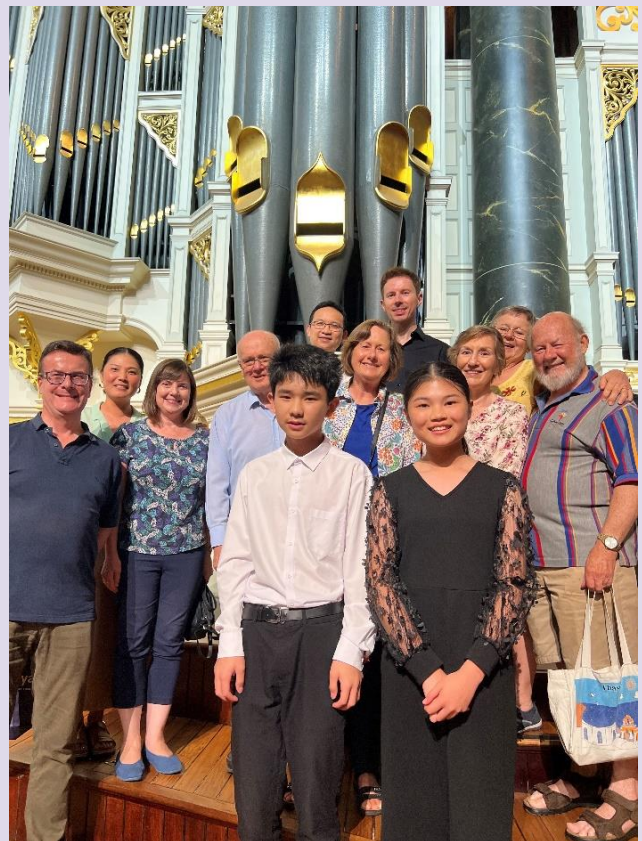
I thought I'll give it a go and I started to work with our organ scholars on the organ duet arrangement a few months ago. However, after a few sessions I thought it was silly to play an orchestral work transcription on the organ without using feet. It didn't sound right without the organ imitating a double bass part or at least a cello part in their correct, low range. In the meantime, knowing the orchestral version of the piece very well from my Polish times, I also found many mistakes in the score we were using and some not very logical propositions by the arranger which we were relying on. That was when I decided to change the score we had. I gradually added pedal parts, pencilled in necessary changes and removed many printed mistakes. At the end I was very happy with the result and after publishing on the internet a little fragment of our organ scholars playing it on Saint Alban's Organ, I have received requests for my edition of the score from all over the world. I was also happy to hear from other organ teachers after our organ scholars played the arrangement at Town Hall Grand Organ Concert that it was impressive and that it sounded very grand."



Isobel Li and Enoch Pan are seated at the console of Sydney Town Hall's Grand Organ. Chris Czerwinski stands at left, assisting the organ scholars by pulling out the impressive 127 organ stops



The young organists with the Town Hall Organist Titus Grenyer at the lectern, far left, and Isobel and Enoch, far right



With Enoch and Isobel are some of the many Saint Alban's supporters who enjoyed the concert

Paul's Adventures in Paddington

The Reverend Paul Weaver



As most parishioners will be aware, I was asked last September by Michael Stead, the Bishop of South Sydney, to accept the position of Acting Rector of Saint George's Paddington, whose Rector had had to retire unexpectedly with significant health issues. I took up this position in October and am not sure at this stage how long I will be in this position.

Saint George's is a small parish, with only around thirty in the congregation for the main Sunday morning service, and a small group on Sunday afternoons at an informal 3.00pm service, which I attend and lead a couple of times a month.

The small church building was completed in 1890, and a few decades ago it was divided into two sections: an area for services and a small hall, which is often used for ballet classes and other weekday activities. The church is on Glenmore Road at Fiveways, on a major connecting road for locals and at a busy local centre for cafes and eateries.

On Sundays it is only 30 minutes' drive from our home at West Ryde. However, when I need to get there during peak hours on weekdays, driving is no quicker than using public transport – about seventy-five minutes.

When I was asked to take on this ministry, I was aware that the people of Saint George's were a diverse group, and that their concern for indigenous issues, climate change and social justice had more of an emphasis than in many Sydney churches. I have found the congregation to be people of deep faith and prayerfulness, with a real concern to understand and apply the scriptures. I have also found them to be warm and welcoming to me, as well as active, enthusiastic and generous – sufficiently generous to cover the financial requirements to be able to seek their new Rector. I am very much enjoying my ministry there, even though I miss my friends and my involvement at Saint Alban's.



Inside Saint George's church

Although Saint George's has found it difficult over the years to grow the congregation numerically (a challenge for their new Rector when he comes!), the congregation is very active in reaching out into the community.

It is a voting centre for elections – with the inevitable sausage sizzle. It is known for having a candidates' night before elections. It holds a monthly children's Lego afternoon on Saturdays, and also a monthly craft afternoon.



The Sydney Street Choir at Carols in the Garden

On the Saturday before Christmas, it held a Carol Service with the Sydney Street Choir singing in the entrance garden. Food was provided for the choir and all who came – close to 100 were present. People are aware of Saint George’s connection with the local community.

One remarkable event was their Halloween celebration. I have always been happy to sidestep Halloween, which has various aspects about which I am uncomfortable.

However, Saint George’s saw that it was a community event with which the congregation could connect and so, on Halloween, for over two hours the entrance garden was filled with children (and their parents) wearing costumes, doing craft activities, having photos taken (for their own use, not the parish’s), enjoying a sausage sizzle (not to mention quite a few lollies and chocolates). Hundreds came in for 10-30 minutes or more. Four hundred sausages were barbecued and eaten! I dressed up as a wizard and was able to introduce myself to many locals – hopefully not too confusing! I am told that many locals now recognise me as the new temporary minister!

The main Sunday services are traditional, using a very similar liturgy to Saint Alban’s. I wear the same robes that I would at Saint Alban’s and am assisted by members of the congregation. The service has a fairly relaxed feel, with pews set up in the round rather than the traditional rows we have at Saint Alban’s. And I find that people are very responsive to the preaching of the word.



Three characters from Halloween celebrations: you might recognise the wizard!

Last term I taught scripture at the local school to replace the former Rector. However, rules nowadays are very strict about who may take Anglican (and other) scripture classes, and what training they must have. Unfortunately, I will not be able to continue this year, and another of our current teachers will also not be able to continue. Please pray that we will find two new, qualified scripture teachers, so that this significant ministry and community connection can continue.

Do also keep praying for the nomination process, so that Saint George’s may find - without undue delay - the right person to take up the role of Rector for this lovely and lively congregation. I miss my friends at Saint Alban’s, but am enjoying the relationships, opportunities and challenges of this ministry at Paddington.

Parish thanks and appreciation are due to three parishioners, Mark Taylor, Mark Gibbs and Colin Jones who worked to remove from the Rectory the now outdated kitchen and replace it with a kitchen, only a few years old, donated by a parishioner who had removed and replaced it in a family home.

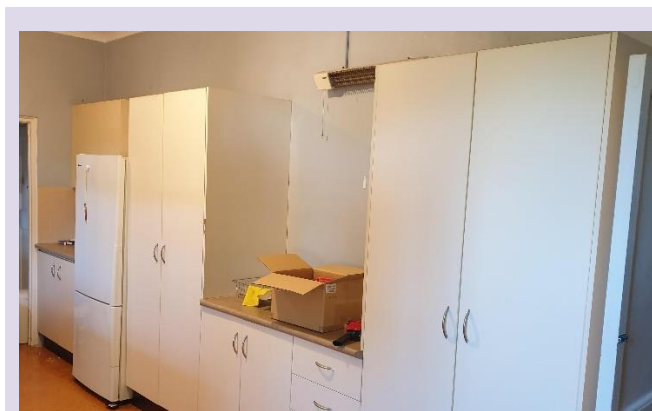
Refitting a kitchen that was custom made for another building meant compromising which items could be reinstalled and where they could be installed, for example, the kitchen sink could not be located directly under the window and a second oven had to be left out as it would have required an upgrade of the power board. The stone benchtops had to be cut to suit the new layout. A professional stonecutter did the work needed on the benchtops.



Before and after

Once the old kitchen was removed, the three skilled ‘tradesmen’ repaired wall cracks, sealed the many gaps between the floor and the walls and repainted. There was also electrical work required to remove old wall heaters and add additional power points. Once the old kitchen was removed, they uncovered some very plumbing that needed repair including a large hole in the floor where the drainpipe exited.

There was an area where there were ancient cupboards which dated back to the building’s original kitchen. They were removed and the area turned into a kitchen nook/breakfast bar. The result is an attractive and functional kitchen.



Before (ABOVE) and after (RIGHT)

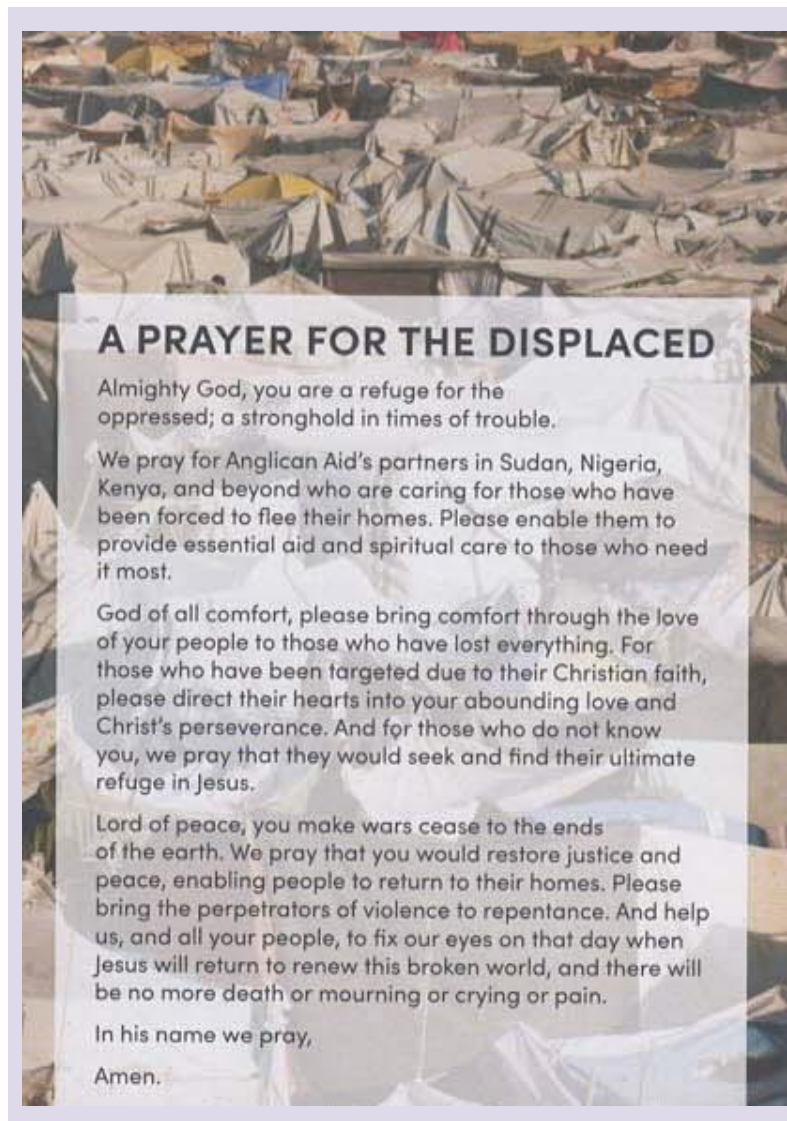
The work took four months to complete. The three men worked two to three days per week over that period and they say: *“Don’t employ us if you require speedy work!!!”* They also thank their cheer squad – The Reverend Phil Lui and Parish Administrator Denise Pigot.

What a generous contribution of their time and skills!
Thank you.



A Prayer for the Displaced

by The Reverend Canon Tim Swan, CEO of Anglican Aid 2024



Would you like to contribute to the next edition of *The Parish Magazine*?

Ask yourself:

- ✚ What am I looking forward to in my Church life?
- ✚ How can I contribute to my Church family?
- ✚ Do I have an interesting journey of faith? Would others enjoy hearing my story?
- ✚ Is there someone who has influenced me and my religious faith? An author? A preacher? A friend?
- ✚ Is there a Christian book or author I would like to review?
- ✚ What would I like to see in future editions of my Parish Magazine?

**The deadline for contributions is
4 April 2025.**

Please contact the editor Julie Evans via email julie.evans@ihug.com.au
or via the Parish Office

Photographs are also welcome.

Karibu from Kenya

Following God's call to a nation of beauty and need

Ian Ratcliff

A very heartfelt 'karibu!' (welcome) to the congregation and supporters of Saint Albans, Epping from Nairobi, Kenya, where I and my family are serving with SIM International [<https://www.sim.org>] and Banda Health [<https://www.bandahealth.org>]. As our 2025 ministry progresses, I am grateful for this opportunity to share part of our journey of faith and action with you.

In my first article for this Parish Magazine [Number 877 August-October 2024], I described our mission call to Kenya and our early experience in this nation, learning about the vulnerable communities which Banda Health impacts through its support of slum health clinics. Since then, Theano and I have continued to develop connections and relationships with clinics, pastors, community organisations and individuals who are serving in some of the poorest communities in Africa. We have encouraged them and, in turn, been inspired by the work that they are doing for the people who inhabit these spaces. As these relationships develop into stronger partnerships, I look forward to bringing you stories of encouragement and life-giving change.

In this article, I'm going to focus on the crossover between my pioneering role with Banda Health and my 'other' ministry for SIM.

Caring for God's creation and community

My role with Banda Health aims to develop ministry partnerships that bring Gospel hope and light to vulnerable communities in Kenya. I have been combining my partnership ministry however, with a role as the Global Lead for environmental matters for SIM. In this other role, I am helping SIM members and teams across the world to consider how they can steward and care for God's creation in their life and ministries. Wearing my 'environmental' hat, in September 2024 I had the honour of joining a gathering of Christians from more than 40 nations at the Global Creation Care Forum [GCCF] in South Korea.



Ian Ratcliff (LEFT) and Tony Rinaudo at the GCCF

At the Forum, we came together to consider how to respond to the deep environmental crises of our time with hope-filled solutions. It was an incredible opportunity to learn from the stories and reflections of people like Tony Rinaudo (of *The Forest Underground: Hope for a Planet in Crisis* fame), Dr Ruth Padilla DeBorst and Prof Dr Katharine Hayhoe.

If you haven't heard of these people and their impactful ministries, I recommend that you look them up. You will find their stories a great encouragement of how God is bringing about environmental justice and hope in this beautiful world.

The Korean Invitation

A significant outcome of the Forum is an invitation to the church to affirm God's good news for **all** the earth and to respond in repentance, prayer and urgent, practical action. This Invitation to Action, known as *The Korean Invitation: Good News For All the Earth*, was published on 12 December 2024 [<https://lausanne.org/statement/good-news-for-all-the-earth>]. I am proud to have been part of the consultations at the Forum that have helped shape the #KoreanInvitation and I have personally become a signatory. I encourage you to consider the invitation and how you too can engage with it as individuals and as a church.

One of the themes of the Invitation, which has particular resonance in our current ministry, is the integration of caring for the earth and caring for the most vulnerable. As the Korean Invitation puts it:

“We support nature-based solutions that address the climate and biodiversity crises as well as global injustices which are deeply intertwined. ... it is important that the voices of those who suffer the worst impacts of nature’s destruction — marginalised communities, indigenous peoples, and those whose livelihoods depend directly on nature — be at the heart of discussions and solutions.”

It is in this space between environmental crisis and marginalised communities that I find a crossover between my roles for Banda Health and SIM.

The challenge to care for God’s creation in the slums of Nairobi?

Kayole is one of the large informal settlements of Nairobi. While some areas of Kayole have developed, there are still parts of the original population that are living in great poverty. I came across the poorer part of Kayole settlement in a roundabout way. In May 2024, as my family relaxed at Uhuru Park – one of the few public green spaces in Nairobi - a dozen bold, joyful Kenyan children descended upon us, wanting to play with our children, Trinity and Oliver. They played, they sang, they danced. It turned out that they were a Sunday School group who were on a day out from Kayole. We met Pastor Charles on that day.

Fast forward to October and I was walking the dusty streets of Kayole with Pastor Charles and members of the Banda Health team, learning about the challenges his community faces and introducing the benefits of the BandaGo system to clinics and pharmacies in this area of Nairobi for the first time. That ‘chance’ meeting between us and the kids from Pastor Charles’ church opened up another vulnerable community to the benefits of Banda Health’s outreach.



The streets of Kayole

Treading the dusty streets of Kayole, one sees few trees or other vegetation. Yet goats and sheep share the streets, and I wonder where they can get enough to eat.

Pastor Charles’ church is a corrugated iron shack with few furnishings, but it’s surrounded by some flood-prone land. There are pumpkin plants growing, seeds deposited by the last flood. A half-formed building to house a children’s centre is testament to both the church’s dreams of transforming its community and the low resources which have stalled the project.

So what does this place have to do with creation care and the Korean Invitation?

Food security is an issue in Africa generally, all the more so for those living in poverty. Other slum-based pastors I have met in Nairobi volunteer that when a member of their congregation comes to ask for prayer because they cannot afford food for their family, there is expectation that the pastor will do more than pray. Yet pastors in these places often have very limited resources themselves.



Gospel Tabernacle Church in Kijabe

Farming God’s Way is a small-scale program that significantly improves food security while also protecting the environment from the impacts of overused chemicals and soil erosion. The program combines biblical principles and good farming management techniques. It often includes the planting of trees to improve long term sustainability. In October, I visited the Farming God’s Way demonstration site in Kijabe and spoke with the members of Creation Stewards International who teach this amazing program. The size of the cabbages were something else!



Kijabe Farming God’s Way – Ian with Craig Sorley, Kenya Director of Creation Stewards International, Antony Muga, Deputy Director and Russell Ochieng, Agriculture Outreach Manager

Farming God’s Way is a program that is usually directed towards rural environments. But as I think about the challenges faced by Pastors like Charles and their congregations, I have a vision to see this program transported into these urban settings. Why not use their church land to put into practice a small-scale garden? Perhaps vulnerable communities will be blessed with healthy, nutritious vegetables and the beginnings of a thriving environment. Exploring the opportunities to roll out such a program is one of my goals for this year.

In ways like this, I hope to put into practice the challenges of the Korean Invitation – to see marginalised communities embracing local solutions that originate in Gospel hope for both the communities and their environment.

Making connections for 2025

What will 2025 bring for us here in Kenya? What vision does the Lord have for us, as we open our hearts and lives to the Spirit's leading this New Year?

In my next article, I'll be sharing more about the work that Theano and I are carrying out in the slums and remote communities of Kenya.

*“He has told you, O mortal, what is good:
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justice, and to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)*



Editor's Note:

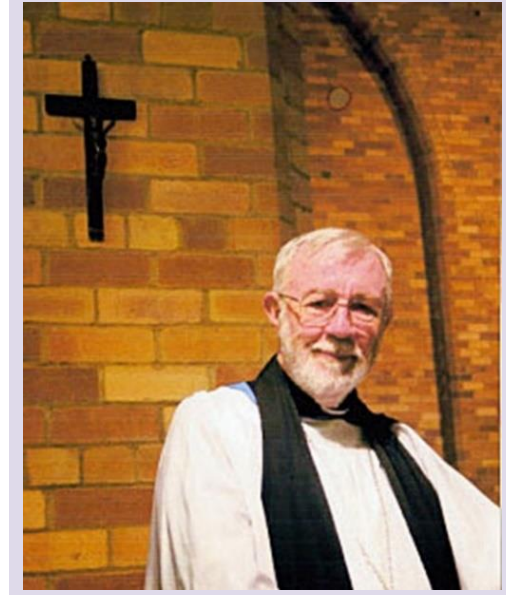
If you would like to partner with Ian and Theano Ratcliff in prayer or financial support, please connect with them through <https://www.sim.org.au/Donate/Missionary/Find-a-missionary/Ratcliff-I-T>.

In July of 1959, when I was a student at Sydney University, I purchased a small notebook and started to keep a diary. Recently I went back to that diary and read the first entry.

I recorded that I was reading an autobiography entitled *Surprised by Joy*, by C S Lewis. I wrote down some of my reflections on that fascinating but sometimes vague autobiography.

Years later I recalled that Lewis, who had been a confirmed bachelor, fell in love with an American ex-communist named Joy Davidman. His friends made jokes about him. She had admired his writings so much that she came to Oxford uninvited, with her two young sons, to meet Lewis. His friends said that Joy had certainly surprised him.

Clive Staples Lewis was fifty-eight when they married, and Joy was forty-one. They had a brief but passionate marriage, ending with her tragic death from cancer in 1960.

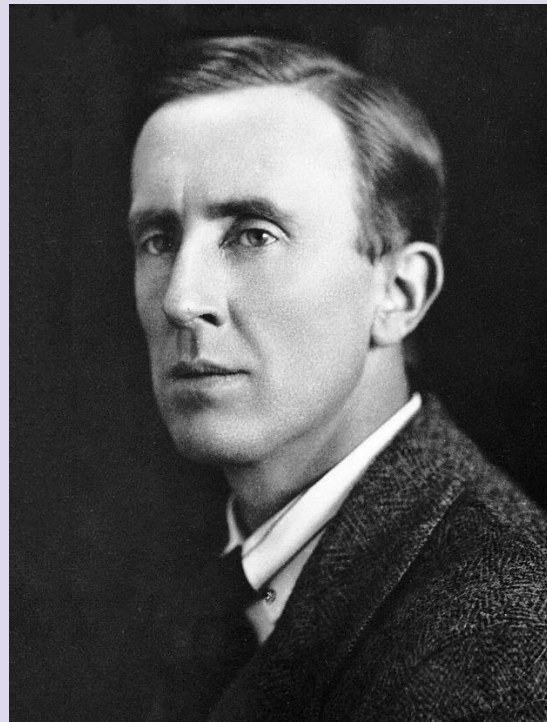


C.S. Lewis was one of the most gifted thinkers and writers of the 20th century. Books such as *Mere Christianity* and *The Screwtape Letters* have become world famous expositions of the Christian faith. Lewis has been acclaimed as an apostle to the Sceptics of the modern world. I must say that I found the second of these classics more interesting than the first.

For much of his life Lewis was a teacher of English at Oxford. During those years his friend was another Oxford scholar named J R R Tolkien who was busy scribbling a fantasy saga entitled *The Lord of the Rings*. I must admit that I have never read it, but I know many people who love both the book and the famous films which were inspired by it.



Clive Staples Lewis (1898 – 1963)
Photo taken in 1947



John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892 – 1973)
Photo taken in the 1920s

Lewis and Tolkien and several of their friends formed a regular association which became known as the 'Inklings'. They would read chapters of their writings in the group and share comments on them. Friendship was very important to Lewis.

He was born a Protestant in Northern Ireland but was an atheist as a young man. He served in the trenches in the Great War and devoted his life to caring for the elderly mother of a brother officer who died in battle. Mrs Moore was twice the age of Lewis, very demanding of his time, and probably insane in later years. She seriously interrupted his studies and career, but he gave her devoted and loving care until her death. His exact relationship with her remains a mystery. Then Lewis met Joy Davidman.

Lewis remained close friends with Tolkien who was a devout Roman Catholic. When Lewis was converted to faith in Christ about 1936, he became active as an Anglican apologist. Tolkien may have resented the fact that his friend did not become a Roman Catholic.

By the 1960s Lewis was seriously ill. He collapsed and died on 22 November 1963, the same day and hour as the assassination of President John F Kennedy in the USA.

Shortly before he died a young American scholar named Walter Hooper knocked on his door. Hooper had admired the writings of Lewis and, like Joy Davidman, came uninvited to see him at his home. Lewis was close to death, but he welcomed the young man and, on an impulse, invited Hooper to be his private secretary, literary agent and executor.

Walter Hooper saw his chance and the invitation gave him his life's work. He returned quickly to America, settled his affairs, and hurried back to Oxford.

Much of the writings of Lewis remained in scattered fragments but, after his death, Hooper began to collect every scrap available. The letters, scripts of radio talks, articles, reviews and so on, were published in a series of books numbering more than thirty volumes.

The joke was that after his death C S Lewis published more books than he ever had in his lifetime. Some scholars have resented the work of Walter Hooper, but most experts agree that he was a faithful editor of the writings of a great man.

The life of Lewis, his conversion, his friendships, his work as a Christian apologist and literary scholar, and his relationships with various people, have always fascinated me. When we were in Oxford my wife and I lunched at the *'Eagle and Child'* pub, dating from the 17th century. Lewis and his friends called it *'The Bird and the Baby'*!

We caught a taxi and photographed the grave of Lewis in the grounds of the Anglican Church just outside the centre of the University.

I reflected that many of his academic colleagues may have intensely disliked him. They were secular humanists, but C S Lewis spoke to agnostics in a way that has remained powerfully relevant to this day.

Acknowledgements:

1. Photo of CS Lewis [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C. S. Lewis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis) Accessed 14 December 2024 at 1420hrs
2. Photo of JRR Tolkien in Public Domain [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J. R. R. Tolkien](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien) Accessed 14 December 2024 at 1430hrs

Parish Directory

Rector	The Reverend Philip Lui BAppSc, BD
Children and Youth Ministry Worker	Kari Hewitt Anglican SRE Teacher BTh Student at Christ College Burwood
Student Minister	Doris Awad BA, BEd BTh Student at Moore Theological College Sydney
Lay Assistant	Ruth Shatford AM (Diocesan)
Sanctuary Assistants, Servers, Readers and Intercessors	Godfrey Abel, Sue Armitage, Ron Arnold, Ross Beattie, Licette Bedna, Ken Bock OAM, Jane Bryant, Margaret Cummins, Margaret Foster, Rema Gnanadickam, Brian Haywood, Elizabeth Jenkins, Meredith Lawn, Anne Lawson, Christine Murray, Margaret Pearson, Peggy Sanders (Senior Liturgical Assistant), David Tait, Amy Taylor, Gillian Taylor, Mark Taylor, John Thompson, Kim Turner, James von Stieglitz, Sarah Weaver
Sacristans	Ross Beattie, Mark Taylor, James von Stieglitz
Parish Administrator	Denise Pigot Telephone: 9876 3362 Email: office@eppinganglicans.org.au
Honorary Parish Treasurer	Shane Christie-David
Churchwardens	Elizabeth Jenkins – Rector’s Warden Noel Christie-David – People’s Warden David Tait – People’s Warden
Parish Councillors	Licette Bedna, Ken Bock OAM, Margaret Cummins, Glyn Evans, Christine Murray, Peggy Sanders, Gillian Taylor
Parish Nominators	Glyn Evans, Peggy Sanders, Ruth Shatford AM, Meryl Smith, James von Stieglitz
Synod Representatives	Corey Chen, Gillian Taylor
Safe Ministry Representative	Sarah Weaver
Music Director	Chris Czerwinski Perf. Dip. (Wieniawski School of Music, Poland), BMus (Eastman School of Music, New York, USA), MMus (Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University, England, UK), MMus (Sydney Conservatorium of Music)
Organ Scholars	Isabel Li and Enoch Pan
Caretaker	Kari Hewitt
Editor	Julie Evans
Proof-readers	Glyn Evans and Peggy Sanders
Archivist	Brian Haywood

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