

# The Parish Magazine

## Epping Anglicans

### May to July 2025

### Number 880



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

In this edition of *The Parish Magazine* readers will learn about a number of new ministries operating within the Parish. Youth Ministry Worker, Kari Hewitt, shares with readers information about Sunday School, the Youth Group, his own theological studies, and scripture at Epping Boys High School. Carol Riyad, part of the Ministry Training Strategy at Macquarie University, has written about her role and ministry to students. Doris Awad, resident of the Rectory who is also undertaking theological studies and will contribute to the Sunday School, gave one of the reflections during Holy Week services. The other reflections were given by two young parishioners, Laura Devine and Amy Taylor. In case you missed them, the three reflections are printed in this issue.

You can also be updated about the English Conversation Classes; Ecumenical activities; the World Day of Prayer; the controversial Reverend Samuel Marsden; and Mount Etna volcano. Become familiar with members of the Parish Council and others in roles of responsibility in our church.

Many parishioners are using their gifts to minister within our church and community. If you believe you have something to offer in service to Saint Alban's, please speak to the Rector.

Please contact me at [julie.evans@ihug.com.au](mailto: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](mailto:office@eppinganglicans.org.au)

Website: [www.eppinganglicans.org.au](http://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 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>



## See Jesus Returning

### (A Guide to reading the Book of Revelation)

Over the Easter Season (the time between Easter Sunday and Pentecost) we are going to have sermons on the book of Revelation, specifically chapters 1 to 7.

It can be an intimidating part of the Bible, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, the main application of the book is COMFORT and ASSURANCE, amidst a background of present chaos and confusion.

Chapter 1 is key to understanding the book of Revelation because it tells us what the book is and how we should view it.

#### 1. What is Revealed?

*The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John <sup>2</sup> who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. (Rev 1:1-2 NRSV)*

My first suggestion to understanding Revelation is to imagine yourself in an art gallery looking at a large, singular painting where the central focus is the figure of Jesus Christ. I often emphasise to people that it is not 'Revelations' (plural) but it is 'Revelation' (singular) and specifically it is the 'Revelation of Jesus Christ.' It is a painting that is not only giving you specific information but aims to invoke images and emotion and speak to our whole person about the Lordship of the Risen Christ. When you feel as if you are getting lost in the book, when you feel intimidated by the chaos and confusion, reread Chapter 1 over and over again.

#### 2. Why should you read Revelation?

*<sup>3</sup> Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near. (Rev 1:3)*

Be assured that you will be blessed as the time is near.

#### 3. What is 'the time'?

*<sup>7</sup> Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So, it is to be. Amen. (Rev 1:7)*

The time of the return of Jesus Christ, who comes to judge the nations, is imminent.

#### 4. However, for His people the picture of His return should bring us COMFORT and ASSURANCE.

*<sup>4</sup> John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,<sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood,<sup>6</sup> and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Rev 1:4-6)*

<sup>8</sup> *'I am the Alpha and the Omega', says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.* (Rev 1:8)

We should have comfort and assurance from the book of Revelation because:

- a. We have grace and peace from God
- b. We are loved by the God who freed us from our sins
- c. God the Almighty is in complete control.

## 5. Why do we need COMFORT and ASSURANCE now?

<sup>9</sup> *I, John, your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.* <sup>10</sup> *I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet* <sup>11</sup> *saying, 'Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.'* (Rev 1:9-11)

All who have a share in Jesus and THE Kingdom, will also share in the time of THE Persecution and THE Patient Endurance, which is the time we live in now in 2025.

## 6. The Centrepiece of the Revelation – Jesus the Christ (the most important verses to keep coming back to)

<sup>12</sup> *Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,* <sup>13</sup> *and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest.* <sup>14</sup> *His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire,* <sup>15</sup> *his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters.* <sup>16</sup> *In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force.*

<sup>17</sup> *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, 'Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,* <sup>18</sup> *and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive for ever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.* <sup>19</sup> *Now write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this.* <sup>20</sup> *As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.* (Rev 1:12-20)

As we consider this intimidating, powerful, awesome vision of Christ, this portrait of Jesus who has eyes of fire and who has a double-edged sword, a portrait which sits largely in centre prominence in the painting on the wall, we need to remember that this Jesus is on our side. The one who loved us and freed us also has the power and the might to conquer the chaos and confusion, and who fights with and for us as we endure this time of persecution and patient endurance.

I hope having this article serves as a resource for those who miss the first sermon in our series on Revelation and that it might spur you all on to come and join us for this exciting series as we spend time looking at our Easter King.

P.S. For the younger people as an 'easter egg', highlight all the 'C' words in this article and it will help you get the main points of the article. It is a way to 'C' Him Coming with the clouds of heaven.



Parishioners after breakfast in the Parish Hall on 27 April 2025



**Hope25** seeks to empower Australian Anglican parishes and communities in an intentional season of sharing hope in Jesus from Easter to Pentecost in 2025.

**Hope25 - Hope in an Uncertain World** is an opportunity for us to share the hope that we have in Jesus. Hope25 is an initiative of the Anglican Church Australia.

<https://www.hope25.com.au/>

This is the Collect for Hope25, which we will use weekly between Easter and Pentecost.

*God of Hope  
you call on us to be your witnesses in this uncertain world;  
by your Spirit awaken in us  
a true vision of your kingdom,  
a greater certainty of our salvation, and  
a deeper dedication to your service;  
that through our words and actions the same Spirit may  
bring many who are lost to be found,  
and for them to celebrate the hope  
that we can only have in Jesus Christ,  
in whose name we pray.  
Amen.*

In our parish the Rector will be running a course explaining Christianity over a series of weeks commencing soon after Easter. Please speak with him if you would like to know more.



*Let's share with our community the hope that we have in Jesus.*



**Easter flowers**

# Children and Youth at Saint Alban's and Beyond

Kari Hewitt  
Youth Ministry Worker



Once upon a time, when I was working in maintenance, I looked after a property just two doors down from Saint Alban's church. One spring afternoon, during one of the lowest points in my life, I felt the Holy Spirit stir in me — prompting me to ask a man in a garden shed for prayer. His name was Shaun. That moment sparked a friendship, and over time we became close. He was part of Epping Baptist, and through him I became connected to a men's group that I ended up attending for years as my life slowly came back together.

Then, one afternoon, Shaun called me up and said, "Hey, there's a caretaker's job going at a church called Saint Alban's — give my mate Ross [previous rector, Ross Nicholson] a ring." That phone call led me to meeting Phil and Denise... and the rest is history.

## 1. Sunday School at Saint Alban's

Please pray for our children — that God would stir in them a deep and lasting love for Him. Pray for our future leaders and volunteers — that they'll be faithful, patient, and full of grace. And pray that, through our Sunday School, more families will come and our church will be filled with little ones learning to follow Jesus.



Sunday School 6 April 2025

## 2. Starting at Christ College – Learning to Serve Better

Earlier this year, I started studying at Christ College in Burwood — a big step for me both personally and spiritually. I didn't go to university after school, so this move — from the tools to the textbooks — has been a big shift.

Christ College isn't just any Bible college. It's one of the oldest theological colleges in Australia, founded in 1873 by the Presbyterian Church of NSW. Its vision from the beginning was to train gospel workers who are grounded in Scripture, strong in theology, and passionate about Christ's mission. For over 150 years, they've been doing just that.



Christ College Burwood

The college motto is *“Christ for all of life”* — and that’s hit home for me. This isn’t about filling my head with knowledge; it’s about letting the gospel shape every part of my life. Christ in how I think. Christ in how I lead, serve, and love. That’s what I’ve been learning week by week.

I’ve also come to appreciate the depth of the Presbyterian tradition — rooted in Scripture, shaped by the Westminster Confession, and focused on building strong, local churches. There’s a solid commitment to gospel clarity, accountability, and humility in ministry. I’ve come to see that I’m not just studying theology — I’m stepping into a bigger story.

I’m also deeply thankful for Esmarie, my wife and ministry partner. She’s been with me through the late nights, busy weekends, and the juggle of life, work, and study. We don’t know exactly where this path will lead, but we’re trusting God with each step.

Please pray as I continue learning and growing — for wisdom, endurance, and a heart that stays fixed on Christ.

### 3. Friday Night Youth – Building Something Real

We’ve quietly launched a new Friday night youth group at Saint Alban’s — something that’s been on my heart since day one. It’s small, it’s simple, and it’s soaked in prayer. Honestly, that’s how I wanted it to begin.

Young people today face a noisy world — questions about identity, truth, and belonging. They’re constantly connected, yet often spiritually disconnected. What they need is a space to be real, to be heard — and most importantly, to encounter Jesus.



That’s our vision. We have been meeting every Friday night in the Upper Room (The Loft) at Saint Alban’s, using the Alpha Youth Series to kick things off. It’s visual, relevant, and it opens space for real conversations. It gives our youth permission to ask the big stuff — about life, faith, meaning, and what following Jesus actually looks like in their world.

Right now, the group isn’t big. But it’s real — a mix of church kids and a few still figuring things out. Some are quiet. Some are full of questions. And little by little, we’re building trust.

I’m not chasing hype. I’m here to make disciples. We’re laying a foundation — week by week, seed by seed. Our hope is to see these young people grow not just in church attendance, but in real, grounded faith. To know Scripture. To know their Saviour. And to be equipped to live for Him.

Please pray: -

- 🙏 For our youth — to feel safe, seen, and drawn to Jesus.
- 🙏 For future leaders — to lead with grace, wisdom, and joy.
- 🙏 For growth — not just in numbers, but in depth.
- 🙏 And that this Upper Room becomes a place where faith is formed, and lives are changed.



The Youth Group meets in The Upper Room (The Loft) above the Main Hall at Saint Alban's

#### 4. Wednesdays at Epping Boys High School – Sowing Seeds in Year 8

Every Wednesday morning, I teach SRE (Special Religious Education) at Epping Boys High School, working with a class of Year 8 students. It's a real privilege — and not something I take lightly. I'm serving alongside The Reverend Fergus Semler, Senior Minister of Macquarie Anglican and other churches in the area.

Walking into a public school with a Bible in hand isn't common these days. Many students have never heard the gospel clearly or opened a Bible before. That's what makes this so important. SRE is about giving students a chance to hear who Jesus is, to explore the Bible, and to ask their own questions in a safe, respectful space. Some come to class curious. Others are sceptical. But every week, we show up — and bit by bit, we sow seeds.



Kari outside Epping Boys High School

With Year 8, the key is connection. They're figuring out who they are, testing ideas, and starting to ask deeper questions. So, we keep things interactive — stories, open chats, real-life examples. We break down big truths in ways that make sense for where they're at.

One of my favourite moments in SRE is every Wednesday when I get just half an hour with my Year 8. It's not a lot of time — but it's amazing what God can do in just a little. One thing that really encourages me is that when I ask the boys to bring their Bibles each week - most of them actually do. It might seem like a small thing, but to me, it's huge. In a world where faith often takes a backseat, seeing these young guys show up with their Bibles — sometimes tucked in their backpacks, sometimes held proudly in their hands — reminds me that seeds are being planted.

They're choosing to bring God's Word with them into class. And that tells me they're leaning in, even just a little. It's a quiet, powerful sign that God is at work in ways we might not fully see yet. *That simple act — a Bible in hand — brings so much hope to the middle of my week.*

Some weeks are full of laughs, others are quiet and thoughtful, but I believe God is working in both. The classroom may not be a church — but it can still be a place where hearts are stirred, and seeds are planted.

This connects with everything we're doing at Saint Alban's. It's all part of a bigger picture: to invest in the next generation and help them see that Jesus isn't just for Sundays — He's Lord over all of life.

## 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

<b>Sunday at Saint Alban's</b>	8.00am Holy Eucharist with Hymns 10.00am Choral Eucharist – 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday 10.00am Sung Eucharist – 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of February, April, June, August, October and November
<b>Thursday at Saint Alban's</b>	9.30am Reading, Reflection and Prayers for Healing on Zoom 10.30am Eucharist with Prayers for Healing

### May 2025

<b>Sunday 4 May</b>	Third Sunday of Easter
<b>Sunday 11 May</b>	Fourth Sunday of Easter
<b>Sunday 18 May</b>	Fifth Sunday of Easter
<b>Sunday 25 May</b>	Sixth Sunday of Easter and Harvest Festival

### June 2025

<b>Sunday 1 June</b>	Seventh Sunday of Easter, Sunday after Ascension
<b>Sunday 8 June</b>	Day of Pentecost
<b>Sunday 15 June</b>	Trinity Sunday
<b>Sunday 22 June</b>	Saint Alban's Day – 129 <sup>th</sup> Patronal Festival – <b>one Service only at 9.30am</b> <i>Preacher: Archdeacon Emeritus Ian Cox</i> <i>The Service will be followed by refreshments in the Parish Hall</i>
<b>Sunday 29 June</b>	Third Sunday after Pentecost <i>Preacher: The Reverend Brett Hall</i>

### July 2025

<b>Sunday 6 July</b>	Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
<b>Sunday 13 April</b>	Fifth Sunday after Pentecost and Sea Sunday
<b>Sunday 20 July</b>	Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
<b>Sunday 27 July</b>	Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

**The Rector, Churchwardens and Parish Council invite you to share with us our 129th Patronal Festival Choral Eucharist at 9.30am Sunday 22 June 2025 and to share fellowship over refreshments in the Parish Hall after the Service. Preacher: Archdeacon Emeritus Ian Cox**



I'm Carol, and I am honoured to be part of your church community. I'd like to thank you all for your warm welcome on my first few visits to the 10.00 a.m. service and for your encouraging words when I visited to share about the program I am undertaking over the next two years. It is truly a blessing to fellowship with such a supportive family in Christ.

As you may already know, I came to Sydney in December 2021 as an international student. Originally from Egypt and raised in Kuwait, I came to Australia to study for a Bachelor of Arts (majoring in Creative Writing) and a Bachelor of Linguistics and Language Sciences and graduated in late March this year.

During my time as a Macquarie student, on-campus ministry has been a great blessing to me. In fact, FOCUS (the Fellowship of Overseas Christian University Students) had started making a difference before I even left home. Having started my studies online due to COVID travel restrictions, the Friday night sessions FOCUS live streamed quickly became a key point of connection for me, especially as I did not grow up with many Christian friends in the Middle East and yearned for a godly community. The weekly talks and discussion groups made it a place that lived up to their motto of 'Make Friends, Meet Jesus', and continues to do that today. The staff workers at FOCUS, Phil, Helen and Dennis, were intentional and caring, making an effort to be present and authentic in the way they shared life with us as students. Such an environment was bound to leave its mark. I wanted to give back.



16 March 2025 - Carol Riyad is pictured with [FROM LEFT] The Reverend Michael Robinson, Guest Preacher, The Reverend Phil Lui, Rector of Saint Alban's, and Doris Awad Student Minister at Saint Alban's

As the years went by, I got more involved with Christian Union and FOCUS, beginning to serve and lead there. Phil and Helen were invaluable in training me and growing my love for serving international students. I started reading the Bible one-to-one with some of my non-Christian friends and some of the students I had met in FOCUS and, although I was passionate about my degree, those sessions felt far more worthwhile than studying the minutiae of language. As I spent my year as a ministry scholar at Robert Menzies College, the Christian residential college on campus, I felt I had to choose what would have eternal impact rather than live for my own enjoyment, glory and career success.

I applied for the MTS (Ministry Training Strategy) program and landed a role as a full-time apprentice for the next two years. Challenged by the story of Jonah, I wanted to respond to the call I had felt God place on my life rather than run from it – a decision that has its challenges but has already begun to reap its rewards. My upbringing in the Middle East had given me a fervour for evangelism, and FOCUS is the perfect ground for it. In Mark 16:15, Jesus tells His disciples to “*go into all the world and preach the gospel*”; at FOCUS, the nations come to us! I think of my friend Harry from China who heard about Jesus and prayed for the first time last year, of Adriana from Mexico who is growing in her hunger for the Bible and of Nadun from Sri Lanka, who was baptised a few weeks ago and is already volunteering to serve. What greater blessing is there?

As I head into the apprenticeship, there are plenty of things I need to grow in, and plenty of things to pray for. One is the international students on campus – that we will be able to not only cross paths with them but that we will meet them where they are and be a home away from home for them. Another prayer request is that I would grow in godliness and be trained up and equipped in the ways that I need to be in order to serve faithfully and wholeheartedly. Between one-to-one meetings, Friday night sessions, Games & Stories afternoons, staff catch-ups and apprenticeship training, my prayer is that God will give me a humble heart of service and that I would remain focused on exactly what He brought me here to do. Lastly, I would love prayer for God to send more ministry partners – to work with me through prayer, financial support and even dropping by FOCUS every once in a while.

If this is something that you would be interested in, please do not hesitate to contact me on [carol.riyad@afes.org.au](mailto:carol.riyad@afes.org.au) or find me in church, as I will be helping with Sunday School some Sunday mornings.

I will be praying for you as you pray for me and look forward to having more encouraging and heartwarming conversations with you all.

Your next-door neighbour,  
Carol

**Editor’s Note:** If you would like to financially support Carol and The Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students, you can visit [www.tiny.cc/afes-carol-riyad](http://www.tiny.cc/afes-carol-riyad) or scan the QR Code



## The Parish Register

### Holy Matrimony

Christopher Andrew **LAWN** and Kayleigh Rose **BURNS**  
on 8 March 2025

Raimond **COLETTA** and Ciara Ysabella **HARVIE**  
on 23 March 2025

### The Faithful Departed

John Austin **RAWLING**  
on 3 February 2025

Janice Elaine **CLARKE**  
on 2 April 2025



Readings: Matthew 25:1-30, John 12:1-11

The focus of this reflection is Matthew 25:1-30. It's worth taking the time to read it now to help you understand the reflection.

These two parables in Matthew are about people waiting and Jesus uses both to talk about the Kingdom of heaven, about Jesus' eternal Kingdom.

In the first one, the virgins in the story are waiting for the bridegroom to arrive, and the second story, the servants are waiting for their master to return. In both stories they don't know exactly when it will happen. But they know it will. But what do they do during this time of waiting?

In the first story, the emphasis is on being prepared. Making sure they have enough oil for when the celebrations really get under way.

In the second story, Jesus begins to unpack what being prepared really looks like. What do we do while we wait for Jesus' eternal Kingdom? It's more than just falling asleep and hoping for the best.

In verse 14, there's an interesting word being used: "*Entrusted*". As I've reflected more about this word and its implications, it's changed my mind about how I understood this passage. You see, I always felt a bit bad with how the master treats the third servant. He goes out, buries the money to keep it safe. What's wrong with that? He didn't want to lose it. He didn't want anyone to steal it. And he wanted to make sure that he could give it back when the time came. He's not like the prodigal son, who goes out and squanders his inheritance. He operates with fear, he needs to protect it, and himself. Can you imagine what would happen if he lost the equivalent of twenty years wages (that's how much the bag of gold was worth)?

What helped me understand this story this time was how I perceived the word 'entrusted'. The owner 'entrusted' his servants with *his* wealth. He gives them responsibility for his wealth. What he does is essentially task them as one would a financial broker, or a financial advisor. He entrusts them to build his wealth, to make more money. Not for them. But for him.

Their jobs are to invest

During this time of waiting, to be best prepared for the master's return, they were given the *responsibility* of investing. What that means is putting the large sums of money away into an investment, not being able to see it or access it or spend it for some time, and when that investment yields a return, invest some more. They were tasked to make money. And keep that money working.

These bags of gold aren't ours to begin with

Like these servants I have, and you have, been entrusted with so much.

Sometime last year, as I was talking with my ministry supervisor I stumbled onto this epiphany. I was trying to justify why I could be proud about what I had been able to achieve in life. And then I realised that nothing in my life is truly mine. I couldn't take full credit for anything. The money I have been able to earn? Is that not because God has enabled me to work and given me intellect to do so? What about the study I was able to complete? Is that not because God had given me a brain and then placed me in a country that gave me the freedom to do so? I thought of my cousins back in Egypt, some of whom might have studied, but whose lives look so radically different to mine. My female cousins in particular will never own property. As I think about all the things with which I have been entrusted, I can only conclude that they are all from God and are truly God's.

I have been entrusted with much, to build and grow the Kingdom of God. And on first reading this story, I felt so confident that I am like the first and second servant. Investing all of it. I've given up my career, I've given up a regular and stable income, I've given up being able to travel and buy expensive clothes and bags. I'm in my mid 30s and I'm investing my intellect to study God's word at bible college.

And yet, like this third servant, I operated and still operate with fear.

In verse 24, *“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’”*

Like this servant, I’m so afraid to lose more money. I’m so afraid to go without all the things I see my friends and family have. I frequently find myself crying out to God, *“That’s enough! I can’t sacrifice anymore! Haven’t I given up enough?”*

I forget that, like this master, our good God is wildly generous. In verses 21 and 23, he says to the servants who invested and doubled his entrusted wealth, *“Come and share your master’s happiness.”* Or *“Come and celebrate”*.

It’s a picture of joy and extravagant generosity. On the one hand, there’s a reality that we are waiting for this promise to be fulfilled. This passage is not promising that what I invest now reaps reward for me now. The promise is a future promise where I will join in with the celebration of the Kingdom with my master and share his riches, eternally.

And on the other hand, it reaps reward for the master now. I’m not sure if you noticed it, but for both the first and second servant, their investments double. This is unheard of. What they do for their master, builds his Kingdom. What we do for Jesus, our master, builds his Kingdom. If I’m worried that it has no impact, I know that God is at work. There’s no room for fear.

Rereading this passage this week, I realised that the third servant wasn’t just afraid, he didn’t think Jesus was worth the effort. The master says to him, in verse 26, *“You knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.”*

He didn’t even do the bare minimum. He didn’t think Jesus was worth the time, or effort, or care. He didn’t see it was worth it in the now, or in the future. Instead of using that time to work while he was waiting, he spent his time not doing his job. Not preparing for his master’s return.

Like all the people in these stories, we are waiting, but we don’t need to wait to be extravagantly generous with investing for Jesus’ Kingdom.

We need to be more like Mary from the gospel reading today (John 12:1-11). She comes in, and in front of everyone watching, she *“...took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”*

She knew Jesus was worth the investment and anointed his feet, readying him for burial.

Let’s pray to be like Mary, people who see that Jesus is worth the investment as we wait for his kingdom to come.

Amen

Studying a Bachelor of Theology at Moore Theological College is only possible because of the generosity of my prayerful supporters. Financial donations to college provide me with a scholarship to cover educational and living expenses.

If you are interested in supporting me in this way, please complete the form at <https://moore.edu.au/student/doris/> or scan the QR code (all donations over \$2 are tax deductible).

Please pray that over the next two years, I will grow in my understanding of God and His word, and deepen my love for others, so that I can go back to Macquarie University and keep making Jesus known!



Reference: Ezekial 47.1-12

Water is one of the most common things on earth—yet one of the most precious.

Perhaps you have personal stories of water: swimming in the family pool, stopping on a hike to gaze in awe of the waterfall, catching the ferry across the harbour. Water trickles, it pours, it rushes, it rests. It cleanses and nourishes. Yet when did you last consider the living water?

In the Scriptures, water often represents the very life of God. It's used to speak of blessing, healing, abundance and presence. So, here's a question to begin with tonight:

- *What kind of water have you been drinking from lately?*
- *Has it been refreshing, or has it left you thirstier than before?*

## My Search For Water

There have been seasons in my own life where I felt spiritually dry. I was thirsty, but I didn't always know it. Or if I did, I tried to quench that thirst in the wrong places.

I chased achievement, thinking success would satisfy me. Excel in school, university and professionally. I invested in relations, hoping to feel connected through others. I attempted other means of relating to God that were outside Jesus, thinking if I just meditated more, journalled better, joined a new creative community, I'd finally feel peace.

Some of those things brought moments of clarity or joy. But deep down, I stayed thirsty. In fact, the more I drank from the wells of the world, the more parched I became. Some left me not just dry—but bitter. Confused. Disillusioned. It wasn't until I came fully to Jesus – not just the idea of Him, but the person – that I found a water that didn't run dry. Jesus, who met me in my wilderness and offered me His life. Perhaps you've known that feeling— of reaching for water, only to end up thirstier than before. This Holy Week, you're being invited to return to the true Source.

Please open your Bibles to Ezekial 47 where we see the prophet Ezekial who was exiled in Babylon and receives a powerful vision of restoration and hope from God. At his time, Israel's heart – its temple – was destroyed and the people were displaced, feeling spiritually barren and abandoned. Into this context of loss and despair, God reveals a vision of a river flowing from the temple, symbolising the healing and renewal that would come from His presence. Let's enter that vision together. I invite you to close your eyes if you're comfortable or read along.

## Ezekiel 47:1-12

*The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side.*

*As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. He measured off another thousand, but*

*now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?”*

*Then he led me back to the bank of the river. When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”*

This vision represents the life-giving power of God’s presence. Just as the river transforms barren land into a place of life and abundance, God’s presence brings healing and renewal even to the driest, most desolate places.

When I reflect on this vision, I see how often I try to fill the empty places in my life with temporary things – busyness, success, distractions. But these things leave me thirsty, longing for something deeper. In those moments, the vision of Ezekiel reminds me that true lasting renewal comes from God’s presence, from drinking deeply from His river. It challenges me to stop settling for ankle deep faith and to step into the deep waters where I can be fully transformed.

### **Jesus: The Temple From Whom Living Waters Flow**

During Holy Week, we remember that Jesus called Himself the Temple (John 2:19), and on the cross, His body became the place of sacrifice and restoration. When His side was pierced, water and blood flowed (John 19:34) — a sign of both cleansing and the Spirit poured out. Later, in John 7, Jesus cried out: *“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”*

The river Ezekiel saw is now flowing in and through those who believe in Christ. This is our hope, not just for personal renewal, but for the renewal of the world.

### **A Holy Week Invitation**

As we draw near to the cross, can you hear Jesus inviting you to come and drink? To be restored by His Spirit? To step deeper into His presence? Not just once, but daily, deeply, fully.

Where His water flows—everything will live.

### **Closing Prayer**

Jesus, You are the source of Living Water. You meet us in our desert places. You know how we’ve tried to satisfy ourselves with things that do not last. You do not condemn us – but invite us again to come to You. Let Your Spirit flow in us. Heal the bitter waters of our hearts. Make the Dead Seas in our souls come alive again. And let your river overflow from us into the world You love. Amen





Readings: Isaiah 50: 4-9a  
Psalm 70  
Hebrews 12:1-3  
John 13: 21.21-32

*“The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher...”* or in some versions, *“the tongue of a disciple.”* As God’s people, we are His disciples, but we are also His teachers, called to spread the Good News throughout the world. But how do we teach something as life changing as this?

When constructing a lesson plan in teaching, we use something called the Backwards Design Model, where we start by identifying the desirable results or what we want students to be able to do by the end of the unit. Then we determine acceptable evidence, usually through assessment tasks to prove that the desirable learning has been achieved. Finally, the teacher maps out what needs to be learned to be able to complete the assessment. So, we start with the end goal and work backwards to determine how we can get there. This can be applied to our faith as well. God has written the greatest lesson plan of all time and has provided us with all the steps we need to earn top marks.

## Step 1: Identify the Desired Results

The big goal of faith is to glorify God through living by the example of His Son Jesus Christ, teaching others about the Good News He brings so that all God’s people can live together in Heaven for eternal life. As Christians, we know that this is often easier said than done. But we’re not alone in this race set before us. Hebrews 12 says that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. Verse 1 provides the key to enduring faith: letting go of our burdens, sin or anything that hinders us from pressing forward. When we choose to lay these things down, we need to look for the right things to replace them with. The Greek word for looking is *ef-a-rob* which means ‘to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on one thing.’ That one thing is Jesus. To achieve our desired result outlined in step one, we are called to reject our burdens in order to give our full attention to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

## Step 2 is to Determine Acceptable Evidence

How can we tell if we’re on the right path to achieving our goal? The reading from Isaiah gives us a few examples including, not rebelling against God and His teaching, not responding in like to those who hurt us, standing with God in all things and placing our trust in God to protect us in all things. All these examples have one thing in common. They encourage living counter-culturally to the ways of the world. Romans 12:2 says *“don’t copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.”* We’re not counter-cultural just for its own sake: we’re on a mission. But God doesn’t *need* us to do His work. He’s perfectly capable. But God *wants* to share His big goal with us because He loves to love with us, to work with us and to live with us. What an honour! Just like Jesus’ disciples, we’re invited to sit beside Him at His table. We can’t do that by living like the world.

I’ve always imagined living counter-culturally looks a lot like Boxing Day sales in the CBD. Through the crush of people, it’s safer, more familiar and less likely to cause a scene by going with the flow of the people, even if it’s towards the sale stand you didn’t really want to go to. But when we are tempted to follow the flow of the world around us rather than push in the opposite direction, we can remember the words from Hebrews; “consider Him

who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.” That’s how we can tell if we’re on the right path.

### Finally, Step 3 involves Planning Learning Experiences and Instruction

Our last step is determining what we need to do to ensure we stay on the right path to achieving our goal. If only we had an instruction manual or guidebook to faith-based living. Something filled with Jesus’ teaching, examples of faith and sources of encouragement. Just like any good teacher, God came prepared. Not only does reading the Bible bring us closer to the author of the world but in every chapter there is a lesson we can learn. Our four readings this evening alone hold key instructions to a faith-filled, counter-cultural, end-goal inspired life.

Isaiah teaches patience, to wait on God to show us the way forward in all things by listening well to His Word. Psalm 70 tells us that when we lean on God and seek Him at all times, we will find encouragement and joy. Hebrews reminds us that we are not alone and to look back on the examples of God’s goodness throughout history to keep our paths straight.

And finally, John’s gospel teaches us that we can learn from our fellow disciples. Those sitting at the table with Judas, Simon Peter and Jesus are shown examples of great faith, betrayal and forgiveness. We are not alone in our goal and need to look to one another for encouragement and admonishment. The Lord has given all of us tongues of teachers so that we may know how to sustain the weary with a word.

The Lord’s lesson plan isn’t for the faint of heart, but it is foolproof and has been designed to be used in all classrooms. Whether that classroom looks like a friend’s kitchen, a Sunday School room, the table at a café or in a car, we are all called to be teachers in God’s schoolhouse of faith.

## 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.



**Parishioner Ken Bock OAM  
was the Narrator**

On Good Friday, 18 April 2025, a Service of Reading, Hymns and Communion was held at Saint Alban's. We heard the story of the Passion of Jesus as told by the four gospel writers Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They each contribute their own unique observations of the events that took place, from Thursday night to Saturday at that first Easter.

The narration was brought together to give as complete a picture as possible of the unfolding of the events experienced by Jesus and his disciples.

The congregation was encouraged to listen deeply and hear afresh a story that is so familiar to many of us. Following each reading, a hymn was sung, a hymn that directed our hearts to respond to the story as it unfolded. The Saint Alban's choir led the singing and contributed three special items of their own.

During the Service, images were shown on the screen in the church. These are the work of Michael Marzano who produced them for the 2020 Good Friday service which, because of COVID-19, was held on Zoom.

Michael wrote at the time *"The story of Good Friday is brutal, confronting and stark, and as such, I wanted to recreate the feeling of pain, betrayal and fear with black and white paint, incorporating grey wash, block black, and rough, crude brush strokes, to suggest turmoil and anguish. They are painted on primed high-grade art paper. I wanted to capture the suffering of Our Lord in a way that makes the liturgy come to life, to inspire the beholder to pick up one's own cross and walk to Calvary with Him"*

*(The Parish Magazine No 860, May-July 2020 page 17).*

Two of Michael's images appear below, and we thank him again for allowing the Parish to use these images.

After the Service, the congregation was invited to share fellowship in the Parish Hall. Tea, coffee and hot cross buns were served.



**The cross in the Sanctuary was a stark reminder of the crucifixion**



**Simon of Cyrene carries the Cross**



**Jesus' body is laid in the tomb**

On Palm Sunday, 13 April 2025 there was The Blessing of the Palms and Ecumenical Procession which commenced outside Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church. The procession wound its way to the Uniting Church and then to Saint Alban's. A brief liturgy was led by The Reverend Phil Lui from Saint Alban's, The Reverend Sunny Kyunghee Lee from Epping Uniting Church, and Matthew French, Seminarian, from the Catholic Parish.



The group gathered before the procession at Our Lady Help of Christians

## The Festival Eucharist of the Resurrected Christ

8.30am Easter Sunday 20 April 2025



The congregation sang the opening hymn

# The Vigil of Easter

He is Risen!

5.30am Easter Sunday 20 April 2025

*The gifts of the Master are these: Freedom, life, hope, new direction, transformation and intimacy with God. If the cross was the end of the story, we would have no hope. But the cross isn't the end. Jesus didn't escape from death; he conquered it and opened the way to heaven for all who will dare to believe. The truth of this moment, if we let it sweep over us, is stunning. It means Jesus really is who he claimed to be, we are really as lost as he said we are, and he really is the only way for us to intimately and spiritually connect with God again.*

Stephen James



**PHOTOS ABOVE:**

The Paschal candle was held for the Rector to mark the cross and trace the Alpha and Omega symbols – the beginning and the end. He then inserted five nails containing grains of incense at the extremity of the arms of the cross and at the centre. The candle was lit from the fire and then used to light all other candles of the Sanctuary Party and the congregation.



The 5.30am congregation gathered by candlelight to hear the Reading of the Gospel



Ken Bock OAM read The Ode at the 8.30am Service



The decorated font under The World War 1 Honour Roll



Floral decorations



Music Director Chris Czerwinski at the organ for 8.30am and 10.00am services



FROM LEFT: Ross Beattie, who read the Ode at the 10.00am service, The Reverend Phil Lui, and Edward Lawn who played The Last Post and Reveille at 10.00am

Each year, Aboriginal Sunday is observed on the Sunday before January 26. In 2022 on Aboriginal Sunday, The Reverend Paul Weaver in his sermon at Saint Alban's recounted:

*In 1937, Aboriginal leaders including William Cooper, the 77-year-old Secretary of the Australian Aborigines League, arranged for a petition with 1800 names of Aboriginal people from all mainland states, which was to be sent to King George VI. The petition stated that aboriginal lands have been expropriated by His Majesty's government and legal status has been denied them. The petition asked that the king intervene on their behalf, so that extinction of the race will be prevented, that there may be better conditions for all, and that they might also be represented in Parliament. To organize such a petition, with all its formalities, was quite a thing to do, particularly with signatures from different states. Cooper also wrote to Australian churches seeking their support. Tragically, the Australian Parliament declined to send the petition to the King. On January 26 1938, with its Sesquicentenary celebrations, Cooper gathered with other Aboriginal leaders for a Day of Mourning, as they continued to seek equality and citizenship. Yes, the "Day of Mourning" was started 84 years ago! Then he asked the churches of Australia to set aside the Sunday before January 26 as "Aboriginal Sunday". [The Parish Magazine February to April, Number 867, page 34]*

In his sermon on Aboriginal Sunday 2023 The Most Reverend Kanishka Raffel, Archbishop of Sydney, recounted: *William Cooper, an Aboriginal Christian leader and Yorta Yorta man, called on the national churches to set aside the Sunday before Australia Day to pray for the spread of the gospel among his people and the improvement of their social conditions and welfare. Today, many churches across Australia are answering that call. . . . In calling on the churches of Australia to mark the Sunday before Australia Day in this way, Cooper said: "We request that sermons be preached on this day dealing with the Aboriginal people and their need of the gospel and response to it and we ask that special prayer be invoked for all missionary and other effort for the uplift of the dark people." His language reflects the idiom of the time, but in recent years, there have been renewed calls . . . calling for prayer and action on behalf of First Nations people. [ <https://theothercheek.com.au/this-sunday-is-aboriginal-sunday-2025/> ]*

On Aboriginal Sunday 2025 at Saint Alban's the congregation met Loren Tabuai, the Indigenous Senior Residential Advisor at Robert Menzies College at Macquarie University. Lauren's role is to provide pastoral care and support for Indigenous students at the College as well as to promote cultural awareness and exchange within the Robert Menzies College community.

In particular Lauren supports Macquarie University students who are part of the Garrthalala Bush University program especially targeted for students coming in from remote areas, with a high proportion of them coming from north-east Arnhem Land who are used to living on Country.

See <https://lighthouse.mq.edu.au/for-media/new-bush-university-for-north-east-arnhem-land> for details of the Bush University partnership and for references and further reading: <https://theothercheek.com.au/this-sunday-is-aboriginal-sunday-2025/> and <https://www.eppinganglicans.org.au/parish-magazine>



**ABOVE LEFT: Lauren Tabuai [centre] is with Senior Liturgical Assistant, Peggy Sanders and The Reverend Phil Lui and at RIGHT with Rebecca Lui, Dean of Residents, Robert Menzies College**

## Guest Preacher The Reverend Michael Aitken

23 February 2025

On 23 February 2025, the guest preacher at Saint Alban's was The Reverend Michael Aitken from Anglicare Australia.

<https://www.anglicare.org.au/>

Before joining Anglicare, Michael served in parish ministry for 20 years, most recently as Senior Minister at Saint Stephen's, Belrose. He currently attends The Bridge Church, Kirribilli.

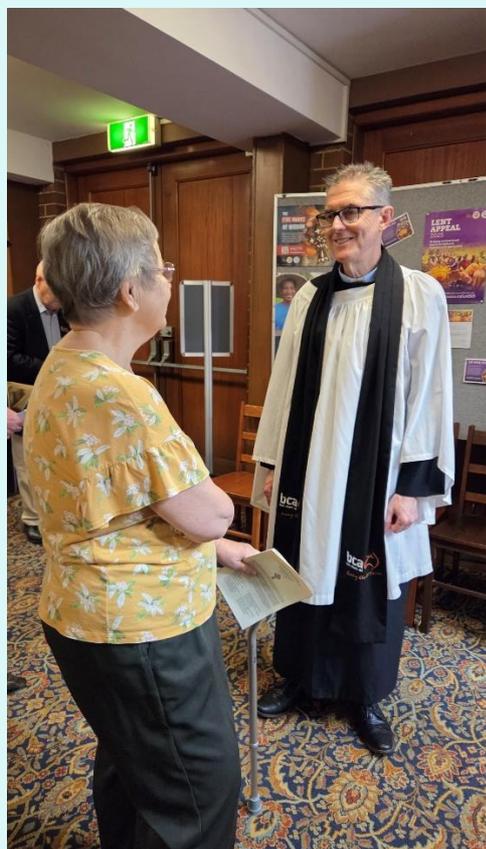
Michael's role in Anglicare is mainly in the Northern region of Sydney. This includes meeting with ministers, preaching, and speaking about how Anglicare can partner with churches to engage with their community and across wider Sydney. He has particular responsibility for church engagement with Op Shops, Seniors Living and Residential Care.



The Reverend Michael Aitken with The Reverend Phil Lui

## Guest Preacher The Reverend Paul Sampson

30 March 2025



On 30 March 2025, the guest preacher at Saint Alban's was The Reverend Paul Sampson who is the NSW Regional Officer for Bush Church Aid (BCA).

Paul was born and raised in country New South Wales. He has been a rector in two Sydney Anglican parishes and has worked as a Bible teacher to pastors in cities and regional towns in Africa.

He commenced as BCA's NSW/ACT Regional Officer in January 2022. On the BCA website he writes: "Having grown up in the bush and worked cross-culturally, I have some insights into the challenges faced by those ministering in remote and regional areas. BCA is strategically positioned to have an incredible impact for Christ."

The NSW/ACT Regional Office is in Sydney. The region incorporates five dioceses: Sydney, Canberra and Goulburn, Newcastle, Bathurst and the Riverina. With over 440 parishes and a population of over seven million, the region has incredible ministry opportunities, and challenges.

For further information about BCA see website:

<https://www.bushchurcaid.com.au/mission-profile.php?id=2212>

**AT LEFT: The Reverend Paul Sampson greets Saint Alban's parishioner Sarah Weaver**

At the Annual General Meeting of the Parish on 30 March 2025 the following were appointed or elected:

**Wardens:**

Elizabeth Jenkins (Rector's Warden); and Noel Christie-David and David Tait (People's Wardens)

**Members of Parish Council:**

Ken Bock OAM, Margaret Cummins, Glyn Evans, Christine Murray, Peggy Sanders, Amy Taylor, Gillian Taylor and John Williams

**Parish Treasurer:**

Shane Christie-David

**Parish Nominators:**

Glyn Evans, Peggy Sanders, Ruth Shatford AM, and James von Stieglitz

**Parish Synod Representatives:**

Doris Awad and Gillian Taylor (who continues in this role as her term is not yet complete)

We thank these parishioners for their willingness to serve the Parish in this way and ask that they receive the support of all parishioners as they undertake these responsibilities. Their commissioning took place at the 10.00am service on Sunday 6 April 2025.



LEFT TO RIGHT BACK ROW: Noel Christie-David, Amy Taylor, Margaret Cummins, Ken Bock, Christine Murray, James von Stieglitz  
LEFT TO RIGHT FRONT ROW: Gillian Taylor, Glyn Evans, Peggy Sanders, Ruth Shatford, Elizabeth Jenkins  
ABSENT: David Tait, John Williams, Shane Christie-David and Doris Awad

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

**The deadline for contributions is**

**4 July 2025**

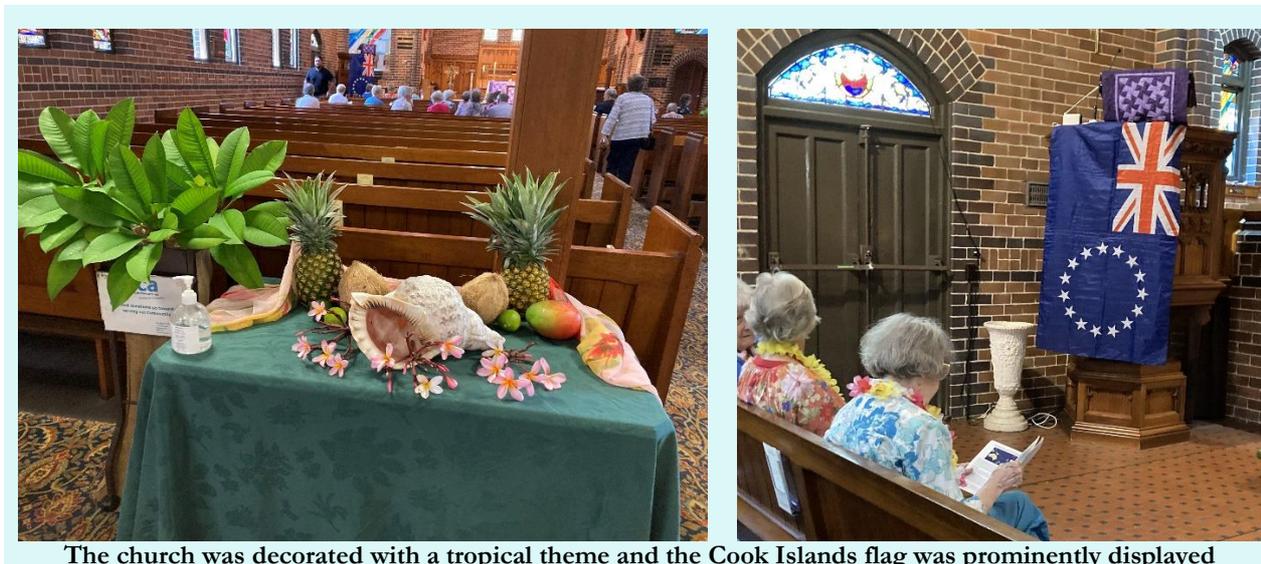
Please contact the editor Julie Evans via email [julie.evans@ihug.com.au](mailto:julie.evans@ihug.com.au)  
or via the Parish Office

Photographs of Parish events are also welcome.

# World Day of Prayer

Friday 7 March 2025  
Elizabeth Jenkins

On Friday 7 March 2025 Saint Alban's was privileged to host this year's World Day of Prayer, organised by Saint Alban's Mother's Union. The country of focus was the Cook Islands, and the theme was *Wonderfully Made*. The annual World Day of Prayer is a powerhouse of prayer, sweeping around the globe as new voices continually join across time zones and continents.



The church was decorated with a tropical theme and the Cook Islands flag was prominently displayed

Our ecumenical event was attended by approximately sixty women from local churches, and women were given a part to play reading from selected Bible passages and short interviews of Cook Islander women. We were very fortunate to have the Saint Alban's Youth Ministry Worker, Kari Hewitt, himself a Cook Islander, as our speaker on the day. Kari examined Psalm 139 and gave us some insight into Cook Islands' life.



LEFT: Kari Hewitt, Saint Alban's Youth Ministry Worker

Psalm 139 Verse 14 [KJV]

*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
Marvellous are thy works;  
And that my soul knoweth right well.*

The day had a tropical theme, and decorations included frangipani and the Cook Islands flag. Key people who participated in the service wore brightly coloured clothing and leis. The offertory came to \$783.50 and has been forwarded to the World Day of Prayer organisation.

The service was followed by lunch in the hall, and this gave everyone an opportunity to socialise in an informal way with other women in our community. It was a successful and enjoyable day with a great sense of community amongst attendees. Next year's event will be held at All Saints North Epping, with the theme country Nigeria. We encourage others to consider attending and supporting this worthwhile occasion, for we know that the power of united prayer amongst God's people is transforming and infinite.

On Sunday 26 January, Saint Alban's invited The Reverend Bruce Hunter, a firm friend to our parish, to preach at both services for the Australia Day observance. His sermon is reproduced below.



Sanctuary Party 26 January 2025

FROM LEFT: Sarah Weaver, James von Stieglitz, Peggy Sanders, The Reverend Bruce Hunter, The Reverend Phil Lui

### Good News for Australia Day

#### Related Readings:

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Luke 4:14-21

- Good News for those who despair in their search for God's Kingdom.
- Good News for 'deplorables' and for those who are rich.
- Good News for those who fear the future.
- Good News for you and me this Australia Day.

Jesus' public ministry began in the region of Galilee at the top end of Israel - where trade routes and cultures crossed, a region with over 250 towns and many cultures.

Jesus, now in His hometown of Nazareth, went to the Synagogue on the Sabbath and read from the prophet Isaiah, Chapter 61.

The prophecy had originally been addressed to the exiles in Babylon and later reread to those who had returned from exile with Ezra, their priest and scribe at the broken walls of Jerusalem. Ezra's reading of the Law came after Nehemiah, the Governor, arrived but it was a risky move. It brought forth 'tears' and rejoicing from the people BUT Ezra had Nehemiah's support - the 'Government' was with him, so all was well.

Now, in Jesus' day in Nazareth it is a different day. When Jesus stands and reads the same passage many years later, Jesus reads and interprets the text. Jesus reads Isaiah 61 and gives its meaning to those gathered - setting the scene for his own future, and for those who follow in his footsteps to this very day. (I trust that's you and me.) But to quote from the theologian N.T. Wright, while "*Ezra had the Governor's (Nehemiah's) backing, Jesus stood alone, with Herod not far away, Rome on the horizon and hostile listeners ready to pounce.*"

Today, this good news from Isaiah's prophecy needs to be proclaimed again and acknowledged on this Australia Day - it needs to be seen anew both at Saint Alban's and indeed throughout the world. Isaiah's prophecy is about the coming of the Messiah - God's Son - and all that this entails. Jesus stood, opened the scroll at Isaiah 61 and found the place where it was written: "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.*" Yes, Jesus is proclaiming that He is the Messiah - that He is the One - to bring rescue to God's people. Good news to the poor, good news to the blind, and to the Deplorables.

Those listening in Nazareth knew Jesus, they also knew his father - the carpenter. Jesus is a local, their contemporary. So how was it that Jesus now makes this claim: "*Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing?*" Luke says that reports about Jesus had spread throughout the whole countryside - obviously he had quite a reputation and now Jesus returned to Galilee, returned in the power of the Holy Spirit. And everyone praised him! Jesus the local boy had 'made good'.

Jesus opened the scroll, found the text (Isaiah 61), reads it, re-rolls it, returns the scroll to the attendant and he sits down! All eyes are fixed on him! They were, it seems, impressed, but their amazement soon turned to anger. "*Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.*" Outrageous! An outrageous claim by Jesus, to be the One who will bring in the Era of God's Favour (cf verses 18 and 19). A claim to bring God's Kingdom in - Today, it is fulfilled, says Jesus!

The listeners knew the quotation from Isaiah 61 and they also knew that Jesus had stopped halfway through verse 2. Jesus stopped before Isaiah's words proclaiming, *'the day of vengeance of our God'*. Why? Because that day is still far off - a future event. It is the day when Jesus will return in power and might to judge the Earth and that day is still to come. However, the people in Nazareth, like people in Australia, like the world, we want justice now! The listeners at Nazareth would have been hoping and expecting the Messiah, God's anointed, to drive the Roman occupiers from Israel and restore the Kingdom with one like King David to rule the land. Wouldn't we wish for the same in our world today!

People, even 'good' Christian people can get mixed up, when studying the Scriptures. Those at Nazareth were mixed up, like many today, who claim to base their beliefs on the word of God and yet come up with vastly differing ideas about how and when God will act, or how he will carry out His purposes. Now to be honest, in our materialistic and relatively comfortable Australia, who really wants to hear Jesus and what he has to say about wealth, leadership, personal relationships and the way we should live? Who wants to hear the word of God in our homes and lives? I suspect not many: they didn't want to hear it in Nazareth either!

So, had the prophecy as spoken by Jesus come true? The plain answer from the Gospel of Luke is that: *"the one that Isaiah said would come to save God's people had arrived"*. Jesus, God's Son, the Messiah had come and - He is with us this Day! Jesus lays claim to being God's anointed One, come to save and to bring good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind and proclamation of the Year of the Lord's favour. Jesus came to rescue those who recognise their own poverty, their own need of rescue.

So, how does that match up with Australia this morning - do we recognise our own poverty, our need as a nation, as sons and daughters of the living God? The Nazarenes in Jesus hometown didn't! Do we? Do I? What is God saying to each and to all of us on this Australia Day? Perhaps we are like the Nazarenes - we want God's word to make us strong, to comfort us, and to build us up. But God's word is also there to put us straight! To challenge us to live as God's sons and daughters, to live like Jesus, to be God's holy people - His sons and daughters. When we experience God's Word at work in our lives, it will set us free, able to see things clearly so that we too can proclaim good news to those who are blind and in need of rescue.

Saint Alban's Vision statement calls you and me 'to be a city on a hill' - a light to the nation and the community in which we live. Jesus came to liberate captives from all kinds of bondage: to bring release, comfort, restoration and blessing. His very act of coming proclaimed the fulfilment of Isaiah 61, verses one and two. It was also an act of judgement on those who refused to see and admit their need of rescue.

So - who are we today? Are we too, like the people of Nazareth - furious with God's Anointed One? So furious that we seek to throw him off the cliff (see Chapter 4 verse 29)? Or do we accept our need of forgiveness and a fresh beginning as God's sons and daughters? Do we accept the gift of new life that Jesus came to bring? Do we accept that only Jesus could pay the ransom to save us? Would we rather remain proud Nazarenes - determined to live life our own way, like most of Australia?

Which is it to be? The day of the Lord will come sooner than we think, so let us pray.

Lord God, we ask you to open once more your word to us today, to let your word and spirit speak with us so that we might know your very presence and enable us to hear and to follow you, to be your people, to indeed be light and salt in this troubled world. This we ask in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen



Following the success of a similar event in 2023, and by popular request, at 2.00pm on Sunday 9 February 2025, Saint Alban's Epping hosted a Hymnfest titled "Ten Glorious Known Hymns played by Ten Organists".

The event was advertised and promoted as:

*Come join us in this ecumenical event involving all the congregations of Epping and surrounding suburbs and local residents. Help us 'lift the roof off' the church with sacred song.*

Invitations in the form of a flyer were hand delivered to churches of various denominations in Epping and surrounding suburbs, including Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Church of Christ, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Uniting. The event was advertised on Hope 103.2 FM radio and announced on 2MBS-FM.

There were more than one hundred people who gathered to sing the ten well-known hymns. Many were Saint Alban's parishioners, and many new faces indicated that the publicity had been effective.

### Program

**All Creatures of Our God and King (4 verses)**  
*Played by Isabel Li*

**When Morning Gilds the Skies (5 verses)**  
*Played by Dickson Chan*

**Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven (5 verses)**  
*Played by Philip Reichardt*

**For All the Saints (5 verses)**  
*Played by Enoch Pan*

**Thou, Whose Almighty Word (4 verses)**  
*Played by Ryan Li*

**Be Still, My Soul (4 verses)**  
*Played by Heather Moen-Boyd*

**All My Hope on God is Founded (5 verses)**  
*Played by Andrew Davidson*

**Christ is Made the Sure Foundation (4 verses)**  
*Played by Chris Wagstaff*

**Crown Him with Many Crowns (5 verses)**  
*Played by Graeme Hunt*

**All People That on Earth Do Dwell (5 verses)**  
*Played by Nicholas Morley*



**ABOVE:** Saint Alban's Organ Scholars, Isabel Li and Enoch Pan at the organ during Hymnfest

**LEFT:** The afternoon's program showing hymn and organist

The Reverend Phil Lui hosted the event and introduced the organists. Special mention was made of Graeme Hunt who travelled all the way from Windsor to play for us. The MC for the day was Ken Bock who spoke before each hymn giving information on the history of the hymn and/or the composer. Saint Alban's Chorister Sonya Carruthers was Song Leader. Hymn words were displayed on the large LCD screen operated by Judith and Aaron Thomas.

The event was sound recorded by Sydney Organs Group and the recordings have been uploaded to their YouTube Channel @sydneyorgans3250.

Feedback on the day and through an exit survey, completed by sixty-two attendees, was overwhelmingly positive with 95% scoring the event as 4 or 5 out of 5. Attendees indicated that they were from nineteen different postcodes.



**LEFT TO RIGHT: Graeme Hunt – Saint Matthew’s Anglican Church, Windsor; Christopher Wagstaff – Saint Alban’s, Epping; Nicholas Morley – Saint John’s Anglican Church, Parramatta; Andrew Davidson– Saint James’ Anglican, Turramurra; Heather Moen-Boyd – Scots Kirk Presbyterian, Mosman; Ryan Li – Saint John’s Anglican, Beecroft; Phillip Reichardt – Hunters Hill Anglican Parish; Enoch Pan – Saint Alban’s Epping Organ Scholar; Isabel Li – Saint Alban’s Epping Organ Scholar and Dickson Chan - Saint Mark’s Anglican Church, Granville**

The organ Dickson Chan plays at Saint Mark’s Granville is the original organ from Saint Alban’s Epping

## 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](mailto:phil@eppinganglicans.org.au)

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



## Readings for the day:

*Isaiah 43:16-21*

*Psalms 126*

*Philippians 3:3-14*

*John 12:1-8*

This morning, I would like to focus on the gospel story about Mary, probably familiar to most of us. It is told, in some form or another, across the four gospels. Mark and John link it to Jesus' last days. Mark, followed by Matthew, places it in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, just after Jesus' final arrival in Jerusalem. John places it just before that, in Bethany in the house of the three siblings, Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Bethany was just outside the boundaries of Jerusalem, but it was officially sanctioned as a place for any overflow of pilgrims to stay. Luke has a similar story in the house of Simon the Pharisee, placing it much earlier in Jesus' ministry and apparently in Galilee.

Scholars believe that some parts of the story have been displaced. Even though the details of the event or events are not totally clear, what is clear is that something of considerable importance happened to generate the stories. If perhaps not in its original setting, the story now belongs in the last days of Jesus, before his death. The tradition has obviously been reworked, with variously, Jesus' feet being anointed, or his head, by a good woman or a sinner. Mark suggests that Jesus predicted how memorable her act would be! So, as well as looking at the significance of the event for Jesus' disciples of about the year 32 or 33 CE, let's try to see why this story has survived to somehow impact us in 2025. Mary's action is one of extravagance with the pouring out of the very expensive oil or ointment. I say "oil or ointment" because it is hard to be sure of the meaning of the Greek "pistikos" which can mean genuine or authentic or can mean liquid or even an extraction from pistachio nuts. Whatever, it was the real thing, fragrant and very expensive. In Palestine, no respectable woman ever appeared in public with her hair unbound. But at this function in Jesus' honour, Mary's getting down on the floor, undoing her hair and wiping Jesus' feet, does not exactly conform to dinner party etiquette; it is not the behaviour you might have expected. It is financially, socially, emotionally extravagant and it certainly caught attention. The phrase 'to let your hair down' came into the English language in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, meaning that a woman was casting aside restraint and ignoring or flouting the social mores of the day. It is interesting to see the reactions of those who were present at this occasion.

Nobody was impolite or crass enough to mention the breaking of social conventions. The focus was on the reckless extravagance of opening and "wasting" the very expensive ointment. In today's version from Saint John's Gospel, it was just Judas who spoke out. It is not surprising that Judas has had a universally terrible press, but what do we really know of him and of this incident? A little later on, when he left the last supper room to go out into the night and betray Jesus, we are told the other disciples thought he had gone out to give money to the poor, as this seemed to be his habit. The back story is that Caiaphas the high priest had just told his cohorts "*It is better to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed.*" He instructed that anyone who knew where Jesus was, should immediately report it so that he could be arrested. Despite his succumbing to this, Judas must have had considerable trust placed in him by his fellow disciples, if he was the keeper of the common purse. It is hard to know if it was with hindsight that he was described as a thief.

Nevertheless, if we take Judas' response at face value, I think we can readily identify with that response. "*Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.*" It was inordinately expensive, and you would as a first reaction, think that Judas would have gained Jesus' approval for his comment. Everything points to Judas just saying what they were all thinking, anyway.

In Mark's and Matthew's Gospels, it is the disciples in general who were present, who were critical of the waste. In the other tellings of the story it was not Judas individually who spoke against the waste. In Matthew, it was the disciples. In Mark just "those present". In Luke, it was Simon the Pharisee. At first, Jesus' retort to Judas seems a real rebuff. "*Leave her alone. It was meant that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.*"

The narrative is now closely connected to Lazarus, newly raised from the dead. And Mary does not just wash Jesus' feet, dusty from the road, but anoints them with costly perfume and then wipes them with her hair. The feet would only generally be anointed as part of the ritual preparation for the burial of the dead. That must have been a real clanger to have dropped at a dinner party! The verse that follows is part of a verse from Deuteronomy: *"There will never cease to be poor in the land, and therefore I command you, open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land."* Jesus is reaffirming the importance of care for the poor but also saying that is not always the priority. This conforms to the Rabbinic tradition that good works of mercy (such as anointing and burying the dead), take precedence over good works of justice (such as giving to the poor).

While some of the guests talked of effectively squandering the perfume, Jesus interpreted the action quite differently, something more like "lavishing", a generously positive word to describe the action. If we think back to recent events before this dinner, it is not surprising that Mary was so lavish in expressing her gratitude to Jesus. The sisters, Mary and Martha, had sent word, desperate for Jesus to come when their brother Lazarus was very ill. The sisters had nursed him, but subsequently he had died. And they saw their future die with him. Jesus did not seem to hurry to them, causing Martha to say, *"If you had been here, my brother would not have died."* When Jesus restored Lazarus to life, it was not just for the women restoring their beloved brother to them; it was ensuring for them the continuity of a whole way of life. Two single women without their brother, without husbands, without means or access to a place in any workforce, they would have had no protection, no income, no living. Small wonder that Mary was what some people would have seen as over the top in her gratitude to Jesus. Mary's expression of her regard for Jesus has been described by some as reckless, extravagant and possibly even verging on scandalous, but Jesus defends her against those who are so critical.

But what does the event say to us? John's gospel is sometimes called the book of signs as it is deliberate in revealing the symbolic dimensions and meanings of events. This story and Jesus' attitude and response are indicating that such expressions of love and generosity are a sign of the redemptive death of Jesus and a sign of the kingdom of God. As important as it is to avoid waste and to maximise the resources we can give the poor, this must not become a scrupulous measuring out that becomes destructive of spontaneous generosity and of hope and joy. Beyond our concern for care for the poor, there is a greater truth, where the extravagant expression of love, both giving and receiving, are the signs of the culture of God's people regardless of the disapproval some may express. Jesus was not speaking callously of the poor but telling us we would have the opportunity of showing them generosity. We have the call and the opportunity to lavish the love that we have received on the Christ we meet in the broken and bruised victims of this world. Real service of the poor begins with real people, people who are on our radar. There will be times when we need thoughtfully to discern whether we focus in extravagant love on one or two people, or whether we need to give generously to some unknown poor whose plight we know of. I try every year to make a sound decision in this regard with the plum pudding money!\*

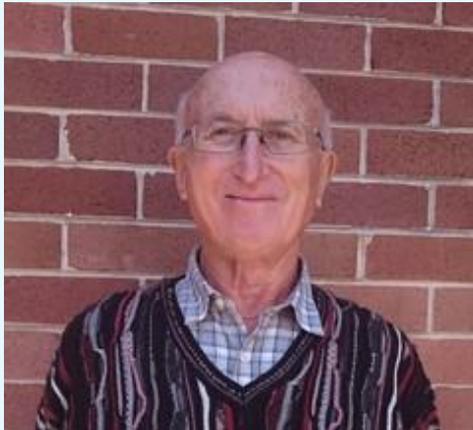
Every week as we gather here to celebrate the Eucharist, we gather as the living body of Christ, which we proclaim. While we commemorate an historic event, we are not setting out to remind ourselves of an historic episode, but instead we are participating in the reality that feeds our deep hunger and our hope and it draws us deeper into God's love and draws from us the love that we can allow to be extravagant, the quality of love that Mary showed to Jesus. Our worship will give birth to a compassion that takes flesh in the service of others.

While I have focussed today on the gospel reading, you no doubt will have picked up a common thread through the other readings. And that thread is expressed in the verse *"Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago."* And also *"Watch for the new thing I am going to do."*

God is not a God who simply rehashes the past, however good it might have been. One commentator says that we are being called to avoid wasting our energy trying to escape the pain of our past or trying to recover the glories of our past. Our past may have valuable lessons to teach us, but it does not teach us what God is going to do next other than to expect the unexpected and to open ourselves to new possibilities.

Perhaps the new thing for us each personally is seeking the God-given sensitivity to discern when and how we should lavish love, and when and how we should give to the poor. Jesus predicted how memorable Mary's action would be and as we hear the familiar story again, it speaks to us afresh today.

\***Editor's Note:** Each year for the past twenty years Ruth has made and sold plum puddings at Christmas. Over this time the amazing amount of \$200,000 has been raised and shared among various charities both in Australia and overseas. The Christmas 2024 'pudding money', totalling \$12,550, was given to the refugee support organisation House of Welcome, Granville. [houseofwelcome.org.au](http://houseofwelcome.org.au)



In previous editions of *The Parish Magazine*, I have shared with readers more of the history of our church by following the 'Around our Parish Church' Series started in the October-November 1983 edition of *The Epping Parish Magazine* written by the then editor Nigel Hubbard.

Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 6 in the series were covered in the edition of *The Parish Magazine*, Number 874, November 2023-January 2024. Numbers 4 and 5 were published in the edition of *The Parish Magazine*, Number 875, February-April 2024.

Numbers 7, 8 and 9 were featured in *The Parish Magazine*, Number 876, May-July 2024

Let us continue.

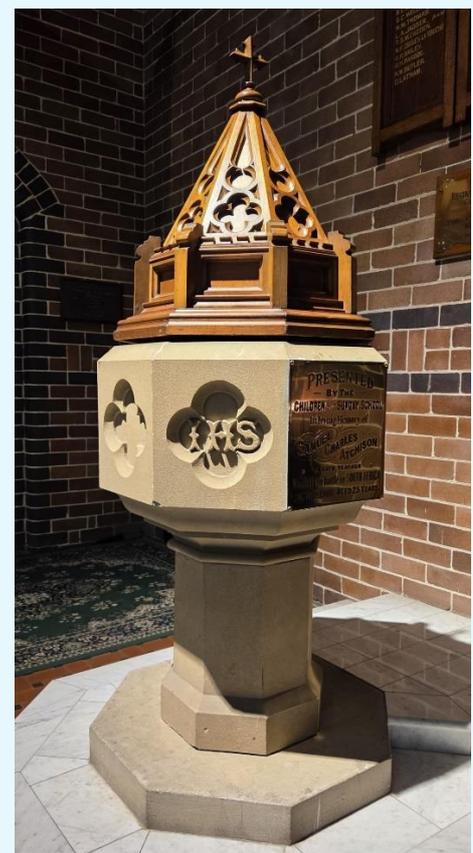
### Around Our Parish Church Number 10 – The Font

[Reference: page 10 *The Epping Parish Magazine* June – July 1985]

Saint Alban's font was the only significant piece of furniture taken from the old church when the present Saint Albans was opened in 1923. It was given in June 1900 by the children of the Sunday School in memory of one of their teachers, Samuel Charles Atchison, who was killed in the Boer War [in South Africa] on 20 February 1900. The full story of its dedication is told in the parish history *Fourscore* [by Nigel Hubbard published 1977 ISBN 0 909625 07 7]

At the turn of the century few Australians saw involvement in the Boer War as an act of imperialistic aggression and popular support ran high. Special interest was taken by the residents of Epping in Samuel Charles Atchison, the only local boy to enlist. Before Federation there was no Australian Army as such and Samuel Atchison served with the E Squadron, New South Wales Mounted Rifles, which left Sydney on 3 November 1899 and reached Capetown on 6 December. Their assignment, the relief of Colesburg, commenced on 3 February and on 20 February 1900 they were in action on the farm Wolfefontein, close to the siding Arundel between the towns of Colesburg and Noupooort in the Cape Province.

A fellow soldier reported the circumstances of Atchison's death. *"Just after breakfast our company had to go out and escort the guns. Seventy men went and were under shell fire all day. During the afternoon a forty pounds shell burst quite close to Private S Atchison ... His horse's foreparts were blown to pieces and parts of the hell struck him on the shoulder and abdomen. It was seen at once that he was dire so they did what they could for him. He asked one of them to read the bible to him. When they took it out of his breast pocket, they found it was struck and nearly pierced through."*



The memorial font in Saint Alban's

Trooper Atchison was given chloroform but died four hours later. His body was sewn up in a blanket and covered with a Union Jack. The fellow soldier also said *"I nearly forgot to mention that the C of E Chaplain read the burial service and Private Boulton had charge of the party to dig the grave. Willis [Private David John Willis, also killed in the Boer War at the Battle of Elandskop] of Beecroft was one of the party."*

The military reports of the time make no reference to the location of the grave. In the area there are several graves of unidentified soldiers; or it may be that a grave hastily dug by the mobile force may have lost its identity over the years.



Samuel Charles Atchison

The inscription on the brass plaque on the side of the font reads:

**P**RESENTED  
 BY THE  
**C**HILDREN of the **S**UNDAY **S**CHOOL  
 In Loving Memory of  
**S**amuel **C**harles **A**tchison  
 A LATE TEACHER  
**W**ho fell in battle in **S**outh **A**frica  
 20<sup>th</sup> February 1900 AGED 24

### The Font Cover

The font cover was given in Memory of Mrs Ethel Jane Goldby who died on 14 December 1952 and is the gift of her husband and family. Her funeral two days later was conducted by the then Rector, Canon William Noel Rook who wrote in *The Parish Magazine* at the time, “*The late Mrs Goldby’s radiant personality, her presence in the Women’s Guild and her place in worship will be greatly missed by a wide circle of friends. We thank God however, for her Christian witness and devotedness to her church.*”

To link to the item on the font itself, let us look at

### Around Our Parish Church Number 32 – The Font Bowl

[Reference: page 13 *The Epping Parish Magazine* February – March 1989]

The beautiful, polished brass font bowl in Saint Alban’s was used for the first time at the Feast of Christ the King, 20 November 1988. The bowl was given as a thank-offering by parishioner Brian Howard. In *The Epping Parish Magazine* item, the writer stated: “*We are grateful for this gift which will enhance our splendid font (which is nearly ninety years old) in a very practical way.*”

### Acknowledgements:

1. Both items are from *The Epping Parish Magazine* of Saint Alban’s Anglican Church. The original author of the first item acknowledged information supplied by the Australian War Memorial, the Central Army Records Office, the National Monuments Council of South Africa and Mrs Kay Gilbert of Rustenburg, South Africa
2. Photo of Samuel Charles Atchison <https://anzacs.shellharbour.nsw.gov.au/boer-war-servicemen/> Accessed 13 April 2025 at 1700hrs
3. Photo of font taken by Julie Evans and used with permission.

## English Conversation Classes Easter Morning Tea

Jess Li



**Volunteer Staff for the Conversation Classes LEFT TO RIGHT: Gill McLennon, Christine Murray, Danielle Loa, Jasmine Hu, Kay Whowell, Ruth Tsai, Rema Gnanadickam and Jess Li ABSENT: Sarah Weaver**

On 31 January, with support from Saint Alban's parish, Rema Gnanadickam and I attended the Anglicare Everyday English Conference. Having participated in various workshops run during the day, we were inspired to think of opportunities to connect our Everyday English students with our church family. On discussing this with the other teacher volunteers at Saint Alban's, we all felt strongly that we should make some effort in this regard. The team then thought of creating an event once a term to connect our students with members of our parish.



**The Reverend Phil Lui speaking to the students**

For this first term of 2025, there could be no better opportunity than gathering together for an Easter morning tea. We therefore made invitations and handed out personal invitations after the 10.00am church service the week before our agreed date. The morning tea took place on Wednesday 9 April.

On that day, the Everyday English classes started with students learning about Easter during a 45-minute lesson slot. After this The Reverend Phil Lui, our rector, kindly agreed to lead our students into our church building for a 'show and tell'.

Many of our students have never been inside a church, so the purpose of the activity was to show students around the church to appreciate the glory of the building itself and explain the meaning of the symbols inside the church. Rector Phil shared his wisdom with the students, also sharing God's message that they were all very welcome to come to church anytime.

The successful morning finished with a lovely morning tea together with some members of the parish, sharing hot cross buns, easter eggs and Easter stories. We would like to thank our parishioners for the great turnout from our church, and for initiating lovely English conversations with our Everyday English students. It really gave them a chance to practise some of the basic English they have been learning in their classes.



**Parishioners and students chatted over morning tea**



**Group activity led by one of the teachers, Sarah Weaver – at right facing the group**

On each Wednesday morning an activity session is arranged from 10:45am-11:00am, just before morning tea, to give students from all three levels of the classes an opportunity to do something together. The photo above was taken during one morning activity session led by Sarah Weaver.

There are now almost fifty students attending the Wednesday English Conversation Classes. If you would like to assist in some way or visit for just one day of support or conversation, please contact Jess Li or Rema Gnanadickam via the Church Office. You will be made very welcome.

# Ecumenical Lenten Service

Thursday 27 March 2025

Christine Murray

The Ecumenical Lenten Service for 2025 was held on Thursday, 27 March at 12.00pm at the Epping Uniting Church. Participating clergy included Father Jim McKeon from the Catholic Parish of Epping and Carlingford, The Reverend Sunny Lee from the Epping Uniting Church, The Reverend 'Oto V Faiva from the Uniting Church of West Epping and The Reverend Phil Lui of the Anglican Parish of Epping.

The service opened with the now traditional lighting of candles by representatives of each church community and a welcome from Reverend Sunny Lee. The readings, sermon and prayers were shared by the clergy and representatives of the participating churches.

The service was followed by a lunch of delicious pumpkin soup, bread rolls, cakes and slices provided by the Epping Uniting parishioners. This proved to be an excellent opportunity for fellowship and promotion of ecumenical friendship between our local churches.



Father Jim McKeon, LEFT, who preached the sermon, with The Reverend Phil Lui



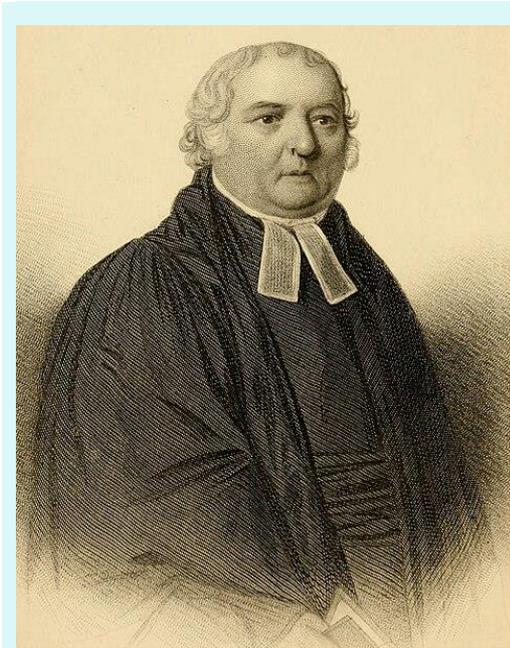
LEFT TO RIGHT: Helen Aiton, from West Epping Uniting; Lorraine Lobsey from the Catholic Parish; The Reverend Sunny Lee from Epping Uniting; and Judy Carruthers, Jane Bryant and Margaret Cummins from Saint Alban's



Detail from the cover of the Order of Service

## The Reverend Samuel Marsden – a Controversial Life

Geoff Dornan



The name, The Reverend Samuel Marsden, is well known to many of us who live and work in the northern and western parts of Sydney and to those who are members of the Anglican Church. For me the name has appeared many times over the years and sometimes in surprising and unrelated contexts.

I am neither an academic researcher nor a historian but from snippets of information gathered over the years I conclude that Marsden was an influential clergyman, missionary, farmer and legal officer in the early days of the colony, particularly in and around Parramatta.

He came to Australia in 1794 from his native England as a member of the Church Missionary Society with his young bride Elizabeth and their new baby, born off the coast off Van Dieman's Land in a howling gale. They landed at Sydney Cove and were stationed at Parramatta. Despite Marsden being quickly promoted to Senior Chaplain of the Colony they remained based there for the rest of their lives.

We see his name in Marsden Street and the suburb of Marsden Park. He was there for the building of Saint John's Parramatta in 1803 as its first rector. At some stage he held administrative roles on the board of the toll roads and the Female Factory as appointments by various governors of the colony. He was on the committee to establish Church of England Schools, the best-known being The King's School (1832). He was a preacher and theologian of some note. There is a collection of 130 of his sermons held at Moore College.

In 1795 Governor John Hunter gave Marsden the role of Magistrate at Parramatta where in addition to his many duties as Senior Chaplain he handed down punishment to many offenders in the district who came before the courts.

He was also a significant land holder and farmer having accumulated land through a grant and then by purchasing more for a total holding of 3000 acres, not far from Parramatta. Apart from being a clergyman, Marsden identified as a farmer and was part of the early wool producing and exporting industry. He challenged Macarther's use of Spanish merino sheep and developed his own breeding programs using heavier Suffolks and in 1812 he exported 4000 lbs. to England, a significant quantity at the time.

However, there was a dark side to Samuel Marsden, and he obtained a reputation as an unjust magistrate, handing out extremely harsh sentences, earning him the title of 'the flogging parson' as reference to the severe punishments such as extended floggings for relatively minor offences. The pundits of the day said he served communion to offenders on Sunday, sentenced them on Monday and had them executed on Friday. Not very complimentary of a churchman.

Marsden was also prone to major disputations with others including the captain of the ship 'William' on which he and his wife came to Australia, and he had an ongoing toxic relationship with John Macarther. He was widely criticized for his non-clerical and sometime entrepreneurial activities. In addition, some of his writings in private letters indicate an almost pathological hatred of the Irish and Roman Catholics. He was disparaging of aboriginal people but in contrast he took a liking to the Māori and the South Pacific.

Marsden's controversial life ended in 1838, and he died at the parsonage of Saint Matthew's Windsor where he had gone to recover from a bout of ill health. He is buried in the graveyard of Saint John's Parramatta. Elizabeth had died three years earlier.

Another noted clergyman, The Reverend J.S. Hassall, recalled seeing Marsden in his old age.

*“He was about seventy years of age, short, stout, clean shaven and rather bald with some white hair. He wore a broad brimmed beaver hat and drove himself about Parramatta in an old - fashioned gig with a splendid horse. He had two rings placed in the splashboard to pass the reins through, for he would sometimes drive home without them in his hands in the forgetfulness of old age. His horse however would always stop safely at the front door of the parsonage quite the same as if he had driven there.”*

Having encountered the many facts, myths and legends about Marsden and his life in Parramatta, it came as a surprise to find him in a completely different context and with a totally different reputation. Sue and I were visiting a cousin of hers in Kerikeri in New Zealand in the beautiful Bay of Islands, north of Auckland. We were visitors to the quaint white timber church of Saint James which sits gracefully on top of a very green New Zealand hill. Whilst sitting in the pews gazing at the stained glass what caught my eye came as a shock. Amongst the saints and apostles was a small portrait of a familiar face, the round head, sloping shoulders and distinctive eyes. It was the very recognizable Samuel Marsden. What was he doing here?



Samuel Marsden featured in the top panel of one of the three main windows over the altar in Saint James' Church



Saint James' Anglican Church, Kerikeri was opened on 15 December 1878 to replace the original church built in 1823 and commissioned in 1824

And so, another chapter in the Marsden story unfolded before me. It is well known that as part of his missionary life, he went to New Zealand many times and that Māori people came to visit and stay in Parramatta. However, what is not generally known in Australia was his huge impact on the establishment of Christianity in New Zealand, his role as a peacemaker amongst warring tribes and even his contribution to the beginnings of the New Zealand sheep and wool industry.

Marsden took an interest in the Māori people as early as 1794 when he was visiting the penal colony on Norfolk Island. By chance Governor King had taken two Māori lesser chiefs there to teach flax weaving. An encounter with Marsden led him to state in his journal that he had developed *“a desire to benefit this interesting race”*.

In 1807 he went to England for various reasons. He visited the Church Missionary Society and convinced them to extend their activities to New Zealand. He unsuccessfully attempted to recruit missionaries *“for the conversion of the Māori people”*. Unfortunately, none came forward given stories of cannibalism and cruelty of the Māori circulating at the time.

Marsden returned to Australia and with funds from his own enterprises he purchased a ship *The Active* in 1813 and sent her to Bay of Islands on a reconnaissance mission. It returned to Port Jackson and then went back loaded with goods, livestock and Marsden. It was not a peaceful place with tribes in long term conflict and with mistreatment handed out by American and other sailors who regularly came to the area for purposes of trade, and who were returning from sealing and whaling expeditions. Marsden found himself in a peace-making role between rival Māori factions. He was successful and he developed a reputation of a godly man of character and peace. He preached the first Christian sermon in New Zealand on Christmas Day of 1814. Legend has it that he preached in the local Māori language which he had learned from visitors to Parramatta.

Marsden again returned to New Zealand in 1819 with a number of missionary families who remained and carried on their work of conversion of the Māori people. They established the Church Mission Society mission station at Kiddy-Kiddy, now known as Kerikeri. It was a major settlement of well-constructed stone buildings, many of which are still standing today. These included a Mission House, a sequence of chapels and finally Saint James' Church, a schoolhouse, and the most famous building, the Stone Store and Mill.

The mission was carried on by various missionaries until the 1850s and like many of things associated with Marsden there was controversy in the form of arms trading of muskets for food with some Māori tribes, and the lascivious lifestyle of one or two missionaries (although Marsden did not condone these dubious activities).



Samuel Marsden is held in the highest regard in New Zealand and his legacy is remembered through the naming of schools and university colleges and a general recognition of him being the founder of the faith in that country.

As recognition of his service to New Zealand at the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Saint John's Parramatta, a baptismal font hand carved by a Māori craftsman was presented to the church where it currently resides [see at left]. An inscription on it reads:

*This Baptismal Font is a gift of the Māoris of New Zealand. It commemorates the visit to their country of the Rev. Samuel Marsden in 1814, when he became the first to preach the Gospel on New Zealand soil. At the time he was Rector of this Church.*

*The font has been made at the hands of craftsmen and adorned with painstaking skill by Tuarau. one of their master carvers.*

Samuel Marsden was an enigma. He lived a controversial life, and he influenced many areas of society, religion, agriculture, commerce and the administration of the colony in Australia. In New Zealand he achieved an almost saint-like status.

Like many controversial characters in history, separating the facts and truths from myths, legends and sometime outright untruths is difficult as is the case with Samuel Marsden. What remains of his legacy is surrounded by controversy with many of his actions and attitudes subject to various interpretations. However, whatever his motivations, he certainly had a lasting impact and remains a fascinating character.

### Postscript:

Again, Samuel Marsden popped up in a different context. Whilst writing this story [December 2024] I read of the death of much-loved author and teacher John Marsden. I had the privilege of meeting John a couple of times and my sons, in their teenage years, loved the books he wrote for that age group. The most famous was *"Tomorrow, when the war began"*, part of a series also made into a movie and a TV series. As an educator, John established two schools in his native Victoria, encouraging children to have enquiring minds. In articles about his passing, it was mentioned that John was a descendent of Samuel Marsden, which was news to me, not having previously connected the two surnames.

### Bibliography and Acknowledgements:

1. *Samuel Marsden – The Great Survivor* by A T Yarwood Melbourne University Press 1977
2. *Samuel Marsden (1765- 1838)* Australian Dictionary of Biography 1967
3. The quote of Rev J.S. Hassell comes from: *The King's School 1831-1981* by L D S Waddy - The Council of The King's School -1981 pg. 29
4. *Chapel to Church The history of Saint James Church, Kerikeri* A P B Watson 1974
5. *Missionary and Māori* A history of the CMS at Kerikeri by Nola Easdale. Te Wairora Press. 1991
6. Portrait of Samuel Marsden (1764-1838) from Frontispiece of *Life and Work of Samuel Marsden* by John Buxton Marsden, ed. James Drummond, Whitcombe and Tombs, Christchurch, 1913 Creative Commons CCO Licence
7. Photo of Saint James' Anglican Church, Kerikeri from Bruce Ringer Collection in Auckland Libraries Heritage Collection 3003-1852 Creative Commons Licence
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## Do the Rocks Melt Like Wax?

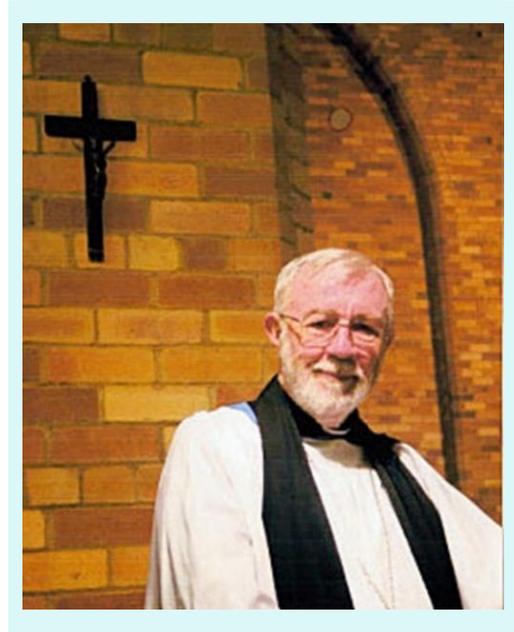
## A Sicilian Travel Tale Father Robert Willson

**Editor's Note:** Father Robert Willson was Chaplain and a teacher of Divinity and History at the Canberra Girls Grammar School for seventeen years. Now he is retired he pursues his interest in history and is a regular contributor to *The Parish Magazine*.

He writes:

In Psalm 97, verse 5, we have a vivid image of the rocks melting like wax, at the word of our Creator God. Twenty-five years ago, my wife and I were in Sicily, and we were very glad that the rocks around the rim of Mount Etna did not melt like wax while we took our photos.

In 2001, not long after our visit, visitors to this famous volcano were running for their lives with death horribly close behind. One report in the London *Times* said that lumps of red-hot lava the size of motor vehicles were being hurled out of the mouth of Etna and rolling down the hills.



It was Easter in the year 2000 and my wife and I were on a long tour of Italy. We visited Sicily as part of that trip. Italy, shaped exactly like a boot, appears to be kicking the little island of Sicily.

### A Battleground

The history of Sicily shows us that it was a battleground between great powers of the ancient Mediterranean, the Greeks, the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians and the Romans. Later influences included Vandals, Byzantine, Arab and Norman. Finally, Sicily merged with the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. We were especially interested in the Greek Temples and in Roman remains. There are beautiful Greek Temples built by Greek colonies and some superb Roman frescos. It was unfortunate that our visit to Sicily coincided with the Easter Holiday seasons. Italians love to get away for such a holiday, as we soon found out.

Our trip began in Naples, the port of departure for Sicily. After spending time in Pompeii, and seeing the sights of Naples, we joined the coach to be taken to our ship, for the overnight voyage to Palermo, the capital of Sicily.

### A Miscalculation

I am a diabetic and at this point I made a serious miscalculation. I had been told that food would be available on the ship, so did not take supplies with me. The ship was sailing on Good Friday and was grossly overcrowded, with ten lifeboats for heaven knows how many illegal passengers packed in every space. We had not eaten before we sailed, and we were confronted with a seething mass of humanity fighting to enter the self-service facilities for a meal. It took an hour of pushing and shoving but eventually we got what food was available. We managed to get dried up chicken and overcooked vegetables and bread rolls and cheese. I shudder when I think how dangerous it is for a diabetic to miss a meal. Back to our cabin, climbing over people sleeping in every corridor, we struggled to get some rest.

### At Palermo

At 7.00am the next morning we were so glad to get off the boat and be driven to the beautiful hotel in Palermo where our room was a great change, sheer luxury! On our first day our party was taken for a three-hour tour around the city and its treasures. One is almost overwhelmed by the riches. The climax was a visit to the Cathedral of Monreale in the town of the same name in the Metropolitan City of Palermo. It is said to be one of the finest examples of Norman architecture in the world. I am ashamed to say that I recorded nothing about it beyond the comment that it was as good as anything in Ravenna which we had seen earlier.

## Cefalu

We had a light lunch and, in the afternoon, set off along the coast for another seaside resort called Cefalu. It is only a small town, but it is one of the major tourist attractions, attracting millions of tourists every year. The splendid Cathedral includes pillars taken from an ancient Greek Temple elsewhere. Such borrowing is quite common. There was a magnificent carving of a priest blessing a crippled beggar. One could almost feel the agony of the cripple and the compassion of the priest. The unknown artist was believed to be Leopold Bernino, and some say his work was as fine as that of Michaelangelo. He completed only two pieces of work and died unknown and forgotten. But his work echoes the Gospel stories.

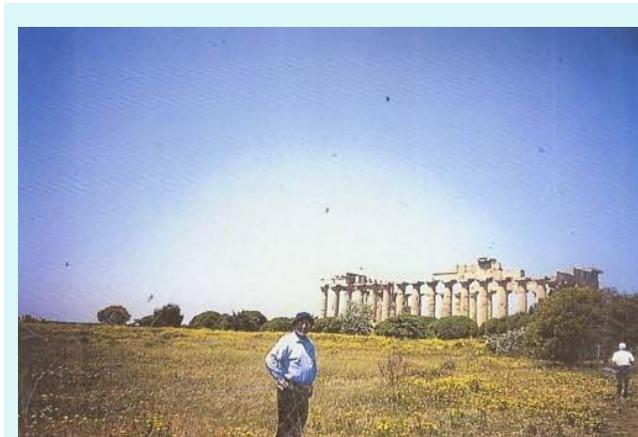
## Easter Day

My wife Beth and I were too tired to go to Midnight Mass for Easter Day and slept in until 8.00am. Our first stop was a lovely fishing village called Mondello along the coast, with blue waters and the hills and mountains reaching down to the sea. As we walked around, the bell suddenly sounded over our heads, and it was the Easter Morning service. It was a packed little church, and a priest and a deacon began the service. The opening hymn for Mass was very beautiful. We could not stay as our coach was departing but the memory lingered with us. *"Christ is risen indeed!"*

During that Easter Day we headed to places associated with Temples built by the Greek colonists long ago. The Greeks first landed at Naxos, on the south coast of Sicily about 720BC. It was then territory ruled from Carthage in North Africa. Their ancestors were from Phoenicia.

## Selinunte Archaeological Park [<https://www.selectsicilyvillas.com/places-in-sicily/selinunte/>]

We stopped for lunch at Selinunte, founded by Greeks from Megara Hyblaea [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megara\\_Hyblaea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megara_Hyblaea)]. It was the farthest the Greeks ever ventured into Carthaginian territory, and they knew they were very exposed. One can imagine the rejoicing when a Greek ship appeared on the horizon bringing news and supplies from home. One can also imagine the fear when the ships of Carthage appeared. Selinunte was apparently named after a vegetable, the Greek word for wild celery which still grows in the area and appears on the coins. I remember the Australian gum trees planted around, the beautiful poppies, and the massive Doric columns of the 5<sup>th</sup> century temple, later sacked by Hannibal. The drums of the columns are said to weigh about one hundred tonnes each.



Robert Willson at Selinunte Archaeological Park

Today there is only silence, and the religious symbolism of the temple is forgotten. One tries to imagine the last date, the final celebration of the rites, and then destruction and death and the fading memories.

I recall the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Empedocles who originated the theory of the four classical elements. He lived in that part of Sicily. He observed that people would eat as if they would die tomorrow and build temples as if they would live forever.

## The Villa Armerina

As with so many parts of the Roman Empire we were reminded of the imprint of Rome by seeing a beautiful villa, the Villa Armerina, with its rich panorama of mosaics. Was it the country retreat of a Roman Emperor or of a highborn nobleman? I have never seen such a rich variety of scenes from Roman mythology. One can almost hear the growl of the captive tigress in the big game hunt mosaic. The name of the 4<sup>th</sup> century Roman who ordered his artists to create it is lost, but his artistic heritage lives on.

## Taormina

So, we came to Taormina, which has been a Sicilian tourist attraction and beauty spot since Greek and Roman times. It still is, as we experienced the mad drivers struggling to reach the top. Our driver did a magnificent job to enable us to get there. I will never forget the stunning distant view of Mount Etna, just a wisp on the horizon, but soon to be very much closer.



Mount Etna Volcano Crater

### Mount Etna

It was Anzac Day, a special day for Australians, when we stood on top of an ominously quiet Mount Etna. My wife and I walked to the top and held hands as we peered into the crater. All was quiet but for wisps of smoke and the smell of fumes. As always with Etna, you can never forget that it is one of world's most active volcanos and sometimes, as the Psalmist wrote, the rocks do indeed melt like the wax of a candle in the heat. We can never take her for granted.

The following day, 26 April 2000, we ended our pilgrimage to Sicily. A week later we read that Etna decided to show her fangs but by then we were safely away. We crossed the Straits of Messina by ferry to mainland Italy. It was on a similar crossing that John Henry Newman was inspired to write the hymn "*Lead Kindly Light*". Such are the memories of a pilgrimage.

**Editor's Note:** At the time I received this article from the writer, February 2025, Mount Etna was active again, causing a great safety risk as tourists flocked to the site, to witness the volcano erupting spectacular lava sprays. Even during an eruption, there are many hiking trails and paths that are still safe on the mountain, though it is a legal requirement to go up with a qualified guide.

### Acknowledgements:

1. Photographs taken by Beth Willson
2. Selinunte Archaeological Park website <https://www.selectsicilyvillas.com/places-in-sicily/selinunte/> accessed 3 March 205 at 1430hrs
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## Poetic Thoughts on Easter

From **Edmund Spenser**, English poet, considered one of the great poets in the English language (1552-1599)

### *Easter*

*Most glorious Lord of life, that on this day  
didst make thy triumph over death and sin;  
and having harrowed hell didst bring away  
captivity thence captive, us to win:  
This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin,  
and grant that we for whom thou didst die  
being with thy dear blood clean washed from sin  
may live forever in felicity.*

*And that thy love we weighing worthily,  
may likewise love thee for the same again:  
and for thy sake that all like dear didst buy,  
with love may one another entertain.  
So let us love, dear love, like as we ought,  
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.*

From **George Herbert**, Welsh-born poet and Anglican priest, recognised as one of the foremost British devotional lyricists. (1593-1633)

### *Easter*

*Rise heart: thy Lord is risen. Sing His praise  
Without delays,  
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise  
With Him mayst rise.*

From **Thomas Kelly**, Irish evangelical and Church of Ireland cleric. (1769-1855)

### *The Lord is Risen Indeed*

*The Lord is risen indeed!  
Now is His work performed.  
Now is the mighty Captive freed,  
And death's strong castle stormed.*

*The Lord is risen indeed!  
Then hell has lost his prey.  
With Him is risen the ransomed seed  
To reign in endless day.*

*The Lord is risen indeed!  
He lives, to die no more.  
He lives, the sinner's cause to lead,  
Whose curse and shame He bore.*

# Parish Directory

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<b>Youth Ministry Worker</b>	Kari Hewitt Anglican SRE Teacher BTh Student at Christ College Burwood
<b>Student Minister</b>	Doris Awad BA, BEd BTh Student at Moore Theological College Sydney
<b>Lay Assistant</b>	Ruth Shatford AM (Diocesan)
<b>Sanctuary Assistants, Servers, Readers and Intercessors</b>	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, Giles Rowling, Peggy Sanders (Senior Liturgical Assistant), David Tait, Amy Taylor, Gillian Taylor, Mark Taylor, John Thompson, Kim Turner, James von Stieglitz, Sarah Weaver
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<b>Parish Nominators</b>	Glyn Evans, Peggy Sanders, Ruth Shatford AM, James von Stieglitz
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<b>Safe Ministry Representative</b>	Sarah Weaver
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