



## **TO BE ON EARTH THE HEART OF GOD**



**ST JOHN THE APOSTLE PARISH - KIPPAX ACT  
DECEMBER 2024**

# Time for Reflection



## Hospitality is the cornerstone of relationships

Hospitality is Heart Spirituality in action. It is more than just opening doors; it is about opening hearts. As Henri Nouwen beautifully expresses in *Reaching Out*, true hospitality creates a sacred space where strangers become bearers of gifts, and relationships deepen into transformative encounters. The biblical story of Abraham welcoming three strangers at Mamre is a profound example. His openness to offering food and rest to unknown visitors revealed a divine promise and blessing. Hospitality, therefore, is not merely a social custom but a spiritual practice—one that draws us closer to God and to one another.

In contrast, gossip closes this sacred space. It erects walls between people, distorts truth, and fosters mistrust. As Pope Francis reminds us, speaking ill of others “damages social bonds, poisons hearts, and leads nowhere.” Gossip undermines the unity and harmony necessary for a thriving ecclesial community. It shifts our focus from seeing the gifts others bring to magnifying their flaws or missteps. This distraction keeps us from living the joyful, fraternal harmony to which Christ calls us.

St. Paul’s exhortation in his letter to the Ephesians challenges us to use words that build up, not tear down. Words have immense power: they can create bridges or barriers, nourish relationships or erode them. To practice hospitality, we must also practice restraint in our speech, choosing kindness and truth over negativity and division.

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus emphasize this connection between hospitality and community life. Constitution number 32 calls for a spirit of family built on kindness, understanding, compassion, and mutual forgiveness. It is a vision where gentleness and humility prevail, where simplicity and humour lighten burdens, and where hospitality becomes a cornerstone of relationships. Such a spirit cannot coexist with gossip, which corrodes these values from within.

Hospitality invites us to see every encounter as an opportunity to reflect God’s love. Gossip, on the other hand, turns us inward, feeding pride and judgement. To choose hospitality over gossip is to choose to see Christ in the other, to nurture the bonds that make us a family in faith.

May we cultivate this spirit of hospitality in our words, actions, and attitudes, creating spaces where love, trust, and unity can flourish. Let us resolve to speak words that heal, welcome with hearts open wide, and become communities that reveal God’s blessings to the world.



# EDITOR'S NOTE

The season of Advent, spanning the four Sundays of December, invites us into a time of preparation for the birth of Christ. Traditionally, it is a season of “slow time,” where we are encouraged to step away from the busyness of life to meditate on the profound mystery of the Incarnation—God becoming human.

Yet, embracing slow time can feel countercultural amidst December’s whirlwind of parties, thanksgivings, endings, and transitions. How often do we find the space to truly contemplate the arrival of our Saviour?

St John the Apostle Primary School marked the end of another academic year with a Thanksgiving Mass on 6 December. Year 6 students celebrated their graduation on 11 December and now look forward to beginning high school in 2025.



On Friday, 27 December, we gathered for the Feast of St John the Apostle with a 9:30 a.m. Mass, followed by a shared morning tea. A special reflection on St John the Apostle and the Sacred Heart of Jesus can be found on page 7.

This month’s front cover showcases beautiful moments from our parish celebrations: the Christmas flowers, the Children’s Nativity at the 5:00 p.m. Mass, Carols by Candlelight on 20 December, and the parish foyer Nativity scene.



As we step into 2025, on behalf of the parish team, I extend to you a heartfelt blessing for the year ahead. May this new year be filled with the radiant light of Christ, guiding your path with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

May Hope lift your spirit, even in times of challenge.  
May Peace dwell deeply within your heart, bringing calm and renewal.  
May Joy overflow in your life, inspiring gratitude for each new day.  
May Love surround you and those dear to you, uniting us all in the embrace of God’s grace.  
May the presence of the Holy Spirit sustain you, and may you walk confidently into the future, trusting in the unfailing love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



Wishing you every blessing in 2025!

*Blessings*  
*Marian*



# December Baptisms

We welcome into the SJA Community Body of Christ.

The following children were baptised during the month of :

*Obieze Emmanuel IKENYI*

*Son of Anochirim & Francisca*



# December Death Notices

*Valerie Patterson*  
*26/04/54 - 05/12/24*



# LIFE IS A JOURNEY - 5 Day retreat

## with Fr. Chris McPhee msc

### March 10-15 2025

Life is a Journey Retreat is a reflective, prayerful excursion that contemplatively aligns our personal journeys with the journey of Jesus, focusing on transforming our past through the intimacy of God's love. It emphasizes healing, liberation, freedom, and spiritual growth by reframing our life experiences. The retreat aims to transform pain into love, leading to deeper intimacy and joy, love, in and through the heart of Christ Jesus.

**Opening: Welcoming session on Monday**

**Guided Reflections and Input: Reflecting on the life experiences of Jesus and making connections with our own.**

**Personal Journaling: Writing about personal experiences.**

**Meditation and Prayer: Seeking spiritual growth and healing**

**Rite of Forgiveness: Freeing what binds; letting go and embracing love.**

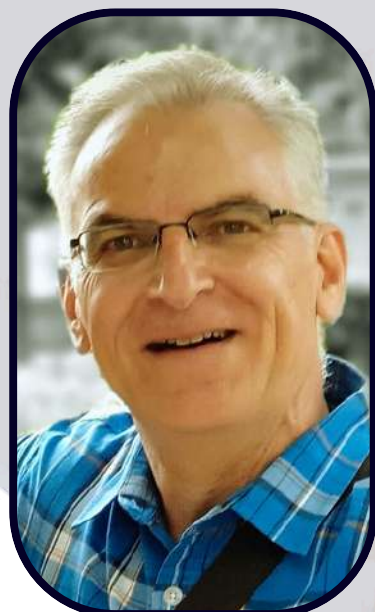
**Prayer Companion: One-on-one guidance.**

**Closing: Saturday before the evening Mass**

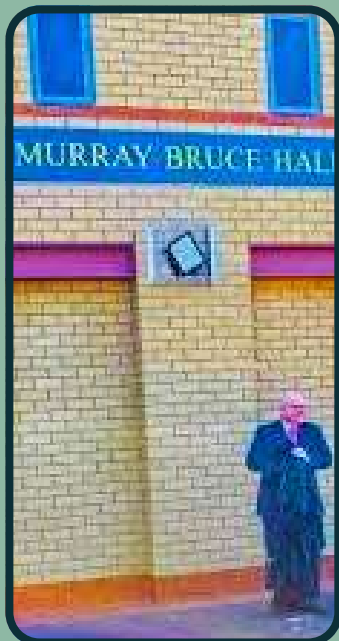
**Reflecting on the retreat and setting future intentions.**

Silence is a central part of this retreat; however, there will be times to share and interact with others on the retreat. The retreat can be for any adult.

**More information to follow in the new year.**



Fr. Chris R. McPhee, MSC, is a member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) in Australia. Born in 1960, he initially worked in banking before joining the MSC. He made his first vows on June 19, 1993, and was ordained on March 7, 1997. Chris has served in various capacities, including parish work in Erskineville, Sydney, and roles in the Justice office and Aboriginal ministry. He also worked in parishes in Henley Beach, Adelaide, Randwick, Sydney, and Kippax, Canberra. His academic pursuits took him to the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, where he studied at the Institute of Religious Formation. Chris' approach to retreats is deeply rooted in his extensive experience and education in religious formation. He has a particular talent for creating a welcoming and contemplative environment, allowing participants to deeply engage with their faith and spirituality. His retreats are known for their thoughtful structure, incorporating prayer, meditation, and discussions that encourage personal and communal reflection.



## THE MURRAY BRUCE SCHOOL HALL

You will be aware that Murray, our convenor, has enjoyed a stellar career in the education industry. This was acknowledged when he was named the "Principal of the Year" whilst the principal of the Gordon Primary School. He officially retired in 2021 but has continued his association with Canberra's education by working two days a week at Garran Primary.

As Murray retired at the height of the Covid 19 pandemic, the school was unable to give him an appropriate sendoff. Last week he and his family attended a ceremony to mark his retirement and to honour him by naming the school hall "The Murray Bruce School Hall"!

Murray, on behalf of all members of our dining group *[and the parish, ed.]*, I offer you our heartiest congratulations on being honoured by the school community which recognises the most significant contribution you made to the education of the children of Gordon and is an indication of the esteem the school holds for you. We salute you!

With admiration,

Rob Breen.

### Advent prayer

Hail and Blessed  
 be the hour and moment  
 at which the Son of God  
 was born – of the most pure  
 Virgin Mary at midnight  
 in Bethlehem in piercing cold.  
 At that same hour and moment,  
 vouchsafe O my God  
 to hear my prayers  
 and grant my petitions  
 through the merits of  
 Our Lord Jesus Christ  
 and of his Virgin Mother.

Amen.

Eamonn Murtagh

## In December

In December, the days  
seem to fall like dominoes;  
no sooner does the month start  
than you begin to feel as squeezed  
as an accordion.

Damn, you think, I'm yet to sit down  
and take up the plough  
of writing Christmas cards!  
In theory, they should be a pleasure;  
in practice, they can be a nightmare.

Then, of course, amid your work,  
there's the double whammy  
of cooking and shopping;  
depending on your family size  
and the probability  
your territory  
will be invaded by guests,  
this dual responsibility  
can loom larger  
than Santa Claus' belly!

Which is why it's wise to withdraw  
to an oasis of silence,  
to find a place of prayer  
where your batteries can be recharged  
by our loving Father,  
the One who sent us His only Son,  
born of the Spirit through Mary  
in a manger full of straw.

*Shane Murtagh*

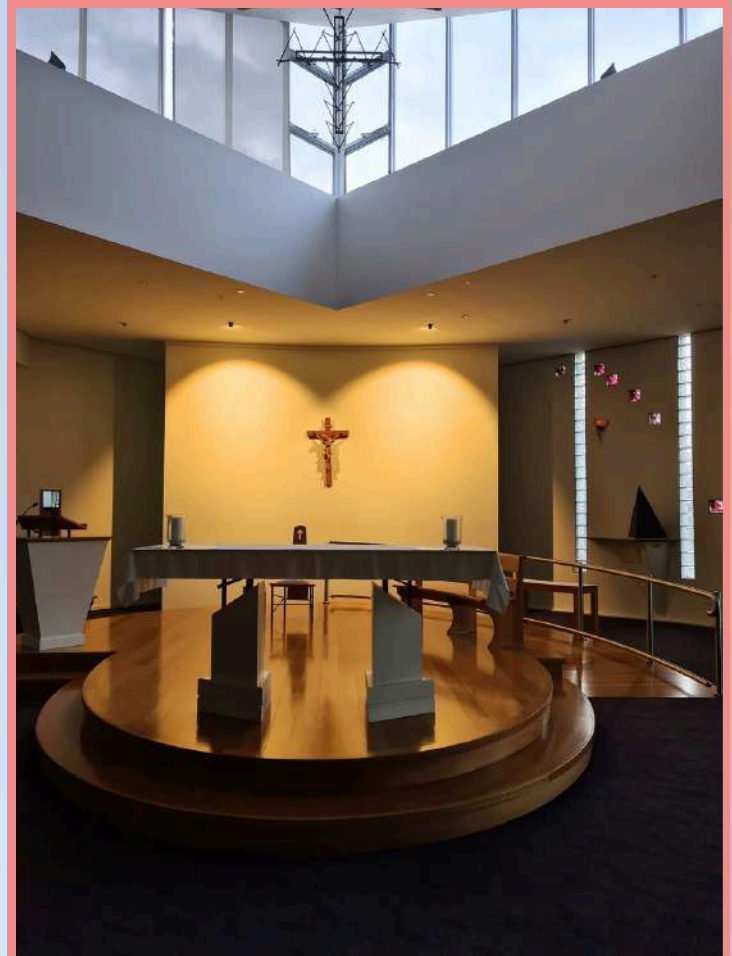
## A Christmas Blessing



May the blessings that the birth of the Christ Child brings  
fill your heart with light and wonder this Christmas and always.

May the **hope** of the manger guide your steps into the new year,  
the **peace** of His presence calm your spirit in every storm,  
the **joy** of His coming overflow in your life and relationships,  
and the **love** of Emmanuel dwell richly in your heart and home.

With faith renewed and hearts aglow,  
may the miracle of Christmas bless you and those you hold dear.  
Amen.

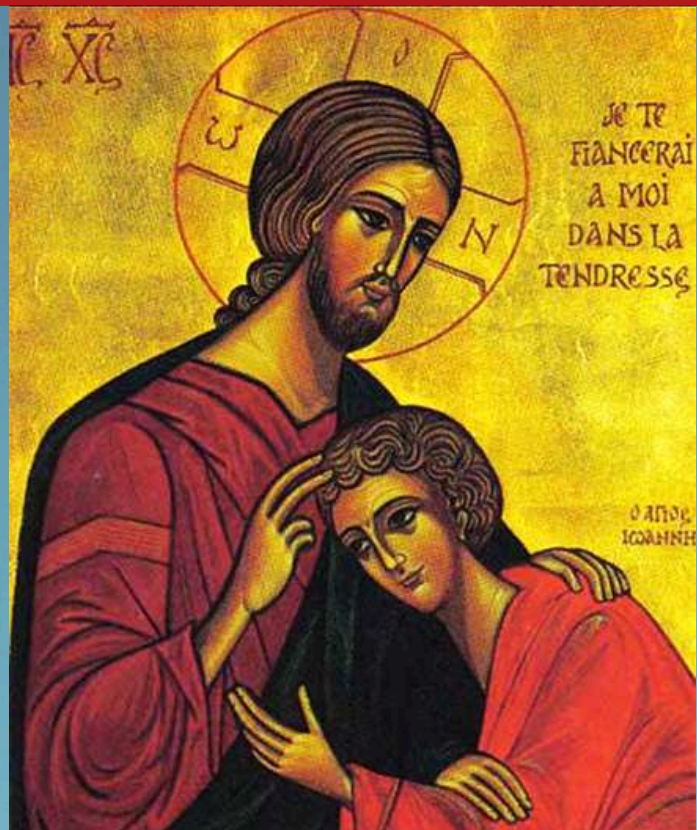


## Feast of St. John the Apostle 27 December

### Reflection

St. John, the beloved disciple, rests his head against the breast of Jesus, close enough to feel the rhythm of His breathing. Each rise and fall of Jesus' chest speaks of life and love, the same love that shaped the universe and holds us all in being.

From this closeness, John hears the voice of Jesus—not just the words, but the subtleties and tenderness of the One who preached love, forgiveness, and mercy. This is the voice that spoke peace to the storm and compassion to the woman caught in adultery.



John's gaze meets the eyes of Jesus—eyes full of divine compassion, the same eyes that see us today, not with judgment but with unwavering love.

The breath of Jesus warms John's soul, the same breath that once animated creation and became the first cry of a child born in Bethlehem. It is this breath, the Holy Spirit, that continues to breathe life into us, filling us with grace and guiding us in every moment.

As we reflect on this intimacy between John and Jesus, we are invited to draw closer ourselves:

***Do we hear His voice? When we listen attentively to the Word of God in Scripture, we hear the voice of Jesus speaking to us today. Are we taking time to reflect deeply on His Word?***

***Do we see His eyes? In prayer, we encounter Jesus' loving gaze fixed on us. He is madly in love with each of us, delighted by even the smallest glance in His direction. Do we allow ourselves to meet His eyes in trust and love?***

***Do we feel His breath? By being open to the Holy Spirit within us, we sense the life of Christ guiding our thoughts and actions. Are we attuned to the Spirit's inspirations in our daily lives?***

To love Jesus is to grow in intimacy with Him, to rest against His heart and feel the nearness of His presence. Let us make room in our hearts to lean against His breast, to hear His voice, to see His eyes, and to feel His breath.

Let us live each day with the same closeness that John experienced, allowing our love for Jesus to transform our lives.



## What It Means to be MSC

MSC's are recognised for who we are and the special charism we offer. Nothing grand, nothing spectacular, but rather ordinary, really, in a way like - well Jesus. Jesus from his very core, offering heartfelt response to each and all, whatever their need.

Being MSC means being compassionate, being caring, being heartfelt, shepherding, being Jesus, or as we MSC like to say, **being on earth the Heart of God.**

Being MSC is how we are called, can contribute, can make a difference.

~ Philip Malone, msc

“Reflect on verbs rather than nouns when exploring our relationship with God, ourselves and one another: to speak of being faithful rather than faith, of loving rather than love”.

Michael Fallon, msc



*Photos from Feast of St. John the Apostle Morning Tea*



## Pope Francis' Prayer Intention - January 2025

### ***For the right to an education.***

Let us pray for migrants, refugees and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a better world, might always be respected.



<https://www.popesprayer.va/popes-prayer-intentions-for-2025/>

## ***Spes non confundi - Jubilee Year of Hope***

SPES NON CONFUNDIT. "Hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5). In the spirit of hope, the Apostle Paul addressed these words of encouragement to the Christian community of Rome. Hope is also the central message of the coming Jubilee that, in accordance with an ancient tradition, the Pope proclaims every twenty-five years. My thoughts turn to all those pilgrims of hope who will travel to Rome in order to experience the Holy Year and to all those others who, though unable to visit the City of the Apostles Peter and Paul, will celebrate it in their local Churches. For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the "door" (cf. Jn 10:7.9) of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as "our hope" (1 Tim 1:1)

***The name Jesus, given to the Child,  
is a name of hope, for it means Saviour  
~ Jules Chevalier.***

Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. Often we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope. Taking it as our guide, let us return to the message that the Apostle Paul wished to communicate to the Christians of Rome.

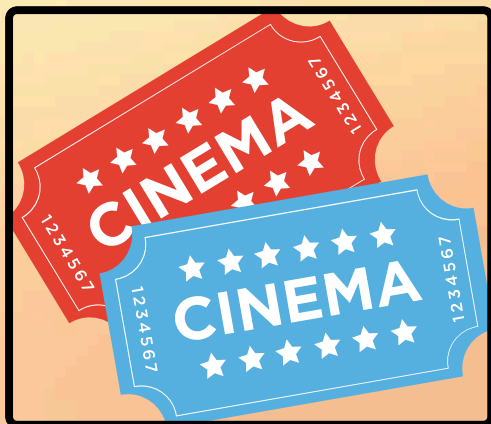
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# JOIN US AT ST JOHN'S IN 2025!

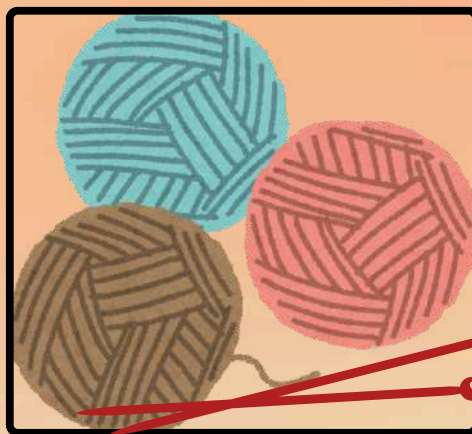


**Women's Breakfast**  
4th Tuesday of the month

**Friendship Group**  
Last Wednesday of the month



**Movie Night**  
4th Friday of the month



**Pins & Needles**  
3rd Monday of the month



**Men's Group**  
3rd Friday of the month



**Community Connections**  
3rd Sunday of the month



## Vinnies Christmas Appeal



St Vincent de Paul Society  
CANBERRA/GOULBURN  
*good works*

### Thank you for making the Christmas Appeal a great success

Thanks to the enormous generosity of parishioners, students, staff and parents from St John the Apostle Primary School and St Francis Xavier College, Rotary Belconnen and Ginninderra and Gungahlin Lions, this year Vinnies Kippax prepared and delivered hampers for 77 families. There were gifts for 98 children. The hampers were delivered by 20 beautiful parishioners on Saturday 21 December.



Companions who received the hampers were very grateful for the assistance especially given the challenges of the rising costs of living. For these families the hamper and gifts allow them to celebrate Christmas with dignity and joy. They appreciate that people unknown to them genuinely care about them and wish to share the Christmas spirit with them. For many they draw hope from these acts of kindness and love. One lovely companion said as she received her hamper ***'you've put sunshine in my heart this morning.'***

Each hamper comprised an array of food items including rice, pasta, cereal, condiments, pasta sauce, tea and coffee, tinned fruit and vegetables and Christmas goodies such as a plum pudding, custard, a Christmas cake, shortbread, lollies and chocolates, fruit juice or cordial, chips and nuts. We made up three sizes of hamper with large hampers for families of five or more, medium hampers for families of three and four and small hampers for singles and families of two. We included an eftpos voucher in each hamper, with \$50 for the small families, \$75 for the medium-sized families and \$100 for the larger families. This was made possible by the generous financial donations from parishioners.





Our estimates of the value of contributions made to this year's Christmas Appeal include **\$6330 for food items, \$2940 for toys and other gifts and \$5100 for eftpos vouchers**. We haven't received the final figures for financial donations to the Appeal, but they are likely to exceed the value of eftpos cards provided in the hampers. We will use the surplus funds to support our ongoing assistance for the poor in our local community.



A lot of work goes into planning and coordinating the Christmas Appeal with many hours put in by Conference members. However, the success of the Appeal is due to the generous support that we receive from our wonderful Parishioners at St John the Apostle, our local school and college communities and Rotary and Lions clubs. Many thanks for your gifts for the poor and marginalised in our local communities. You have made a difference in the lives of many people.

Thank  
you

# ST JOHN THE APOSTLE PARISH

## SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

St John the Apostle Parish is committed to safeguarding and upholding the dignity and rights of all our children and vulnerable people.

We seek to empower children, their families and carers, and vulnerable people, to have a say, to be listened to, and to be protected. This approach is at the centre of all of our thinking and action.

### PARISH SAFEGUARDING VOLUNTEERS

The role of the Parish Safeguarding Volunteer is to be an additional point of contact in the Parish on matters relating to the safeguarding of children, young and vulnerable people, complementing the roles of the Parish Priest and Parish Secretary. They can provide advice on how complaints can be made, and forward concerns, relating to the protection safeguarding of children, young and vulnerable people within the Parish to the Institute for Professional Standards and Safeguarding Manager.

Jenny McGee and Carl Madsen – [safeguarding.kippax@cg.org.au](mailto:safeguarding.kippax@cg.org.au)



We love to celebrate mass with the children and vulnerable people of our parish. Safeguarding and care is everyone's responsibility.

### KIT @ Kippax

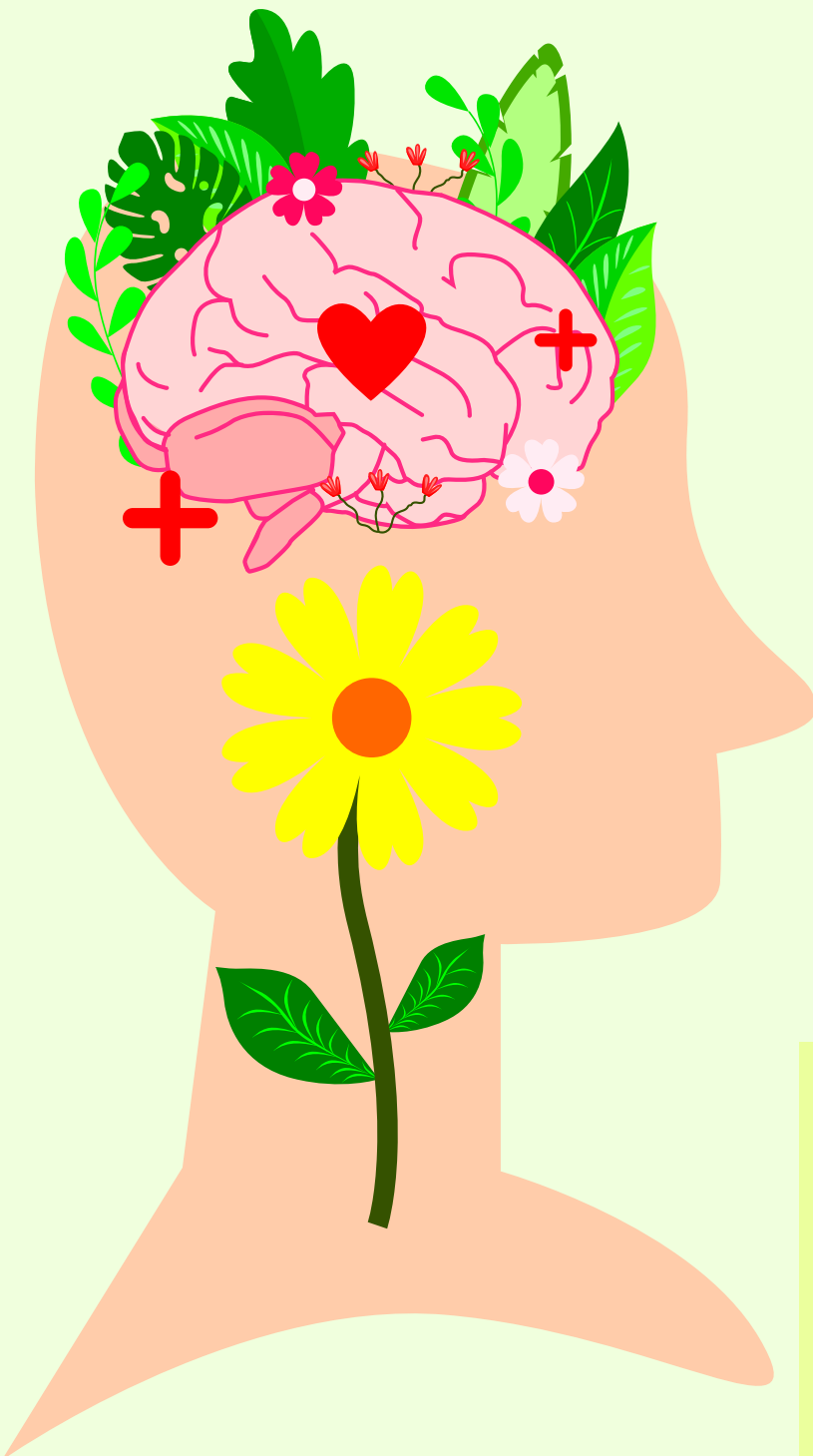
KIT is produced for the St John the Apostle Catholic Community from contributions submitted by parishioners. Send submissions to [kippax@cg.org.au](mailto:kippax@cg.org.au)

**Editor** Marian England \* **Graphic Design:** Kirsty Vera

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# MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY

## TAKING CARE OF MENTAL HEALTH



At St John the Apostle Parish we will be developing our Mental Health Ministry in 2025.

If you are interested in joining a small group please contact the parish office.

[kippax@cg.org.au](mailto:kippax@cg.org.au)

CATHOLIC LEADERS ACROSS THE WORLD ARE RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY.

IN JANUARY 2024 THE VATICAN HELD ITS FIRST CONFERENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH

“Sow seeds of hope in the lives of your friends and everyone around you”  
Pope Francis

# JANUARY 2025



PARISH  
OFFICE  
CLOSED

1	Wednesday	Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God
2	Thursday	Gethsemane – Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament
3	Friday	1st Friday of the Month – Mass of the Sacred Heart Meditation – 5:30pm – Parish Library
4	Saturday	
5	Sunday	<b>The Epiphany of the Lord - Year C</b>
6	Monday	
7	Tuesday	
8	Wednesday	
9	Thursday	
10	Friday	Meditation – 5:30pm – Parish Library
11	Saturday	
12	Sunday	<b>The Baptism of the Lord - Year C</b> <b>Baptism at 10:00am mass</b>
13	Monday	
14	Tuesday	Community Connections – Coffee Ichi café Kippax 2:00pm
15	Wednesday	
16	Thursday	
18	Saturday	
17	Friday	Meditation – 5:30pm – Parish Library Men’s group – 6:30pm - Parish Centre Movie Night “The Water Diviner” – 7:00pm - Parish Library
19	Sunday	<b>Second Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C</b> <b>Community Connections - Parish Centre - 4:00 - 5:30pm</b>
20	Monday	Pins & Needles – Parish Library 7:15pm
21	Tuesday	
22	Wednesday	SJA - STA Steering Committee Meeting - 7:00pm
23	Thursday	Liturgy Meeting - 7:30pm
24	Friday	Meditation – 5:30pm – Parish Library
25	Saturday	
26	Sunday	<b>Third Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C</b> <b>Australia Day</b>
27	Monday	Public Holiday - Australia Day - parish Office Closed
28	Tuesday	Women’s Breakfast - 7:30 - Bean Origin Cafe
29	Wednesday	SJA Friendship Group - Morning Tea
30	Thursday	
31	Friday	Anointing of the Sick after Mass Meditation – 5:30pm – Parish Library