

The Parish Magazine

Epping Anglicans

February to April 2026

Number 883



**The Reading of the Gospel
8.30am Service Christmas Morning 2025**

Saint Alban the Martyr,
3 Pembroke Street,
Epping

with

Saint Aidan of
Lindisfarne,
32 Downing Street,
West Epping

From the Editor



It is the beginning of my eighth year as editor of *The Parish Magazine*. What a privilege. And what a responsibility! Parishioners ask “How’s the next edition going? Have you got enough material?” Others offer photos of a parish event; an article that they would like to share on a matter of interest; a poem; an item from another church publication or just (much appreciated) encouragement.

This edition contains many articles and photos from parishioners, and I thank them all for their contributions. There are articles from others whose names are new. On page 7 read the introduction from our new Assistant Minister Bill Walton and his wife Gloria, a student minister. Read pages 8-10 where Aimee and David Wong, two new student ministers, introduce themselves. How blessed we are at Saint Alban’s to see God’s hand guiding these individuals to minister among us. Let us warmly welcome them and support them as they settle into our church family.

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

Our vision:

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

To contact us:

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

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

Post Office Box 79, Epping NSW 1710

Email: office@eppinganglicans.org.au

Website: www.eppinanglicans.org.au

Our clergy may be contacted at any time:

The Reverend Phil Lui 0413 396 435

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

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The Anglican Parish of Epping

3 Pembroke Street Epping, NSW, 2121, Australia.

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

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



What are my reflections on 2025?

Having some leave and a moment to reflect has left me with a profound gratitude and appreciation for God's loving provision for our church.

I am grateful for the individual members of the Body of Christ at our church, those who serve us more publicly upfront such as with our finely crafted prayers, or our emphatic readings that capture the heart of the text, to those who serve more behind the scenes such as those who help Denise in the office or clean the church brass.

I am grateful for God's hand of providing for our new ministers at church: our new part-time assistant minister Bill Walton, and our new student ministers Gloria Walton (who will assist with our welcoming), Aimee and David Wong (children's ministry) and our continuing student minister Doris Awad (who will be introducing our 'Taste and See' course and will continue to host newcomers' lunches). Although it might seem strange to thank God for these things that are just commencing or still to come this year, I think back to all the conversations had over 2025, all the advocating work Doris has done and all the prayers that have been answered, and I am delighted and excited to see how God has worked things out.

I am also grateful for Pastor Kian Holik, his wife Liza and our new Indonesian brothers and sisters in Christ, who have joined our church family at Epping. It has brought deep pride and joy in my heart seeing the effort and warmth that has been expressed at the 'second half of church', over morning tea, from both the existing parishioners of Saint Alban's and our new parishioners as well.

What are we to expect in the coming year?

I'm mindful, as Jesus clearly reminds us in Luke 12.48 *From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.* Yet at the same time with the wisdom and prudence of the faithful Wardens and Parish Council, who work incredibly hard, I anticipate that we will do more in 2026 than 2025.

In February, I will be introducing our new missional goals of 'Gather, Grow, Go' We also anticipate encouraging a new Mandarin and Cantonese speaking ministry early this year; and 'Taste and See' which is an introductory course to Christianity, will be starting. We hope to enrich our church community with more opportunities for ministry on Sunday afternoons.

We will celebrate a very significant milestone for Saint Alban's with our 130th Saint Alban's Patronal Festival this year. We will have another busy and enriching liturgical year and in Holy Week, we will offer the opportunity to share in a Passover Meal prior to our Maundy Thursday Service.

Thanks to you all for your prayers, service and support.

Your Rector and Brother in Christ

Phil

Reflecting on 2025

Doris Awad
Student Minister and Children's Ministry Worker



Seeing Jesus in the Stories of the Bible

Our final term for Sunday School last year was split across completing our lessons from the Promises unit and getting ready for the annual Christmas pageant. As I reflect on the lessons from 2025, I am thankful to God for the reminder that sending Jesus into our world to save, redeem and be Lord of all, was always a part of God's plan. Martin Luther famously said, *"Take Christ from the Scriptures— and what more will you find in them?"*.

While at times it might seem repetitive and a little strange to keep talking about Jesus, even in the stories in Genesis, it's an important and timely reminder that all of what God said about himself to His people, was ultimately all about Jesus.

What a comfort that is! That all the stories, the weird and wonderful, are a way for us to know God personally. He has stood with and walked alongside his people, revealing who he is to them at every turn. He has seen all their struggles, their doubts and fears, their disobedience and faithlessness and has loved them still.

But Luther's Theology of the Cross takes it further – how can we fully understand God now? Through the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross. In John's gospel (3:8) *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up"*. The word for 'lifted-up' is a play on words for 'exalted'. John uses this as a reference to Isaiah's suffering servant in Isaiah 53, to demonstrate the paradoxical shift of seeing God's wisdom and power in the most unexpected of ways. As Jesus suffers and dies, our understanding of God – the Word made flesh – is reframed. God isn't just standing and walking beside us in our pain – he has taken it upon himself. And in this seeming defeat, he has victoriously defeated sin and death.

This is how we can know God now, as we read through the whole of the Bible, we see glimpses of Jesus in the promises God gives to his people and then, on the cross, we see God fully. The glorious God who powerfully works to save us through death, from death.

If you're interested in seeing how Jesus appears in all the pages of Scripture, I recommend reading Vaughan Roberts' "God's Big Picture".

The Sunday School Christmas Pageant 14 December 2025



The Sunday School, with encouragement from Amy Taylor, told the congregation the wonderful story of the Birth of Christ

It was a delight to wrap up the year by watching the children present for us the nativity story. This was only possible due to the tremendous effort by Amy Taylor. Thank you, Amy, for your vision and hard work and for taking this on after your big year! It would not have happened without you!!

End of Year Reflections on Children's Ministry

One of my subjects for Moore College this year was a practical subject, where we focussed on a new ministry experience, set some goals, had a go and then reflected on our experience. Coincidentally I had just taken on the Children's Ministry role at Saint Alban's and so I was able to reflect with Becky Lui (my College prac supervisor) about some of the things I had learnt throughout the year. I thought I would use the end of year Sunday School report to share some of these things with you all.

Theological reflections

One of the interesting revelations I had was just how institutionalised I had become. Having been in education for a long time, I had internalised a worldview that put the expectation of learning and engagement solely on the teacher. If a child acted out, I often assumed that it was because I had not provided enough or not planned enough or not been engaging enough. I was challenged by one of my lecturer's questions when we were discussing this issue, *"Where does sin fit into this?"*

It shifted my thinking to see that what I was doing in the kids' church space was more than just providing information for children to learn and memorise. Sunday School is the starting place for considering discipleship within the church community. We do this altogether as a church family.

In the Doctrine classes at College we had been discussing the theology of man and considering how the world considers the anthropology of man. When we explored the educational philosophy behind the current systems of education in our society, that our society views children as innocent, that the world corrupts them and to fix things, we must change the system to achieve this utopian society. I rebuked myself to see how much my personal philosophy had been shaped by this thinking. As I reflected on what I had learnt, I could see the importance of viewing Sunday School as more than just a learning space. It is about relationships, where the Bible shapes our truth and values. It's about speaking into the children's lives and even the parents. Again, this is not just done in the Sunday School room, but as we interact with one another, sharing all of life together as a church family.

I want to keep thinking about how to talk about sin within the lesson, encouraging the children to see their own sin, and teach and model repentance. More importantly, I want to keep growing my relationships with the parents within our church community so that we can be discipling the children of the church together.

Some Reflections - A Year at Saint Alban's

Church feels like family

Saint Alban's is a special church in our Diocese. At College, I often get asked how church is going and I'm always delighted to share with people that Saint Alban's is going great! When they ask why, I'm quick to tell them that it's because of the people. In the last 12 months, I have quickly come to feel as if Saint Alban's is home because you have been exceptionally welcoming, exceptionally generous and exceptionally encouraging. You have loved me and the girls in the Rectory so well, I am at a loss for words to know how to thank you all.

You're not just welcoming of me; I have seen our church be exceptionally welcoming of all people. I remember one time a young man attended the 8.00am service. He sat at the front and at the end of the service was one of the last to leave because it seemed as though everyone at the service had gotten up to say hello to him and ushered him over to say hello to me. I'm not sure you know this, but that young man became a Christian at our church. Please pray for him.

Saint Alban's is a welcoming church that longs for people in Epping to know Jesus and be a part of our church family. Early on, I was taken aback when one of our parishioners said to me, *"What do we need to change to get the Chinese people in Epping to come to our church?"* I could see how much she wanted to fill our pews with the people at our doorstep. One of the most encouraging things over the last couple of months has been seeing our church family embrace our new Indonesian congregation. Saint Alban's is a church that wants people from all over the world to know Jesus. And we know that there are people from all over the world in Epping.

The question for us now is - what else can we do to keep bringing more people to church?

What's next for me?

This year, I begin my third year of College and my second year at Saint Alban's as a Student Minister. While I will still be a part of the Sunday School team, I hand over the reins to the very capable new Student Ministers, Aimee and David Wong. They will oversee the Children's Ministry and I will hopefully be doing more evangelism and hospitality in the Rectory. I have enjoyed serving in the Sanctuary and will hopefully be doing more of that this year as well. While student minister positions are usually for two years, I am planning on staying at Saint Alban's after I finish College.

The big question is whether I will be able to do a fourth year. While I would very much love to do the fourth-year masters, the biggest hurdle for me is finances. College is costly. I am not eligible for government support which means I am reliant on faithful people to help support me through College's Student Support Fund. Last year, I received 48% of the budgeted support I needed, and while I am very grateful, unless I raise substantially more, it will mean a fourth year is not possible.

Please pray with me, that God will provide what I need, as he always does. If you would like to partner with me financially you can do so through <https://moore.edu.au/student/doris-awad/>

Parish Register

Baptism

Jack Krzysztof Louis **MALOTA**
on 11 January 2026

The Faithful Departed

(Robert) Bruce **WILSON**
on 18 November 2025

Regina **MACHIN**
on 10 January 2026



Thank you to Saint Alban's parishioners who contributed generously to the Anglicare Toys 'n' Tucker 2025 Christmas appeal. Thank you to the church office volunteers who packed up the donations.

The photo [LEFT] shows the many boxes and bags, packed and labelled, waiting for collection by Anglicare.

Safe Ministry

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

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

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

Welcome to Bill and Gloria Walton

Assistant Minister and Student Minister



Hello! We are Bill and Gloria, and we are excited to join the staff team at Saint Alban's this year as a part-time Assistant Minister (Bill) and Student Minister (Gloria). There are three questions we are asked.

Who are you?

I (Bill) have recently finished four years of study at Moore Theological College. I grew up in Deniliquin, a regional town in New South Wales, and moved to Sydney in 2013 to study Engineering at UNSW. I enjoy playing and watching sport, particularly basketball (which suits my height well!).

Meanwhile, I (Gloria) am going into my third year of study at Moore Theological College. I grew up not far from Epping and in God's great kindness became a Christian at university. After practising medicine for several years, it has been a great privilege to train and serve in sharing the life-giving words of Jesus. I enjoy reading, taking on new craft projects like crochet, and catching up with friends.

We've been married for almost a year and enjoy walking around and exploring the various parks and tracks near our home in Burwood. We are moving to Macquarie Park in February, so we're also excited to explore the national park close by!

Why are you here?

In Matthew 13:44, Jesus tells his disciples this parable: *The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.* As we've learned more about God through the Bible, we've seen the greatness of that precious treasure – the good news about Jesus Christ. It is precious because it brings eternal life to all who place their trust in Jesus. We have come to Saint Alban's to encourage each other to love and trust in this great news, and to share it with our friends, family, and neighbours who don't yet trust in Jesus.

What will you be doing?

Our role is to enable Saint Alban's to achieve its vision, serving alongside all of you as we walk together in the gospel of Jesus. I (Bill) will be assisting Phil in his role as Rector, working in different areas across the parish. Alongside my role at Saint Alban's, I will also be commencing a PhD in New Testament studies at the University of Sydney, with the intention of equipping us for long-term service in theological education in the future.

I (Gloria) will be continuing my theological studies Monday to Friday and serving Saint Alban's on Sunday as a Student Minister. I will be glad to assist Phil and Bill on Sundays in various ministries as needed and help our church family continue to welcome people well. We will be at both the 8:00am. and 10:00am. services each week, so please come and say hello!



Aimee and David were introduced to Saint Alban's congregations on 23 November 2025

Dear Saint Alban's church family,

We are delighted to be serving at Saint Alban's this year and are so grateful for the way you as a church family have welcomed us so far. We are grateful for the way God has provided this special opportunity to get to know you this year as your Student Ministers. We'd love to introduce ourselves, particularly how we came to be studying at Moore College and where we hope God might have us serve in the future.

Aimee writes:

My parents raised me and my three brothers to know the Lord Jesus, but it wasn't until I was in my early twenties, involved at a church in London that I grew rapidly in how much it meant to me that I could call God my Father because of the gift of Jesus. Because of His death and resurrection, I didn't need to fear death at all. Funnily enough, it was Phil Lui's brother's wife who asked if I would read the Bible with her many years ago in London – and it was through this time that I realised how much the world needed to know what I'd come to know. I spent a couple of very valuable years coming to trust in the power of God's Word to save and growing in confidence to speak about Jesus in many contexts.

This eventually led to a return to my homeland - New Zealand - to serve on the pastoral staff in a small church in Christchurch (Trinity South Christchurch) for three years. (I also got to know the church treasurer a little, but it wasn't until early 2025, going into second year at college, that I came to know the church treasurer even more... more on that later!!).

During my time back in New Zealand, I became increasingly convinced that all the good things that Kiwis often made their priorities - like family, holidays and comfort – could not possibly reconcile them with the God so many had rejected. I was encouraged to make another big move over to Sydney in 2024 to study at Moore Theological College and lay the foundations for a lifetime of telling people about Jesus, probably in New Zealand.

David writes:

Aimee and I met at Trinity when she joined us from Saint Helen's five years ago. I've been a member there since my son, Ethan, was born in 2006. We have experienced God's faithfulness in our lives, and in the teaching we have received over those years; especially through the period after Ethan lost his mother in the Christchurch earthquakes. It has been a joy growing in awareness of Jesus' love through those years and seeing the same in Ethan (and others).

To some extent, my choice to study at Moore Theological College is naturally based on a desire to support Aimee as she completes her studies. But it was a relatively easy decision to choose to study rather than work in Sydney. I've been quietly delving more deeply into the Bible for a few years now and thinking about how I want to use the rest of my life now that Ethan has grown up. I spent most of 2025 serving in various ways on staff and parish council at Trinity, part of which involved thinking about how we can serve the gospel.

The prospect of study at Moore is daunting but also exciting. It will be privilege to spend the year growing in understanding of God's Word, surrounded by humble, godly, thoughtful people, and my hope is I can thereby be a better support both to Aimee as she follows God's calling for her life, and to my minister and my church as I seek to serve in my own capacity in furthering the work of the gospel. While there is clearly a significant cost in choosing this route, we trust that it represents a worthwhile investment in our ability to contribute to God's work in the future.

David and Amy conclude:

We were married in Christchurch on 12 December 2025. It was a joyful occasion of celebrating God's faithfulness to us in so many ways – feel free to check out a photo album of the day at <https://photos.app.goo.gl/wKT4E2aBte1mWac79>). We are grateful for your prayers as we deal with the many big changes for us over the summer and find our feet as a newly married couple. In just a few weeks, David has moved house, moved countries (leaving wonderful Ethan behind) and changed jobs (becoming a student again – he will be studying the Advanced Diploma at Moore). Aimee is heading into a fairly daunting third year of study, where she anticipates being stretched even more in her theological thinking, and taking some deep dives into subjects such as moral theology and doctrine. We are very aware of our own weakness as we begin the year and cannot express enough how grateful we are for the peace of the gospel at times like this. We are confident that God has indeed given us his Spirit, through the Lord Jesus, and will not take it away, even when we feel afraid, grumpy, stressed or uncertain this year.



Aimee and David married 12 December 2025

Do give thanks for:

1. God's provision in bringing us together, precious time over the summer spent together and with family, and preparing for a busy year ahead.
2. The incredible opportunity for our non-Christian friends to hear of God's forgiveness through Christ proclaimed at our wedding.
3. God's kindness in providing amazing support in the form of friends and family during the recent semester of Aimee's study.
4. Ethan's maturity, and Trinity's care for him as we leave him in charge of our home in Christchurch.

Please pray that:

1. David will adjust quickly to life away from home as he begins at Moore College, and that his study will result in a deeper love for the Lord and his people.
2. As we enter our first year of marriage in the intense environment of College, we can establish patterns that help us to live out the promises we made to each other.
3. God will provide for our needs, financially and spiritually, through 2026. We have taken a leap of faith with David leaving work and family, trusting that this is a good investment in eternity.
4. We will care well for others at College and church in Sydney. Pray we will particularly be a support and encouragement to the incoming Kiwi students at Moore College.
5. We will make wise decisions with regards to 2027 (regarding further study, where we might serve down the line, etc.) that prioritises mission and not comfort.

We look forward to hearing from you in how we can be praying for you too.

Much love in the Lord Jesus,

Aimee and David Wong

Lent

Ash Wednesday is 18 February 2026

The season of Lent begins with a focus on penitence. Our individual life with God moves forward the restoration of all human relations. The eminent poet and preacher John Donne (1573-1631) points the way in a painfully honest prayer.

Forgive me, Lord, my sins:

the sins of my youth,

the sins of the present;

the sins I laid upon myself in an ill pleasure,

the sins I cast upon others in an ill example;

the sins which are manifest to all the world,

the sins which I have laboured to hide

from mine acquaintance,

from mine own conscience,

and even from my memory;

my crying and my whispering sins,

my ignorant sins and my wilful;

sins against my superiors, equals, servants,

against my lovers and benefactors,

sins against myself, mine own body, mine own soul,

sins against Thee, almighty Father

O merciful Son,

O blessed spirit of God.

Forgive me, O Lord, through the merits of thine Anointed,

my Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Also printed in Epping Parish Magazine February-March-April 1995 page 6

Our Services

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

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

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

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

Our regular services

Sunday at Saint Alban's

8.00am Holy Eucharist with Hymns
10.00am Choral Eucharist – 1st and 3rd Sunday
10.00am Sung Eucharist – 2nd, 4th and 5th Sunday
The 10.00am Holy Eucharist is also streamed via Zoom.
Sunday School 10am in The Loft (above the Main Hall)

6.00pm Taizé Service – Prayer with Songs from Taizé
2nd Sunday of February, April, June, August, October and November

Thursday at Saint Alban's

9.30am Reading, Reflection and Prayers for Healing on Zoom
10.30am Eucharist with Prayers for Healing

February 2026

Sunday 1 February
Sunday 8 February
Sunday 15 February
Wednesday 18 February
Sunday 22 February

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany *Blessing of Students and Educators*
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Transfiguration - Last Sunday after Epiphany
Ash Wednesday - Eucharist with Ashing 12noon and 7.45pm
First Sunday in Lent – Litany and Ashing

March 2026

Sunday 1 March
Sunday 8 March
Sunday 15 March
Sunday 22 March

Second Sunday in Lent
Third Sunday in Lent *Preacher: The Reverend Brett Hall*
Fourth Sunday in Lent – Mothering Sunday
Fifth Sunday in Lent
10.00am Service will be followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Parish

Sunday 29 March

Palm Sunday 8.00am Sung Eucharist
10.00am Blessing of the Palms and Ecumenical Procession

Monday 30 March
Tuesday 31 March

Holy Week: Eucharist and Reflection 7.45pm
Holy Week: Eucharist and Reflection 7.45pm

April 2026

Wednesday 1 April
Thursday 2 April
Friday 3 April
Sunday 5 April

Holy Week Eucharist and Reflection 7.45pm
Maundy Thursday Eucharist and Serving one another 7.45pm
Good Friday Eucharist 9.30am
Vigil of Easter, Renewal of Baptism and Eucharist 5.30am
Festival Eucharist and Renewal of Baptism 8.30am
Preacher: Assistant Minister Bill Walton

Sunday 12 April
Sunday 19 April
Sunday 26 April

Second Sunday of Easter
Third Sunday of Easter
Fourth Sunday of Easter – ANZAC Remembrance



The Readings:

Job 14:1-14

Psalm 29

John 5:19-29

My thanks to the rector Phil Lui for inviting me to preach tonight. What I have to say is more by way of a reflection than a sermon as such and we agreed that it was more appropriate to speak from the lectern, closer to the congregation.

Why do we annually have this weekday service? It really is an expression of part of our doctrine of the Communion of Saints. So, on 1, 2 and 3 November, we have a related group of specially designated days: All Saints' Day, thanksgiving for the Church triumphant. All Souls' Day has been described as the feast of the Church suffering. 3 November includes all of us in the Church militant, completing our marking of the Communion of Saints. These days, including Remembrance Day on 11 November, constitute a short season of remembrance. Sadly, 31 October, Hallowe'en, has been derailed by secular, commercial interests.

One preacher makes a distinction in our liturgical approach to All Saints and All Souls, referring to the **feast** of All Saints, but the **commemoration** of All Souls. Our lectionary readings throw some light on the intended focus of the day.

* Psalm 29 is one of a small group of psalms called the 'enthronement' psalms, the thrust of which is neatly summed up by the final words of the Lord's prayer "... *For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours forever.*"

* While Job reflects on the brevity and suffering of life and the finality of death, he expresses a profound hope for future resurrection, hope in the midst of despair.

* John 5 speaks of the nature and work of God and Jesus, one nature, one will, one purpose, one work.

I think that the mindset with which most of us approach this service is one of solemn remembrance, of quiet sadness for those often described as those whom we have "loved and lost". The absence of our beloved has been described as a wound in our present time. But the past and future are always NOW to God. The beloved who are on our hearts tonight are beyond sight and touch, but they reach into the deep knowledge of memory and longing as we stand together within the divine sight for judgment and mercy. While we speak loss and recollection, we speak hope that all that has been exists for redemption in the eyes of God, through the resurrection of Christ. In this is walking in faith and hope, not only by sight. We share then in the life of the Trinity.

Our broader context tonight is giving collective thanks for all saints, all souls known and unknown. And then personally and individually, we think of our beloved, no longer seen by us, but on another shore and in a greater light. We give thanks that we are bound by God with the departed. Jesus speaks of God as God of the living and we give thanks for eternal life through the Son. We give thanks for the unbroken bond of the Communion of Saints as well as for eternal life beyond any life we have previously known.

Recently, during my visit to France, I had visited a very old abbey church and then walked through the local village cemetery adjacent, with a younger friend. Her husband in his 40s, had collapsed and died during a bike ride, leaving her bereft and bringing up their two primary aged boys on her own. She told me this was where David, whom I had known since he was a young boy, was buried. When we reached his grave and she pointed it out, I swung straight into sympathy mode, whereupon she turned to me and said "*It is all right. He is now more alive than he ever was before.*"

She has a lively sense of God calling her forward in life according to His purpose in the movement of the Trinity. It made me recall the Shunamite woman in 2 Kings going to meet the prophet Elisha to discuss the death of her son that she was grieving. Asked by the prophet, who as yet did not know of the child's death, *"Is it well with the child?"*, she replied *"It is well with the child."* I have seen the same verse on the memorial plaque for a 10-year-old boy in a school chapel, the steadfast affirmation that it was indeed well with the deceased child, even as parents and school community grieved their loss.

Saint Ambrose, who lived in the 4th century, said of those who had died: *"We have loved them during life. Let us not abandon them in life until we have conducted them by our prayers into the house of the Lord."*

We not infrequently use the phrase 'those we have loved and lost'. In the context of the resurrection life and our bond with the departed in the communion of saints, it seems to strike a discordant note to refer to our beloved who have gone before us as 'lost'. As they have moved from our sight to a greater life and light, perhaps we could think of a more positive way of conceptualising and expressing this. One sun has set on them, but a greater sun has risen on them.

As we recall tonight those we have committed to God's eternal care, we affirm that we can leave them with quiet thanksgiving, now in his nearer presence.



The Sanctuary on the night of the All Souls' Service 4 November 2025
The Cross represents death and resurrection. The candles were placed on the altar by those attending the service, in memory of loved ones.
The list of those the Parish especially remembers was placed at the base of the altar.



LEFT: An arrangement of memorial flowers

If you would like to arrange a display of memorial flowers at the front of the Church for someone you wish to remember especially at a particular time, contact the Parish Administrator, Denise Pigot.



The Sanctuary Party on Remembrance Sunday with guest preacher, Senior Defence Force Chaplain David Schweinsberg, [FAR LEFT] and trumpeter Edward Lawn [SECOND FROM THE RIGHT]



ABOVE: The Altar in Saint Alban's

LEFT: The decorated font, which is a war memorial in itself, with the World War 1 Honour Board behind



Floral decorations for Remembrance Sunday

The Lord's Prayer During the Season of Pentecost

Peggy Sanders, Parishioner and Senior Liturgical Assistant



The words of The Lord's Prayer are very familiar to us – even with the 'older version' and the 'newer version'. Does it become too easy for us sometimes to gloss over what we are actually praying, or is the familiarity comforting like a regular conversation with a parent? What happens when we hear The Lord's Prayer being read in a language which is not our mother tongue?

On the Day of Pentecost during the reading of Act 2:1-21 at Saint Alban's we invite members of the congregation to stand in their pew and join with the reader at the Lectern in reading in a language other than English for verses 5-13 when with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the crowd gathered to hear the Apostles speaking ... *Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.* (Acts 2.5 and 6)

For the Season of Pentecost in 2025, twenty-three Sundays between the Day of Pentecost and Christ the King we invited members of the congregation (one for each of the 8am and 10am services) to volunteer to read The Lord's Prayer in a language other than English while the congregation listened, and joined in for the last sentence, reminding us of God's sending of the Holy Spirit and the gifts he gives so that we can spread the Gospel to all nations, peoples and languages.

Over these Sundays from our congregation we heard the following languages, in some cases the readers' 'mother tongue', and in other languages they have acquired or studied: Cantonese, Egyptian Arabic, French, Gaelic, German, Italian, Latin, Malayalam, Mandarin, Marathi, New Testament Greek, Polish, Spanish and Tok Pisin (Pidgin English).

It was my task to coordinate the volunteers and ensure we had two readers for each Sunday (one for each service) – several of them reading on more than one occasion. I am grateful for all those willing to embrace this – and hopefully they will agree to a repeat during Pentecost 2026.

The Lord's Prayer in Tok Pisin Language.

Tok Pisin (Talk Pidgin) is often referred to by English speakers as New Guinea Pidgin. A pidgin language is a grammatically simplified form of contact language that develops between two or more groups of people that do not have a language in common: typically, its vocabulary and grammar are limited and often drawn from several languages. It is the most widely used language in Papua New Guinea. Perhaps one million people now use Tok Pisin, and it is slowly replacing all other languages of Papua New Guinea. (Source: Wikipedia)



The Lord's Prayer

Papa bilong mipela yu stap long heven.
 Nem bilong yu mas stap holi.
 Kingdom bilong yu mas kam.
 Strongim mipela long bihainim laik bilong yu long graun,
 olsem ol bihainim long heven.
 Givim mipela kaikai inap long tude.
 Pogivim rong bilong mipela, olsem mipela pogivim ol arapela mekim rong
 long mipela.
 Sambai long mipela long taim bilong traim, na rausim olgeta samting nogut
 long mipela.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

The Epping Indonesian Congregation at Saint Alban's

Pastor Kian Holik



The Holik family: Josiah, Maverick (the cat), Kian, Liza, and Joel



Epping Indonesian Congregation at Saint Alban's

Pastor Kian Holik writes:

I would like to thank you so much for your generosity in the Gospel ministry, by partnering with us in very practical ways: welcoming us, including us, and providing a room for us to meet to worship the Lord Jesus in our own mother tongue.

Here I will write a little bit about us: who we are, our history, values, vision and mission. We humbly know this is a task that we can't do ourselves within the Indonesian congregation, and it has to be done in partnership with a local parish, so we can bless the nation and make the name of Jesus known among the people of Indonesia. May the glory be to our God alone.

The Indonesian Congregation at Saint Alban's is a testimony to God's faithfulness, the power of the Gospel, and the movement of His people throughout the world. Although Saint Alban's is our current home, as of 23 November 2025, our story began long before this transition.

We were once known as SPICE, the St Phil's Indonesian Congregation at the Anglican church in Eastwood, and before that, a humble student Bible study group meeting at Macquarie University. Through many seasons of growth, partnership, and mission, God has shaped us into a community committed to evangelising, equipping, and sending Indonesian-speaking believers to serve Christ wherever He calls.

Humble Beginnings at Macquarie University

Our journey began in 2016 when a small group of Indonesian overseas students at Macquarie University gathered for Bible study. Most of them were postgraduate students, far from home, navigating life in a new culture, and seeking Christian community. These gatherings were led and mentored by Kian Holik, who at the time was serving with AFES FOCUS (an international students ministry, Fellowship of Christian University Students, as part of the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students.)

What started as a simple weekly meeting quickly grew. Within months, the group saw up to 20 students attending the Bible studies. God was clearly at work among Indonesian students in Sydney, drawing them to His Word and building a community grounded in Scripture and fellowship. Praise God for such a strong beginning!

The Birth of an Indonesian-Speaking Church



The first MITC service at the Robert Menzies College (2018)

By 2018, as the student group continued to flourish, a growing conviction emerged. Many felt the need for a Bible-believing, Indonesian-speaking church in the area—one committed to preaching the true Gospel faithfully. At the time, around 90% of Indonesian churches in Sydney were charismatic in nature. While we give thanks for all churches that seek to honour Christ, there was a noticeable gap for Indonesian Christians who desired a church with strong biblical teaching grounded in Reformed evangelical convictions, complemented by faithful para-church ministries.

From this conviction, and with the support and consultation of Trinity Chapel at Robert Menzies College, Macquarie Indonesian Trinity Church (MITC) was established in 2018. The mission was clear: to reach Indonesian students as well as Indonesians living in Sydney permanently; to evangelise, equip, and send graduates as Christ's ambassadors; and to do so in partnership with campus ministries. The vision extended far beyond temporary ministry. It aimed to prepare men and women who would eventually return to Indonesia—and beyond—carrying the Gospel with them.

Kian was employed part-time as MITC's pastor while continuing in his AFES role, allowing both ministries to work hand in hand for the sake of the Gospel.

Partnership with St Phil's Anglican Church, Eastwood

In 2020, a major transition took place. During the COVID pandemic, Trinity Chapel ceased its morning services and passed the MITC group on to The Bridge Church Macquarie Park. For MITC, this change required prayerful consideration. After further conversations, the group chose to join St Phil's Anglican Church Eastwood—a church known for its commitment to global mission, its love for culturally diverse congregations, and its theological clarity.

MITC was officially welcomed into the St Phil's family and was renamed SPICE: St Phil's Indonesian Congregation Eastwood. Kian was then employed part-time by St Phil's, and the congregation's offerings were directed through the church. This partnership provided the stability, accountability, and ministry support necessary for long-term growth.



SPICE's third anniversary at St Phil's Anglican Church Eastwood (2021)

Why an Indonesian-Speaking Church?

At EPIC, our purpose has always been to share the Gospel faithfully and to reach the world for Christ in and through the Indonesian language. But why Indonesian?

Many of the people we serve are overseas students, temporary residents, or workers who will eventually return to Indonesia. Studies show that overseas students who become Christians or grow spiritually in a second language often struggle to maintain their faith when they return home. The challenges of culture shock, linguistic barriers, and reintegration into their home environment can hinder their spiritual growth.

By discipling them in Bahasa Indonesia—their heart language—we equip them for life beyond Australia. We want them to be spiritually strong, biblically grounded, and culturally prepared when they go home.

Even for Indonesian Christians who have settled in Australia permanently, language remains important. Many still have family and friends in Indonesia who do not yet know Christ. It can be difficult to evangelise loved ones if they have only been trained in English-speaking church settings. EPIC exists to bridge this gap, helping local Indonesians to share the Gospel meaningfully across cultural and linguistic boundaries.



SPICE commissioned its first missionary through CMS (2021)

SPICE then and EPIC today

The group—now known as EPIC—continues to grow and welcome Indonesian students, workers, families, and local residents. We remain committed to being a welcoming community where newcomers are evangelised, believers are discipled, and all are equipped to live as Christ's ambassadors.



Students commissioning as they are returning to Indonesia upon finishing their studies in Australia

Since our early days, more than 70 graduates have returned to Indonesia and other parts of the world. Many now serve in government, education, business, and even church leadership. We praise God that our ministry contributes to mobilising returnees to serve in Indonesia—the world's most populous Muslim-majority country.

We also thank God for local supporters, both Indonesian-born and Australian, who understand and share our mission. Some have even gone on to serve as missionaries in Indonesia themselves.

In recent years, SPICE, and now EPIC, have witnessed a significant increase in Working Holiday Visa (WHV) holders and Indonesian workers joining our community. With the Australian government expanding WHV quotas for Indonesians fivefold, and with bilateral ties strengthening, this trend will likely continue. This presents a large and growing mission field right at our doorstep.

Partnership in the Gospel

Our transition from MITC to SPICE, and now EPIC at Saint Albans, reflects our commitment to safeguarding sound doctrine and ensuring lasting Gospel impact. By aligning with the Sydney Anglican Diocese, we have placed ourselves in a context that nurtures Gospel-centred ministry, theological integrity, and healthy church growth. We are deeply grateful for St Phil's Anglican Church Eastwood and now Saint Alban's Anglican Church Epping for their partnership in this mission. Their support has given us the stability and encouragement needed to flourish as a congregation.

In addition, we maintain partnerships with various churches and organisations through joint evangelistic and fellowship events. These include New Year celebrations, Easter and Christmas services, Thanksgiving Day, Indo Day (our Indonesian cultural and food fundraising event), and the YCB Foundation's literacy fundraising efforts. Many local parishes have also connected Indonesian speakers with us so they can hear the Gospel in their heart language. **[Editor's Note: YCB stands for 'Yayasan Cinta Baca' - 'Love Reading Foundation' in English.]**

Our collaborations extend to mission agencies such as CMS (Church Missionary Society), OMF (Overseas Missionary Fellowship), Pioneers, and several Bible colleges across Sydney. EPIC has become a recommended training ground for missionaries preparing to serve in Indonesia, a great privilege and responsibility.

Evangelism Among Muslims (the majority of the Indonesian population)



Visiting a few Indonesian Muslim students at the eve of Eid (end of Ramadhan/Muslim fasting month)

A unique and encouraging part of our ministry is our relationship with the Indonesian Muslim Students Association at Macquarie University. From the beginning, some of our Christian students intentionally lived in shared housing with Muslim students, modelling the love of Christ and boldly witnessing to Him as Lord.

Over the years, we have prepared food hampers during Ramadan and Eid, and some St Phil's members donated winter clothing for Indonesian Muslim women—gifts we distributed through our networks. Remarkably, some Muslim friends have even visited our services and shared meals with us—something not commonly seen in Indonesia. These are powerful expressions of Gospel hospitality.

Equipping and Sending Disciples

As more Indonesian students and workers return home, Kian identified a growing need to prepare them spiritually for life after Australia. Research shows that only one in five East Asian students who become Christians overseas remain active in their faith once they return to their home country.

To address this, Kian joined OMF's Returnee Focus Ministry, which equips returnees to be Gospel ambassadors back home in East Asia, including Indonesia. This aligns perfectly with our mission of evangelising, equipping, and sending. EPIC has become a key training ground in this global effort.



Commissioning our brother Kevin upon finishing his PhD, to teach at Bandung Institute of Technology

Looking Ahead: Faithful to the End

Our mission remains the same today: to prepare Indonesian-speaking Christians to go into all the world. Jesus said, *"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few"* (Matthew 9:37). We believe God has placed us in Australia not by accident, but for the purpose of training and sending workers into His harvest—whether back to Indonesia, around Australia, or elsewhere in the world.

We praise God for His faithfulness over the years and look forward to how He will continue to use EPIC at Saint Albans for the growth of His global kingdom in partnership with the greater body of the saints at Saint Alban's and beyond.

Christ the King

Sunday 23 November 2025



On 23 November 2025, representatives of the Churchwardens and Parish Councillors of Saint Alban's formally welcomed the Indonesian congregation on behalf of all Saint Alban's parishioners



The Sanctuary Party, the Preacher Pastor Kian Holik, the Rector and Saint Alban's Choir after the 10.00am service for Christ the King



Parishioners gathered for fellowship over morning tea after the 10.00am Service on Advent Sunday

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

Ask yourself:

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

The deadline for contributions is
10 April 2026

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

Photographs are also welcome.

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols 21 December 2025

On 21 December 2025 at 7.45pm, this popular Service combined familiar carols, bible readings and prayers. The Sanctuary party entered the darkened church and, as the servers passed, using their candles they lit the candles held by parishioners. The Reverend Phil Lui officiated. The Parish Choir, under the leadership of the Music Director Chris Czerwinski, contributed special items. They were accompanied by Organ Scholar Enoch Pan.



The candle-lit Sanctuary at the beginning of the Service

Young Organists' Day Sydney Town Hall 22 December 2025



Titus Grenyer is the Town Hall Organist who coordinates the City of Sydney's annual organ recital program at Sydney Town Hall. He brings accessible and deeply musical performances to the city and gives the opportunity for young organists to perform.

On 22 December 2025 Titus Grenyer organised the Grand organ recital Young Organists' Day on the Town Hall Organ. Saint Alban's Organ Scholar, Enoch Pan was one of the gifted young organists who played for the fully booked concert.

Enoch, pictured left, played Toccata in C by J.S. Bach.

Sydney Organ Competition

6 October 2025

On Monday 6 October 2025 the Organ Music Society of Sydney Inc. held their annual Sydney Organ Competition. It was the biggest Sydney Organ Competition so far, with a number of competitors representing Melbourne and Perth. To quote from the competition guidelines:

“The aim of our Competition is to foster a high standard of performance amongst young organ students so that they may gain experience in performing publicly and under pressure. The Sydney Organ Competition encourages them to seek higher levels of excellence by competing. It also gives them an opportunity to meet their peers.”

The Organ Scholars from Saint Alban’s, Isabel Li and Enoch Pan took part in the competition.

- Isabel won second prize in the Junior Section, which was held at Saint Philip's - Church Hill Anglican, York Street, Sydney

The Junior Section was open to organists fifteen years of age, or younger, at the entry closing date. The repertoire required a *balanced* program comprising two *contrasting* pieces or movements (one Baroque) with a total *playing* time not exceeding fifteen minutes.

- Enoch won second prize in the Intermediate Section, held at Shore School Chapel, North Sydney

The Intermediate Section was open to organists eighteen years of age, or younger, at the closing date. The repertoire required a *balanced* program comprising two *contrasting* pieces or movements (one by J.S. Bach, including arrangements and transcriptions by J.S. Bach) with a total *playing* time not exceeding twenty minutes.

Congratulations to these talented young people who regularly play for Sunday services at Saint Alban’s and greatly enrich our worship.



ABOVE: Isabel and Enoch at the console of the Shore School Chapel organ



RIGHT:
Enoch and Isabel with their organ teacher,
Chris Czerwinski, Music Director of Saint Alban’s

A Warm Welcome

When parishioner Jane Jones visited Saint Magnus Cathedral in Orkney, she received a leaflet with the following sketch and words of welcome. Let us all at Saint Alban's welcome our newcomers in the same way, encouraging and supporting them to become members of God's people here in Epping.



St. Magnus Cathedral
Kirkwall, Orkney

You enter this Cathedral

Not as a stranger, but as a guest of God.
God is your Heavenly Creator.

Come, then, with joy in your heart and
thanks on your lips, into God's presence,
offering God your love and service. *

Here may the faithful find salvation, and
the careless be awakened.

Here may the doubting find faith, and
the anxious be encouraged.

Here may the tempted find help, and the
sorrowful comfort.

Here may the weary find rest, and the
strong be renewed.

Here may the aged find consolation, and
the young be inspired.

Saint Magnus Cathedral is a Church of Scotland parish church in Kirkwall, the main town of Orkney, a group of islands off the north coast of mainland Scotland. It was originally a Roman Catholic cathedral and is the oldest cathedral in Scotland and the most northerly cathedral in the United Kingdom.

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.

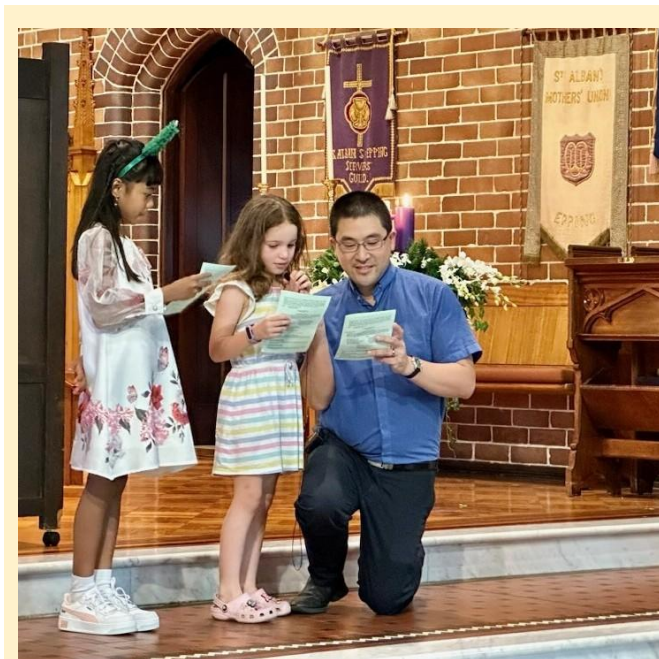
Celebrating Christmas at Saint Alban's

Family Christmas Service – 6.00pm 24 December 2025

Service Leader: The Reverend Phil Lui

Christmas Message: Doris Awad

Musicians: Enoch Pan and Christine Pan



ABOVE: Doris Awad and Becky Lui led the singing of Christmas Carols and Enoch and Christine Pan accompanied the singing

LEFT: Reading the Bible verses Luke 2: 8-14



ABOVE: Prayers were said for the community

LEFT: The Rector showed his Christmas spirit

The Children's Thanksgiving Prayer from the Family Service

Lord God, we give you thanks for all that we have: family, friends, love, health and hope. We thank you that you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, into this world, born in Bethlehem. We give thanks that he lived among us and died for us. Make us ever grateful for your grace to us.

Amen

Festival Choral Eucharist of the Nativity of our Lord

9.30pm 24 December 2025

President and Preacher: The Reverend Phil Lui

Music Director: Chris Czerwinski

Organ Scholar: Enoch Pan

The Saint Alban's Parish Choir

During Communion, the choir sang a Polish Carol – *Stars Were Gleaming/Infant Holy*

Words: Piotrowi Skardze, translators Edith M G Reed and Nancy Byrd Turner



The Sanctuary during the Festival Choral Eucharist of the Nativity of our Lord



ABOVE: The Blessing of the Crib

LEFT: The Sanctuary Party and Choir processed into the church

Festival Choral Eucharist of the Nativity of our Lord
8.30am 25 December 2025

President: The Reverend Phil Lui

Preacher: Pastor Kian Holik

Music Director: Chris Czerwinski

Organ Scholar: Enoch Pan

The Saint Alban's Parish Choir

During Communion, the choir sang *Gaudete! Christus est natus!* which is Latin for Rejoice! Christ is born!

Words: Traditional. Music: arranged by Barbara Rusbridge



The Procession at the beginning of the service



The Advent wreath with all candles alight



The Sanctuary Party with the preacher Pastor Kian Holik, the Rector, and Saint Alban's Choir

Christmas Day Sermon – 25 December 2025

Pastor Kian Holik



Text: Luke 2:8-20

Good morning. Merry Christmas. Selamat Natal, in bahasa Indonesian.

If you do not know me, my name is Kian, and I am the pastor of the Epping Indonesian Congregation, known as EPIC, here at Saint Alban's. It is a great privilege for me to bring God's word to you on this special day.

I would like to welcome especially those who are guests or newcomers. If you can stay behind briefly after the service and introduce yourself, Father Phil and I would be thrilled to get to know you personally.

Let me briefly pray... May these words that we read, and the meditation of our hearts be pleasing in your sight, Lord God, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

It's finally here, Christmas Day! Have you got your Christmas present? Have you opened it? Or maybe, if not, shaken it? Or give a guess at what is inside the box wrapped with your name on it?

We are often let down by the wrapping of the gift. Right? You may have guessed that the gift may not be as valuable, because the wrapping is a bit shabby. We often become like toddlers who are more excited with the wrapping rather than the gift.

Perhaps it is a similar response when your grandchildren receive a beautifully wrapped Christmas present. Inside is the gift you carefully chose for months, something safe, educational, fun, and age appropriate. You have imagined their delight when they open it.

But when your grandchild finally opens the paper and the box, he looks once at the gift, pushes it aside, and starts playing not with the gift, but with the wrapping.

The wrapping paper becomes the highlight of the day. It is bright and colourful. It crackles and crunches. The box itself often becomes a toy, perfect for hiding, crawling into, opening and closing the flaps again and again. Who cares about the present inside? The gift is forgotten, while the wrapping captures all the attention.

That is a child's view of Christmas: focusing on the wrapping and forgetting the present.

And this is what may happen on your Christmas this year. Christmas becomes an incredibly busy time for most of us. We wrap it up with traditions, expectations, and endless activities. There are cards to write, food to buy, prepare, and eat, presents to purchase and wrap, lights to hang, trees to decorate, parties to attend, family gatherings, and holidays to enjoy. There is so much 'wrapping' around Christmas that we forget the present, the gift, the reason for the season.

So let us not have a child's view of Christmas this year. Let us set aside the wrapping for a moment and consider again the wonder of the greatest gift of all.

God sent his only Son, eternal and one with the Father, to step into time and space. God with us came to live among us, to die among us, and to be raised to life, to bring us back to God. And he did not come as a powerful warrior or ruler, but as a helpless and humble baby.

This is such an extraordinary and unexpected event that it should make us shake our heads in wonder. It should draw our attention away from the wrapping and lead us to worship Jesus, to praise God for him, and to offer ourselves afresh to God in gratitude for the enormity of this gift.

It certainly amazed Mary. Near the end of our reading in Luke 2:19, we read, *"But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."* She stored these events away and reflected deeply on them. Gabriel's visit, her miraculous pregnancy, the promise that her child would rule an eternal kingdom in the line of David, and then the shepherds arriving with stories of angels declaring that the Messiah had been born. All of it centred on the baby in her arms, her son and God's Son.

This story is familiar, but we must resist rushing past its details. Luke sets the birth of Jesus firmly in history. Caesar Augustus ruled the Roman Empire, and Quirinius governed Syria. A census was ordered, used by Rome to raise taxes and strengthen its army.

Yet God used it to fulfil his promise spoken through the prophet Micah, that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth in the north, but their family line came from Bethlehem in the south, so they travelled there. When they arrived, Mary gave birth. But this birth was utterly unusual. There was no room for them, so she wrapped her baby and laid him in a manger, an animal feeding trough. It is hard to imagine a humbler beginning, especially for God's own Son.

God, however, did not allow this world-changing event to pass unnoticed. Nearby shepherds were watching their flocks at night when an angel appeared, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. But the angel said, *"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."* Luke 2:9

Then one angel suddenly became a heavenly choir, praising God and singing, *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."* Luke 2:14

Those titles explain everything. Saviour, a name used for God himself. Christ, the Messiah, God's chosen King. Lord, the very title Luke repeatedly uses for God. This tiny baby is God with skin, the creator of the universe, lying helpless in a feeding trough.

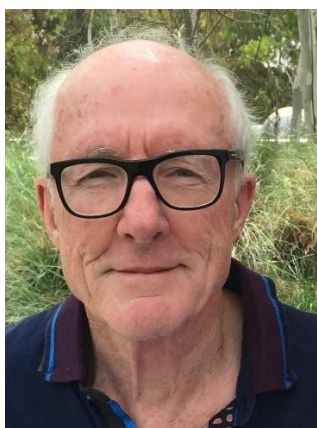
The angels also tell us what he brings: peace. Peace with God, as Jesus bears the punishment for our sin. A peace, knowing our sin and guilt is dealt with. And peace between people, as he changes hearts. This peace is not temporary or seasonal. It is strong, resilient, and eternal. It does not depend on circumstances or calendars.

Rome claimed peace through power, the Pax Romana, enforced by fear. But Jesus brings true peace, beginning now and lasting forever.

This is God's gift to you this Christmas. Jesus Christ. The saviour of the world, for you and me. Accept his rescue. Receive his forgiveness. Turn to him, trust in Him as your saviour, serve him, and know his peace. Thank him for Jesus.

Peel away the wrapping, and there is the gift: Jesus, who saves and gives peace. This is news worth rejoicing over, sharing, and living out every day. Focus on the gift, not the wrapping, and celebrate Jesus this Christmas.

Amen.



A Service of Thanksgiving for Dr Neil Cameron, long-time servant of the Anglican Church and the Diocese of Sydney (Synod, Standing Committee, General Synod, and Cathedral Chapter), was held at Saint Andrew's Cathedral on Tuesday 13 January. The Reverend Dr Michael Jensen led the service, The Right Reverend Peter Jensen preached, The Reverend Mark Wormell and The Right Reverend Paul Barnett gave eulogies, and the Archbishop, the Most Reverend Kanishka Raffel, closed the service. The family of Neil and Marcia; Mysie, Danusia, David and Sophia, gave the readings and moving eulogies.

Neil Cameron was organist at Saint Alban's between 2011 and 2020. Fittingly, the service included four wonderful hymns, and the organist was The Reverend Michael Deasey OAM.

A recording of the service is still available on YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/live/ZTAajhWKMa8>

175th Anniversary of the Anglican Board of Mission

Peggy Sanders Parishioner and
Secretary ABM Diocesan Committee



At Saint Alban's on Sunday 26 October 2025, alongside other churches and Cathedrals in Australia, we acknowledged the contribution of the Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) over its 175 years as the national mission agency for the Anglican Church in Australia. I thank the Rector for giving me the opportunity at each service to outline a little of the history of ABM, its evolving purpose, focus and work, and to provide a taste of the long and the current association of our parish with ABM. This is a summary of what I presented at the time.

First known as the Australasian Board of Missions, it was formed in a school room of Saint James, King Street, Sydney on 29 October 1850 by the six bishops of Australasia – New Zealand and Australia. The bishops' initial purpose was the funding and building of a boat to support the work of the Melanesian Mission. As is often the case it was a very practical and tangible aim.

The boat was commissioned in 1857 and named the *Southern Cross*. The tenth *Southern Cross* was launched in 2024. The Melanesian Mission later became the independent Anglican Church of Melanesia which continues to partner with ABM today.



PHOTO ABOVE: The six Bishops at the 1850 Conference: Bishop Short (Adelaide), Bishop Selwyn (New Zealand), Bishop Nixon (Tasmania), Bishop Tyrell (Newcastle), Bishop Perry (Melbourne), Bishop Broughton (Sydney)

The early Board mandate was to support missionary endeavours among the indigenous people of Australia, the peoples of the Pacific and the Chinese on the goldfields. Acting as the umbrella body, individual mission committees were set up in the various dioceses. The Diocese of New Zealand established its own board in 1872, thus the then Australian Board of Missions became more active in its support of emerging aboriginal missions. In 1891 ABM sent the first Anglican missionaries to the island of New Guinea.

The ABM Women's Auxiliary was inaugurated by women in Sydney in 1910, and branches and affiliated groups quickly spread – now known as the ABM Auxiliary (to include men) – they continue to work very hard in support of ABM Projects. A branch of the Women's Auxiliary was in operation in this parish – the earliest reference our archivist could find was in May 1929, following a Synod call for a 'Missions Sunday' in 1928, and the Auxiliary continued to meet on the second Tuesday of each month for many years.

In 1911, to encourage grassroots support from young people, the 'Comrades of St George' for young adults upwards, and the 'Heralds of the King' for children and youth were established. Our parishioner Margaret Foster, was part of the Heralds of the King in this parish, later leading the group between 1959 and 1962; meeting on Friday nights with an average attendance of 20 or so young girls.

In 1929 Harry Williamson, a parishioner and benefactor of Saint Alban's, made a generous gift to ABM when he donated his fine home and beautiful grounds 'Crohamhurst' (situated next to the Saint Alban's church down Pembroke Street) to ABM when he and his wife retired. ABM used this as a hostel for the training of women missionaries (see *The Parish Magazine* No 882, November 2025, pages 36 -37), and Saint Alban's did much to support the Hostel.

Many of the young ladies formed strong links with Saint Alban's, such as Sunday School teaching. The proximity of the ABM Hostel, which remained until 1938, had a significant impact on the life of the parish.

In 1942 as WWII raged across the Pacific a number of Anglican mission workers in New Guinea were martyred – the remembrance of which we have continued here in Saint Alban's in our Martyrs Chapel, in a window, and in our annual service in early September, particularly because two of the martyrs had been parishioners here while at the ABM Hostel. After the initial shock of the deaths of the missionaries, their witness became an inspiration to others and generated in the post-war period an increased interest in missionary service.

The 1960s and 70s saw some resetting of the vision and direction for ABM and the laying of the foundation for a respectful relationship with newly emerging partner churches. In the 1980s ABM expanded its outreach to Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Zambia as well as the existing partners in the Pacific. The ongoing support for the Diocese of Jerusalem began in the first decades of 20th Century.



There was another name change, in 1993, to the Anglican Board of Mission (singular); and the early 21st century saw the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council (NATSIC) become a key partner for ABM.

In 2021, ABM formed an additional entity: Anglicans in Development (AID) to operate the Sustainable Communities program working with church partners to deliver grassroots, community-driven development.

The current Executive Director, The Reverend Dr John Deane, writing in a recent parish magazine of Saint James, King Street parish, about how the structure of ABM has evolved and changed over time, says: *At the start, ABM's engagement in mission bore most of the hallmarks (and prejudices) of its colonial context. However, in the post WWII period, with the emergence of new nations and autonomous churches, partnerships began to emerge as ABM's primary modality of missionan integrated (spiritual and physical) approach ... the impact of these shifts in three words – invitation, hospitality and relationship."*

Saint Alban's as a parish, and individual members of the parish, continue a close association with ABM. It is our Mission of the Month during Lent; parishioners have been members of the ABM Auxiliary over the years. Parishioner Margaret Foster is a member and a previous President, and parishioner Jane Bryant is the current President. Jane contributes articles on the focus and fund-raising of the Sydney Auxiliary in various editions of *The Parish Magazine*.

I am currently Secretary of the ABM Sydney Diocesan Committee. One of the Committee's roles is the organisation of the annual Martyrs Day Service in September. The Service moves between a number of parishes and in 2026 it will be held in Saint Alban's on Saturday 5 September at 11am. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Just as the Bishops of Australia and New Zealand stepped out in faith to form ABM, so all those associated with ABM and AID step out in faith wanting to see people everywhere experience the wholeness of life God offers in Jesus Christ, supporting partners in God's mission and working for God's promise of love, hope and justice for all.

Prayer for the Anglican Board of Mission

God of all,
bless the Anglican Board of Mission
as it serves the Church in Australia
and our partner churches overseas.
Inspire its work and its vision
that all may come to know your justice,
your peace and your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(*A Prayer Book for Australia*, p 214)

References and Sources:

<https://www.abmission.org/>

Saint James' Connections, Celebrating 175 Years of ABM, October – November 2025 (Parish Magazine of Saint James, King Street, Sydney) <https://sjks.org.au/connections/>

The Parish Magazine No 882, November 2025 – January 2026.

Saint Alban's Archives – thank you to archivist Brian Haywood.

Saint Alban's parishioners – thank you to Margaret Foster and Jane Bryant.

Anglican Board of Mission Mosaic Exhibition and Sale

8 November 2025

Jane Bryant Parishioner and President of Sydney ABM Auxiliary

The Anglican Board of Mission Sydney Auxiliary held an exhibition, demonstration and sale of mosaics in the Saint Alban's Main Hall on Saturday 8 November 2025. The mosaics varied from mirrors, flowerpots, jewellery boxes, coasters, photo frames and small tabletops. These were all made by an Auxiliary member Margaret Lawther. During the exhibition, Margaret's friend Janice Edwards, gave a demonstration of how the mosaics are produced.



Jane Bryant



Examples of ceramic mosaic items



The ABM Auxiliary hosted this event to raise awareness of, and funds for, the Anglican Board of Mission Reconciliation Fund. This Fund supports Indigenous Christian Leaders in Northern Australia and other areas, including the Reverend Aunty Gloria Shipp and her Walkabout Ministry in Western New South Wales.

The Auxiliary served light refreshments which added to the occasion. The event was supported by Saint Alban's parishioners as well as visitors from other parishes. The Auxiliary were grateful to Saint Alban's for the use of the hall and kitchen. An amount of \$511.50 was raised on the day.



ABOVE: Small ceramic pieces ready to be glued onto the chosen item



RIGHT: Janice Edwards beginning work on a tabletop

Celebratory Events for ABM 175 Years

Jane Bryant Parishioner and President of Sydney ABM Auxiliary



Peggy Sanders, Secretary of the ABM Sydney Diocesan Committee (LEFT) with Jane Bryant President of the ABM Auxiliary

During October 2025 ABM supporters across Australia held various events to celebrate the 175th Anniversary.

In Sydney on Tuesday 28 October, over sixty supporters, Auxiliary members, staff, and partners met at Christ Church Saint Laurence. In the morning, ABM Executive Director The Reverend Dr John Deane gave an informative history of ABM, and the way its mission has changed from sending missionaries overseas and within Australia, to now strengthening and supporting local and overseas initiatives in ministry, education, health and community development.

Following this, all the attendees were able to contribute to a history timeline, filling in their own, or their parents', or grandparents' involvement with ABM. After lunch we were all divided into three rotating groups to discuss the future of mission in Australia, and overseas with our Anglican Communion partners. Ideas as to how ABM can inspire the Australian Anglican Church towards mission were also raised. The groups' discussions will assist the staff and the ABM Board plan for the future. The day concluded with Evening Prayer in the church and a 'Myanmar Roadshow' similar to that which was held at Saint Alban's several years ago. This highlighted Myanmar food, and included talks from ABM Pilgrims to Myanmar. The Bishop of Toungoo spoke about the current situation in Myanmar and the church's work. Parishioner Margaret Foster joined me for the day at Christ Church Saint Laurence which we both found to be very interesting and informative.

On Wednesday 29 October ABM organised two tour groups to places of significant interest for supporters. On a wet morning, I joined the group at Saint John's Glebe where we heard about the Scarred Tree Ministries to our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters. We then walked with Larissa Minniecon, ABM's Truth Telling and Reconciliation Missioner, to Tranby College in Glebe, where we had an informative tour of the college and enjoyed morning tea. ABM was involved with the establishment of this National Indigenous Adult Training Centre in 1957 through the work of The Reverend Alf Clint. We viewed the library, a yarnning circle, computer room and study areas.

On Wednesday morning, parishioner Jan Boyley joined a tour of Gawura School. This school is situated within Saint Andrew's Cathedral School and caters for 42 First Nations children from Kindergarten to Year 6, after which the children are offered scholarships to continue their secondary education at Saint Andrew's. This school was established in 2007 with an emphasis on high standards of literacy, numeracy and social skills. The Wiradjuri language is taught at Gawura and in the Saint Andrew's Junior School.

The 175th Celebratory Events in Sydney concluded on Wednesday 29 October 2025 with Choral Evensong in Saint James, King Street where the preacher was The Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith, who was at that date the Archbishop of Adelaide and the Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia. The Choral Evensong was attended by many ABM supporters from around Australia, and many representatives of the ABM Partner churches. From the 'Call to Worship' with the sound of the conch shell (a traditional communication method across the Pacific) to the final words of the hymn 'O praise ye the Lord!' this was an uplifting service of worship and giving thanks to God for all who have served through ABM, past and present.

The Service was followed by the Celebratory Dinner in the Strangers Function Room of the NSW Parliament House, another opportunity to mark this milestone, and to recognise the work of many individuals who have served ABM, and to join with the ABM Partners and supporters from near and far. Most importantly, the gathering was an opportunity to renew the vision of God's mission and to look to where He may now be calling and leading the Anglican Board of Mission. The Reverend Dr John Deane and Ms Larisa Minniecon spoke to this - 'Into the Future - Weaving the Mat' - addressing the programmes aiming to strengthen its mission within Australia.

In 2025, a total of \$2,400 was raised by the Sydney ABM Auxiliary for the Reconciliation Project Fund supporting Aboriginal leaders, such as The Reverend Gloria Shipp and her Walkabout Ministries.

Remembering (Robert) Bruce Wilson

15 December 1932 – 18 November 2025

The Reverend Paul Weaver and Malcolm Lawn Parishioner



The Reverend Paul Weaver writes:

It was a great privilege to preach at the funeral for Bruce Wilson, held at Saint Alban's, after he died last November not long before his 93rd birthday. I have known Bruce and the family since 1974, when I was billeted with them for a Moore College Mission in the parish. He played an active part in the life of the Epping Parish for over sixty years, with a special contribution to its musical life. He and I played piano duets as part of my annual fundraising piano concerts for more than eighteen years – a special experience of making music together.

My wife, Sarah, and I also enjoyed being part of the Saturday afternoon tennis group with Bruce. As I said at the funeral, Bruce was a quiet, gentle and generous person, as well as a loving husband, father and grandfather. He had clear ideas but didn't force them on people. He had a strong steady Christian faith, which he sought to live out in his life. When asked to give a talk on a favourite Bible verse, Bruce chose the shortest verse in the Bible: John 11.35 – "*Jesus wept*". It was a reminder that Jesus was a real human, a person of flesh and blood, with real emotions and feelings.

We are very thankful for Bruce and his wonderful contribution to the life of the parish, especially his musical contribution as organist, choir director and choir member. And we offer our Christian love and sympathy to his wife Ida and their family.

In thinking about how best to pay tribute to Bruce in this edition of *The Parish Magazine*, we located an article from *The Parish Magazine* Number 834 April–May 2015 pp 16-17, entitled "The Two of Us – at the Piano" (available on Parish website) and another from *The Parish Magazine* Number 855 February–April 2019 pp18-19 written by Malcolm Lawn, based on an interview with Bruce. It is reproduced below.

Malcolm Lawn wrote the following article and much of it is in Bruce's own words:

When Saint Alban's suddenly found itself without a choir director late in 2017, Bruce Wilson stepped up to fill the role while the church searched for a permanent replacement. This search took longer and was more difficult than anyone anticipated. Meanwhile, through Bruce's efforts the choir continued in its greatly appreciated role, contributing to worship at Saint Alban's. I took a moment with Bruce to talk about his long association with Saint Alban's and his contribution to music in the Parish.

I first asked Bruce about his background in music. He said he had always shown interest in the piano. "*Whenever I saw one, my itchy fingers were always tempted to try it out. My grandmother had a piano but after my parents bought one I started lessons at a convent in Newcastle at the age of ten years. My father was a teacher and so to gain his promotions the family moved to various country locations where fortunately I was able to continue piano lessons usually at the local convent as in Orange and Conra but also in Bowral where the teacher was the funeral director as well as being the organist at Saint Jude's.*"

Despite his passion and talent Bruce never had any ambition to make it his profession. *"In my second last year at High School at Cowra, I was offered a scholarship to study piano at the Sydney Conservatorium on the basis of results in the old piano Grade 7 AMEB exam. This was very tempting. However, the decision was made to decline the offer and complete the Leaving Certificate and then enrol in the Faculty of Dentistry at Sydney University. I rationalised that I would have an interesting profession with music as a good relaxation. I have never regretted that decision. After graduation, I was working in the Broken Hill Mines Dental Clinic and boarding with a family who had a piano. I was able then to prepare for and gain my A.Mus.A in performance. In doing so it was necessary for two examiners to come to Broken Hill specifically to examine me!"*

Bruce continued: *"My interest in choral music developed while still at school. I accompanied the school choir, and I accompanied many singers and instrumentalists over the years. I have sung in and conducted various church and secular choirs over more than sixty years."*

Bruce and Ida first came to Saint Alban's in June 1962. *"We purchased our first home in Lewis Street, Epping. I had established my dental practice in Castle Hill in February 1961 and by the following year we chose Epping for our home. We came with two small children but by 1968 we had four which is when we moved to our present residence in Pennant Parade."*

Bruce joined the choir soon after arriving at Saint Alban's in 1962, contributing to the choir and worship at Saint Alban's for a remarkable fifty-seven years. A few years later, during the 1970s, he took the opportunity to learn the organ under Christa Rumsey who was then the organist at Saint Alban's. *"It has been a special privilege to be involved with the choir for many years as a bass, accompanist and director. Each of our choir directors over the years has made a significant contribution to our choir. I appreciate that we have expanded our repertoire, have learned aspects of voice production and have learned to appreciate a wide range of choral music and in doing so have enhanced the music and liturgy of Saint Alban's. At the same time the choir has keenly participated in the preparation of our choral music."*

One of Bruce's most significant contributions to music in the Parish was the acquisition of our Létourneau organ and the construction of the choir gallery. *"It was realised that the previous organ was not coping with the large congregation especially as it was located in what is now the chapel adjacent to the sanctuary. I was appointed convenor of the organ subcommittee in 1976 which oversaw the purchase and installation of our organ. The organ was promoted as a Tribute to the Past—Endowment for the Future."*

"As well, the major decision was made to build the gallery from which the organ and choir would greatly support the congregation. It was an exciting time, generating many opinions for and against the plan. The organ was installed in October 1981. At the same time the giving to missions beyond the church increased significantly."

Finally, I asked Bruce about how he would like to see our choir develop in the future. *"Choral music is part of the DNA of Saint Alban's - may that tradition long continue. As Psalm 150 says: Let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord."*



Bruce's family and friends gathered to farewell him



Sounds of Young Hearts
Co-founders Recital
12.30pm Sunday 16 November 2025
St Alban's Hall, 3 Pembroke St, Epping

Prelude & Fugue No 3 in C-sharp major BWV872 — JS Bach
Sonata No 23 Op57 in F minor — Beethoven
i. *Allegro assai*
Transcendental Etude No 11 "Harmonies du soir" — Liszt

Eukai Miao (piano)

♦

Minor Momentum — M Walton
Aria — E Bozza

Jervis Lee (saxophone)

♦

Concert Etude No 3 "Un Sospiro" — Liszt
Rhapsody in Blue — Gershwin

Isabel Li (piano)

All donations go to St Alban's

Sounds of Young Hearts (SoYH) was founded by three enthusiastic high school students, who wish to contribute to the community and beyond by bringing music around with talented young musicians. We are dedicated to delivering high-standard performances while providing performance opportunities to those with music dreams. We aim to support the young generation's music education by hosting regular charity concerts.

Thank you for supporting our young musicians!

Program for the Recital



Isabel Li

Sounds of Young Hearts is a group founded by three enthusiastic secondary school students who want to contribute to their community and beyond by enabling talented musicians to entertain with their music. The group is dedicated to delivering enjoyable and high standard performances while providing opportunities for talented performers to showcase their work. While they also want to support the education of young musicians by regularly holding charity concerts, the donations raised at the concert at Saint Alban's on 16 November 2025 were given to the Church. The three young people are: Isabel Li - one of the Saint Alban's Organ Scholars, Eukai Miao and Jervis Lee. All who attended greatly enjoyed the concert and were impressed by the skill of the performers. \$325 was raised for Saint Alban's.



ABOVE: Eukai Miao at the piano



RIGHT: Jervis Lee

Karibu* from Kenya

Ian and Theano Ratcliff

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



Ian and Theano Ratcliff with Trinity and Ollie

Editor's Note: Ian and his parents, David and Jan Ratcliff, were longstanding parishioners of Saint Alban's from 2002 – 2015, Jan also in the 1960s; and Ian 1995 – 2001 as well as being an occasional visitor after this. Ian was a member of the Saint Alban's choir, was on the Reading Roster and was a volunteer in the Parish Office among other ministries. According to Ian, *Karibu means 'welcome' but it is a word that is used when you are inviting someone into your house, offering tea, asking someone to sit down, or in response to someone thanking you. It has a range of uses beyond the mere translation.

Trinity and Ollie started their new school year in August 2025 (American school year). They are in grades 5 and 2 now. They participated in after-school clubs for last term. Ollie loved Futsal and Trinity enjoyed baking club!

For Ollie's 8th birthday party, we hired a huge bouncing castle for the day, and the kids had a blast bouncing for ten hours straight! The family is pictured enjoying the party

Environmental Action

The **Season of Creation** is a time when the church joins together in prayer and action for our common home, Earth! Ian presented at our local church, Renewal (pictured right) affirming the mandate to ensure that our environment thrives and flourishes. There was an incredibly positive response to the call to commit to "Act Local". Watch interview here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V80XdzF144s>

In September 2025, Ian attended the Micah Global Consultation. The theme was "Walking Together in Hope". Ian has already begun collaborating with other organisations; planning education and training for 2026, culminating in a Kenya's Mazingira (Environment) Day event.



Ian sharing at Renewal church, Nairobi, on the Season of Creation: a call for prayer and action!

In December, Ian represented the World Evangelical Alliance and SIM International at the United Nations Environment Assembly, happening here in Nairobi. This was an amazing opportunity to engage with decision makers and other faith organisations who care about protecting and restoring our environment.

While we are in Australia May–July 2026 we'd **LOVE** to come and speak at Saint Albans, or to a Bible study, prayer or community group.

We feel that God is leading us to stay in Kenya for another two-year term (until 2028)! This is exciting for us as a family to keep building on what God has been doing in and through us.

If you would like to support or get in touch with us, you can contact us via <https://sim.org.au/ratcliff/>. Our work has been approved with SIMaid, SIM Australia's aid and development arm. Donations for our support are now tax deductible in Australia.

Editor's Note: Ian and Theano will be visiting Saint Alban's while they are in Australia. More information will appear in the Weekly Bulletin when details are finalised.

Guest Preachers at Saint Alban's



The Reverend Eric Cheung, Senior Minister at St Phil's Eastwood, preached on 19 October 2025
He was warmly welcomed by parishioners



Michael Walsh from Voice of the Martyrs, preached on 2 November 2025
He is pictured with the Sanctuary Party and the Saint Alban's Choir



The Reverend Michael Robinson [LEFT], preached on 21 December 2025 at Saint Alban's, and on 28 December 2025 he presided and preached when the Rector was on leave



The Reverend Bruce Hunter and his wife Carol were welcomed back to Saint Alban's when the Rector was on leave and Bruce preached and presided on 4 January 2026



Jennifer Farrer

Herbs in the Bible

Until fairly recently every plant not listed as a fruit tree was considered to be a herb. The practice of separating a garden of useful plants from ornamental plants is only recent. To-day we value herbs mostly for their use in cooking but throughout history they have had many uses.

1. Religious and celebration - for purification, decoration and incense
2. Medicine - remedies for diseases were essentially herbal.
However, the use of herbs for healing was inextricably woven with their religious significance. Potions were administered with incantations and prayers to pagan gods and later Christian saints. Today's pharmacology traces its roots back to Galens, a Roman physician from the second century of the Common Era, *Materia medica*. Many modern drugs have been developed from the study of herbs e.g. aspirin was developed from the active ingredient in meadowsweet.
3. Magic - traditionally herb lore has been handed down by practice and word of mouth. This knowledge has been based on faith in the power of the particular plant. Beyond that the attendant magic becomes all powerful, and becomes linked with knowledge of astrology, saints and demonology. e.g. some herbs could only be gathered during certain phases of the moon, or times of day, no iron could touch the plant, plants were credited with supernatural powers etc e.g. mandrake.
4. Dyeing - woad, walnut, saffron, safflower, madder and indigo.
5. Strewing - rushes mixed with herbs were spread over earth and stone floors to create warmth and to deter vermin. Flea repellent or antiseptic herbs such as juniper, wormwood, fleabane, fennel, mints, woodruff, pennyroyal, rue and tansy were used.
6. Culinary - to flavour stews, salads and beverages.

The range of herbs which can be grown is vast. Today we will look at ten of the herbs which are mentioned in the Bible. The first three, dill, cumin and mint, were important herbs in New Testament times as the priests of the Temple required one tenth of the harvest to be given to the Temple [Matthew 23:23].

Cumin – Matthew 23:23 and Isaiah 28:27

Cumin has been cultivated in the Holy Lands from very early times. The spicy aromatic seeds have long been used to enhance the flavour of wine, cheese, goat, lamb and bread. Cumin was used by the Israelites as a healing aid after circumcision. Medieval herbalists prescribed cumin as a treatment for headaches, colic and flatulence. Cumin seeds are still valued by some as a cure for indigestion. A poultice of bruised seeds is said to be effective in drawing out splinters and boils. Other uses of cumin have included the distilled oil of the seed being used as a carrier in blending perfumes and as a liniment. By far the most popular use of the seed today is as a component of curry powder.

Dill – Matthew 23:23

Dill comes from the Norse word - *dilla* meaning 'to lull'. This refers to this herb's calming action. In Biblical times dill grew wild in Palestine but once it began to be cultivated, the crop had to be taxed and a tenth of its value given to The Temple. The Greek word for dill is *anethon* which was mistakenly translated in the Authorised version as anise. Dill's medicinal use goes back to a papyrus written in 2000BC. It has been used to promote lactation in nursing mothers and to cure colic and flatulence. It was an essential ingredient in gripe water for infants. The seeds, flowers and leaves have been a very popular culinary aid. Cabbage cooked with dill seeds is supposed to be easier to digest. Dill seeds are an ideal accompaniment for oily fish. In Northern Europe dill seeds are used to pickle cucumbers and fish (gravlax).

Dill seeds along with similar seeds, such as fennel seeds, were given to children to chew in church to keep them alert in long sermons and hence known as 'meeting seeds'. Dill is an annual herb. As it resents having its tap root disturbed, it is best to be sown in situ. It developed as a field plant and is happy growing with other plants to give it support. It needs full sun and plenty of moisture to flourish.

Mint – Matthew 23:23, Luke 11:42

There are 25 species of mint and the plant's tendency to hybridise has led to many more varieties which are often difficult to identify. The Biblical mint is thought to be horsemint. (Spearmint is thought to be a hybrid of horsemint and apple mint.) It would have been cultivated along the moist banks of streams and like dill and cumin was a taxable crop. It was used as a strewing herb in the synagogues and was one of the bitter herbs of the Passover feast.

The Roman gourmet Marcus Apicius, who wrote a cookery book in 80 BC, includes mint (fresh and dried) in nearly every recipe. It seems that the Romans fitted the use of mint into almost every aspect of their lives. Mint is recommended for calming the nerves and the stomach and as a general tonic. An infusion of mint has been used as a remedy for sore throats, coughs and bronchial troubles. Mint is one of the world's most popular herbs being consistently used in cordials, confectionery and toothpaste. I think that it was an attempt to distil peppermint oil from Sydney Peppermint Gum leaves that led Denis Considen (a surgeon on the First Fleet) to instead discover Eucalyptus oil in 1788. [<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/considen-dennis-1916>]

Mint needs moisture to thrive but does not like shade or soggy soil. Many people grow mint in containers to stop it from taking over the garden. Mints lose their flavour once the stem has flowered. Some cuisines prefer dried to fresh mint. Mint flavour is lost in cooking, so it is usually added at the last moment.

Bay – 1 Corinthians 9:25, Psalm 37:35

The Romans crowned athletes, emperors and poets with a wreath of plaited bay leaves as a sign of victory, glory and peace. This is the corruptible crown which Saint Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians 9:25. The Romans also affixed bay sprigs to good news. The bay of ancient times was dedicated to Apollo, the god of healing and prophecy. The priestesses at Delphi would chew bay leaves before relating a prophecy from Apollo. They may have induced a trance like state as large doses of bay leaves are slightly narcotic. The bay tree's reputation as a tree of prophecy was taken very seriously. If the bay tree withered or became sickly it was thought to signal impending disaster.

The Romans believed that the heavy aromatics of the bay tree gave resistance to contagious disease. Early herbalists prescribed an infusion of bay leaves in white wine to treat bronchitis and influenza. An infusion of the berries was used to treat rheumatism and as a diuretic. The berries also yield an aromatic oil which is used in massage and perfumery. Bay trees still grow on Mt Carmel in Israel. Bay trees will grow in either partial shade or full sun. They grow particularly well in containers and can be clipped to shape. The flavour is released best if the leaves are torn. Bay is a very good herb for drying and there is dispute as to whether the best flavour comes from dried or fresh leaves.

Cinnamon – Exodus 30:23, Proverbs 7:17, Song of Solomon 4:14, Revelation 18:13, Ezekiel 27:19

Cinnamon comes from the bark of trees in the *Cinnamomum* genus which belongs to the Laurel family and is a native of Sri Lanka. It grows best in constant rain and heat. It can grow to 12 metres high. The inner bark of the young twigs of the tree yields the best quality cinnamon for culinary purposes. The bark naturally curls on harvesting and is known as cinnamon quills.

In Biblical times cinnamon was one of the true exotics of the spice world. It travelled through the hands of many traders, mostly Arabs and Phoenicians, by boat and camel caravan. In Proverbs there is a description of using cinnamon with other aromatics to perfume a bed. The Romans valued cinnamon more than gold. It was too expensive to use in cooking but was used to flavour wines. This practice continues today e.g. gluhwein and chai tea. The Arab monopoly on the cinnamon trade was broken by the Portuguese when they discovered the sea route to the Spice Islands. Their monopoly was broken by the Dutch and then the French who smuggled some cuttings to their own territories. Cinnamon has been used medicinally to stimulate appetite, to relieve the pains of flatulence and allay vomiting.

Coriander – Exodus 16:31, Numbers 11:7

Coriander has a long record of use. It is mentioned in Sanskrit texts and on Egyptian papyri. The Israelites knew it well from their time in captivity in Egypt as they compared the taste of the manna in the wilderness with coriander. Romans were particularly fond of coriander and included the seeds in almost all of their dishes, especially breads, stews and wine. The word coriander comes from the old Greek word for 'bed bug' or 'stink bug' because of its similar smell. Many people find the smell of coriander leaves offensive. The leaves have a totally

different flavour and cannot be substituted for the seeds. The roots are also used in Thai cooking. To-day coriander seeds are used as an ingredient in curry dishes. The leaves are used in soups and salads. Coriander seedlings tend to 'bolt' when transplanted. The only way to overcome this is to grow it from seed in situ.

Garlic – Numbers 11:5-6

Garlic has been known and used as a culinary and medicinal herb throughout the ages. It is surprising that it is only mentioned once in the Bible. This is in the book of Numbers when the Israelites yearn for the food they used to enjoy in Egypt. Herodotus says that garlic was one of the staple foods of the pyramid builders who were more than likely Hebrew. One of the first industrial disputes ever recorded occurred when the pyramids were being built. As a cost cutting measure the supplies of garlic were withheld from the workers and they protested about it. Garlic was consumed in large quantities by the Greeks and Romans who ate it as a food in its own right.

Garlic has long been associated with folklore and superstitions. It was believed to deter vampires and bad spirits. Young girls wore garlands of garlic because of its supposed aphrodisiacal properties. A necklace of garlic was also used to help whooping cough until fairly recent times. The Israelites valued it as a remedy for intestinal worms and to combat melancholy. Its antiseptic properties were confirmed by Louis Pasteur in a study conducted in 1858. Syrup of garlic was once an important remedy for coughs and colds, and many people still take garlic tablets to treat colds and bronchitis. Relatively recent research has confirmed that garlic can help with some forms of heart disease as it reduces blood cholesterol levels. Garlic is usually grown as an annual from individual cloves planted at the end of winter. It is harvested when the flower dies and the leaves turn yellow. It is also an important companion plant which has the ability to repel airborne and soil borne pests.

Juniper – 1 Kings 5:3-6, 9-11, Leviticus 14:4, 49-52, Numbers 19:6

Some of the cedar references in the Bible are not to the cedars of Lebanon. The references in Leviticus and Numbers refer to the times when the Israelites were in the wilderness of the Sinai Desert where the species of cedar growing is more likely to have been one of several species of juniper. This 'cedar' was specified to be used in several cleansing rituals. The medicinal properties of juniper were recognised for centuries. The leaves are antiseptic and have been used for dressing wounds. Hospitals once used smouldering juniper branches to fumigate wards. It has also been used to treat rheumatism, joint swellings and bladder complaints. Juniper berries are actually the female cone of the plant and have long been used to flavour game meats. Its most famous use is in the manufacture of gin.



Jennifer brought samples of the herbs she mentioned in her presentation

Mustard – Mark 4:30-32, Luke 17:6

The parable of the mustard seed in the Gospel of Mark is the most well-known reference to mustard. The mustard seed referred to is probably black mustard. Modern black mustard plants will grow to a height of two metres – hardly sufficient to provide shelter for birds. However, travellers to the Holy Lands record seeing mustard plants growing as high as five metres. Similar stories of large mustard plants are found in ancient Jewish and Babylonian texts. It may be that black mustard grew much larger in the wild than it does in cultivation.

Mustard seeds, leaves and oil were appreciated all over the ancient world by the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians. This is still the case throughout the world today. Amongst condiments, mustard is a close second to pepper in terms of world-wide consumption. Black mustard seed is the one used in French mustard. As a medicine, mustard has been used as far back as early Roman times when Hippocrates recommended mustard as an internal medicine and as a poultice, the ancient Greeks used it to treat chilblains, bruises and rheumatism. Hot poultices of ground seeds or mustard plasters have been useful in the treatment of pneumonia, rheumatism and bronchitis. Mustard is known to be an effective anti-bacterial and anti-fungal agent. Mustard is propagated from seed. If the plant is to be used as salad greens it can be grown throughout the year but if it is to be harvested for seed, it would be sown in Spring.

Wormwood – Lamentations 3:15, Revelations 8:11

The genus name for wormwood is *Artemisia* which comes from the Greek name for Diana, the goddess of maternity and chastity. The most likely reason for this is that at one stage wormwood was used as a treatment for menstrual problems. Tarragon is also a species of *Artemisia*. The classic characteristic of wormwood is bitterness. The Bible has many examples of bitterness represented by wormwood. “*He hath filled me with bitterness. He hath made me drunken with wormwood*” [Lamentations 3:15].

A popular use of wormwood in medieval times was as a strewing herb. Its antiseptic leaves were slow to break down, thus providing long lasting protection from fleas and other vermin. The flower heads of wormwood contain a volatile oil which when distilled is a bright green colour and is used in liqueurs, aperitifs and vermouth. The flowers also contain a hallucinogen called absinthine. This is an essential ingredient in the lethal brew known as absinthe which became very popular amongst the artistic set in France during the Belle Epoque. It was outlawed in 1915.

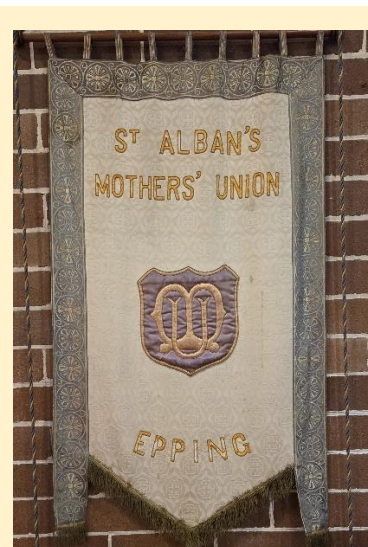
Medicinally it was recommended as a treatment for intestinal worms. It is an excellent deterrent for moths and silverfish when hung in clothing cupboards. A common folk custom was to rub children’s hands with wormwood to stop them sucking their thumbs. Monastic scribes used to mix wormwood with their ink to deter mice from chewing the parchment. Wormwood grows from a creeping rootstock. It needs to be cut back after flowering. It tends to inhibit the growth of other plants, so you need to choose a place for it to grow carefully. When planted as a border it is said to keep other plants out of the garden.

Source: Blair Montague-Drake *A Biblical Herbal – The greatest herbal story ever told* Published by Earth Images 1997



Editor’s Note:

Jennifer’s presentation was very much enjoyed and appreciated by those in attendance at the Mothers Union Brunch. In the photo [LEFT] Jennifer was thanked by Elizabeth Jenkins, the President of the Saint Alban’s Mothers Union.



**Saint Alban’s
Mothers Union Banner**

Everyday English End-of-Year and Christmas Celebration

Rema Gnanadickam Parishioner

On 3 December 2025, the Everyday English group, teachers - students and helpers - got together for an end-of-year and Christmas celebration.

Instead of the usual classes that day, students were invited to a short service in the Church conducted by Father Phil and ably assisted by Sarah Weaver. Before this date, for a few weeks, students had been practising two carols: *Away in a Manger* and *Silent Night*.



Teachers and students gathered for an informal Christmas service and the Rector told them about Christmas

The service, perhaps the first of our Christmas celebrations in the Church, commenced with Father Phil welcoming everyone into the Church and giving a short introduction to the Christmas story. We sang the two carols, accompanied on the organ by Father Paul Weaver. Father Phil then showed a video of a Sunday School Nativity presentation, which told the story quite simply. It was a significant occasion to have our students participating in an act of worship in our Church.

We then repaired to the Hall, where a festive table with all the Christmas goodies and food contributed by the students was laid out.



Jess and Jasmine's class performed *Edelweiss*

The celebration commenced with Jasmine and Jess Li's class of Early Beginners, performing the song *Edelweiss* from *The Sound of Music*.

At the request of these students, this class had practised the English version of the song, which they performed very well for us, accompanied by Father Paul on the piano.

Helen, one of our students, entertained us with some Christmas carols and some popular Chinese numbers performed on a very versatile Chinese-style recorder. Helen had come prepared with background music to accompany her performance, and it was delightful.

We then sat around various tables decorated with Christmas decorations and bonbons and enjoyed both the food and company. We hope that many of the students will return on 4 February 2026, when classes resume.



Everyone enjoyed a festive Christmas lunch



Helen delighted listeners with her recorder renditions

We would like to make special mention of Graeme who has assisted immensely with all the logistics of conducting these English classes these past three years. He gave unstintingly of his time and assisted us with hall arrangements, equipment, attendance records and in myriad other ways.

We are grateful for all the time that he gave to us in helping run these classes, an important outreach of Saint Albans's. We are hopeful that someone will step up from the Parish in 2026 and continue the great work that Graeme has been doing. We promise to train the person up gently!

Everyday English classes are held at Saint Alban's each Wednesday during NSW school terms. The classes are from 10.00am to 12.00pm. Classes cater for all levels of spoken English and new students are always welcome.

Any parishioner who would like to assist in any way with the Everyday English classes is invited to speak to Rema Gnanadickam, Jess Li or the Parish Administrator, Denise Pigot.



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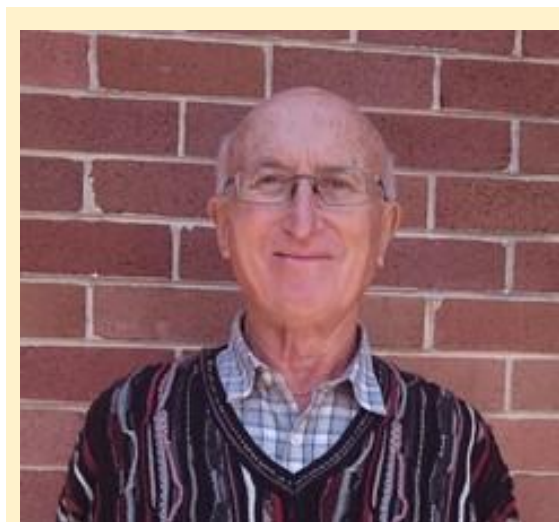
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From the Saint Alban's Archives

Brian Haywood Archivist



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 Parish Magazine* written by the then editor Nigel Hubbard.

Let us continue our journey Around our Parish Church.

Around Our Parish Church Number 12 – The Saint Alban's Archives Room

[Reference: page 6

The Epping Parish Magazine Oct – Nov 1985]

Copies of the three books mentioned at the end of this item can be seen in the Church Office or the Archives.

ST. ALBAN'S ARCHIVES ROOM

St. Alban's Historical and Archives Committee was established by the Parish Council in 1976 and immediately set about the task of restoring and preserving the parish's historical records. It was decided to utilise the space under the organ chamber, as an archives room and this was dedicated by Bishop Cameron at the Patronal Festival 1977. Then and at subsequent Patronal Festivals, many people have taken the opportunity to inspect the room and its holdings. Briefly, these are:

1. Baptism, wedding and funeral registers, complete from 1892;
2. Minute books of Parish Council, Church Committee, Ministers' Fraternal, Sub-Committees — virtually complete.
3. Service registers (from 1892, missing one volume 1912-1933);
4. Parish Magazines in bound volumes. Almost complete 1930 to date; some issues 1928-29;
5. Account books and financial records — almost complete;
6. The correspondence files of the church;
7. A large collection of photographs of St. Alban's, Epping district, church activities, clergy, laymen, etc.;
8. Printed matter — a number of parish histories; Diocesan Year-books;
9. Official documents, contracts, faculties, plans and working drawings;
10. A quantity of printed and photographic material concerning Alban, the first British martyr and St. Alban's Abbey in England;
11. Miscellaneous material — newscuttings, weekly bulletins, programmes of stewardship campaigns, past jubilees; records of organisations such as the scouts, the servers and the choir.

The Historical Committee is always anxious to enlarge and improve its holdings. If you possess any additional material which you feel may be of value, please contact Nigel Hubbard (85 6902) or Bruce Martin (86 3492). If you wish to retain the original, copying can be arranged.

The Historical Committee has also produced three books on the history of St. Alban's and these are available from St. Alban's Church, 3 Pembroke Street, Epping, 2121. Each is \$2.00 plus 85c postage.

**Fourscore: A Short History of St. Alban's Epping
Clergy of St. Alban's Epping
Almost a Martyr's Fire": Everard Digges La Touche,
1883-1915.**

Men's Barbecue Group

20 November 2025



The Men's Barbecue Group meets once a month, on the third Thursday, in the Seminar Room, to enjoy fellowship. All men in the Parish are welcome to attend.

Each person brings his own drinks, and meat for the barbecue, as well as a salad or side dish to share.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Jonathan Malota, Ross Beattie, Rev Paul Weaver, Rev Phil Lui, Colin Jones, Stephen Ford, Giles Rowling, Mark Gibbs, Keith Ryan, William Grove and Brian Haywood [partially obscured]. The photographer was John Griffin-Miller, also a member of the group.

Baptism Service

11 January 2026

On 11 January 2026 Saint Alban's parishioners welcomed baby Jack Malota, pictured below with his parents parishioners Laura and Jonathan, and godparents, after his baptism by the Rector Phil Lui.



Parish Directory

Rector	The Reverend Philip Lui BAppSc, BD
Honorary Priest	The Reverend Paul Weaver BA,BD,ThL, AmusA
Assistant Minister (part-time)	Bill Walton BEng (Hons), BD (Hons), PhD Student University of Sydney
Student Ministers	Doris Awad BA, BEd, BTh Student at Moore Theological College Gloria Walton BMed/MD (Hons), BTh/MTh Student Moore Theological College Aimee Wong BMus, MA, BTh Student Moore Theological College David Wong BSc, ACA, Adv Dip Student Moore Theological College
Indonesian Congregation	Pastor Kian Holik BSc, MTS
Lay Assistant	Ruth Shatford AM (Diocesan)
Sanctuary Assistants, Servers, Readers and Intercessors	Godfrey Abel, Sue Armitage, Ron Arnold, Ross Beattie, Licette Bedna, Pranat Bhonsle, 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, Christina Thompson, John Thompson, Kim Turner, James von Stieglitz, Sarah Weaver
Sacristans	Ross Beattie, Mark Taylor, James von Stieglitz
Parish Administrator	Denise Pigot Telephone: 9876 3362 Email: office@eppinganglicans.org.au
Honorary Parish Treasurer	Shane Christie-David
Churchwardens	Elizabeth Jenkins – Rector’s Warden Noel Christie-David – People’s Warden David Tait – People’s Warden
Parish Councillors	Ken Bock OAM, Glyn Evans, Christine Murray, Peggy Sanders, Amy Taylor, Gillian Taylor, John Williams
Parish Nominators	Glyn Evans, Peggy Sanders, Ruth Shatford AM, James von Stieglitz
Synod Representatives	Doris Awad, Gillian Taylor
Safe Ministry Representative	Sarah Weaver
Music Director	Chris Czerwinski Perf. Dip., BMus, MMus (Birmingham), MMus (Sydney)
Assistant Organist	Christopher Wagstaff B.Mus (Hons, First Class), L.Mus
Organ Scholars	Isabel Li and Enoch Pan
Caretaker	Kari Hewitt
Editor	Julie Evans
Archivist	Brian Haywood
	Proof-readers Glyn Evans and Peggy Sanders

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