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The annual Ecology Sunday Mass on the school's oval, where families are encouraged to bring their pets for a special blessing, is but one fine example of the healthy parish-school partnership

Report highlights ongoing strength of our enviable parish-school partnership

By Fr Fred

As part of my responsibility for the school, I must provide a report each year to St Catherine's AGM. It's an important report as it shows the strength of the parish and school relationship, and I thought I would share my latest report in *The Bridge*.

While attendance across the three Masses is now about 180 (pleasingly, we seem to have more young families with children in attendance), our regular cycle of social events and fundraising events has sometimes struggled due to a mix of a lack of interest and the difficulty in finding volunteers to organise such events.

Our parish website continues to be well used, and I attempt to keep it updated. We are blessed with much involvement in our parish liturgy, our wonderful choir, the new group of young altar servers at the OLOR, the children's liturgy group and our many readers, not to forget the band of

church cleaners and flower arrangers.

Last year, we celebrated 11 weddings at OLOR, mostly couples not associated directly with the parish, and had nine baptisms. A further two parishioners completed the RCIA course and became Catholics, while 19 young people received the Sacrament of Confirmation and Holy Communion. I thank Cathie Oswald and former school APRIM Cara Thomas in preparing the children for the Sacraments.

Children's liturgy continues and while there has been less growth in the number of children attending at the 10.30 am Mass, we hope the introduction of monthly Children's Masses will see an increase in children attending these sessions and being able to access the Gospel through reading, role play, art and craft.

Continued on page 2



St Matthew's
Bridgewater



St Joseph's
Lobethal



St Matthew's
Birdwood



Our Lady of the Rosary
Stirling



St Catherine's
Stirling

Continued from page 1

Enviably parish-school partnership grows

I wish to thank all who work so hard to support our parish community, members of the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council and members of the Faith Formation Team.

Thanks to Marianne Berry who works so diligently to keep our church and site safe through her Health and Safety work and Mark McGeough who keeps children and vulnerable people safe through his Safeguarding responsibilities.

We played our part in the Diocese Assemblies consultation process and had several meetings when parishioners were free to make contributions. Furthermore, we responded to the Diocese Synod process.

We have tried to take seriously our obligation to care for the least of our brothers and sisters, locally through the work of Vinnies and more broadly through initiatives in Pakistan and with the Kopanang community in South Africa.

Our Social Justice group has donated hundreds of dollars to such charities.

We held our well-attended Parish Assembly in October, with a report prepared and distributed, and our parish school relationship – led for much of the past 18 months by Mark Simpson and from the final term of last year by a returning John Low – remains strong and special.

This is thanks largely to the Being Church Together document and the work of APRIMs Carla Thomas, who fulfilled the role last year, and Krystine Dawe, who returned earlier this year.

I wish to thank the staff for their work in helping to prepare their class for liturgies and masses. I try to be a regular presence in the school, and every Tuesday preside over school liturgies and Masses in the school hall. Our relationship between the school and parish is further strengthened through meetings held twice each term.

I thank parishioners and a few school families (thank you) for their regular financial contributions to the parish, as well as for the school advertisement in our parish magazine. *The Bridge*.

We continually ask for more involvement in the various ministries and roles in the parish. In the past year, we have undertaken renovations and extensive repair works at all four of our churches. I continue in my role as Dean of our Deanery in addition to my other duties, and thank all parishioners for the many kindnesses they have shown me...and just for putting up with me!!

Apologies if I have forgotten anything. Please do keep me in your prayers as I remember all of you in my prayers every day.

Nigeria in focus at 2026 World Day of Prayer

By Pam Broadbridge



Pastor Jane Mitchell accepts the Commissioning WDP Candle to host the centenary event

The 2026 World Day of Prayer (WDP) on Friday 6 March shone the spotlight on the African nation of Nigeria and was hosted by the Anglican Parish of Stirling, with the Ecumenical Service held at the Church of the Ascension in Aldgate.

Under the theme of 'I will give you rest: Come', the day was attended by 42 people of all Christian faiths and the reflective, thoughtful, caring and considerate service led by the church's office manager, Steph Loy-Reed, and lay preacher Lachlan Graham.

WDP is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome everyone to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. Attendees learnt that Nigeria has a population of 211 million – it's just an eighth of the size of Australia – of whom some 6.5 million are internally displaced persons, 70 percent of them living in overcrowded camps.

WDP celebrates its centenary in 2027, with Australia fittingly (we were part of that very first year in 1927, holding services in Queensland and New South Wales), the country in focus. Pastor Jane Mitchell from Sunset Rock, Stirling, accepted the Commissioning WDP Candle to host the local 2027 centenary service.



Fr Fred, above, opens the session in the parish hall while, below, he shares some of the reflections and outlines the way forward

Dialogue Week – many voices, one journey

By the PPC's Inge Parodi

During Dialogue Week, the Adelaide Hills Catholic Parish joined parishes across the Archdiocese in a shared journey of listening, reflection and discernment as part of preparations for the upcoming Synod.

Held on 25 February, the evening brought together 35 parishioners in prayerful conversation to reflect deeply on key themes shaping the future of our Church. Guided by the message *"Many Voices, One Journey,"* participants engaged in small-group dialogue, quiet reflection and respectful listening, creating a space where every voice could be heard.

Following a shared meal, the session opened with prayer, Scripture and the Synod prayer before participants moved into facilitated groups. Each group reflected on one of the Synod themes:

- ◆ Becoming Missionary Disciples
- ◆ Communion in Grace – Sacrament to the World
- ◆ The Mission of Catholic Education and Being Church Together
- ◆ Formation for Mission and Leadership

- ◆ Structures and Planning for Communion, Participation and Mission

Through prayerful discernment and dialogue, participants considered what kind of Church we are called to be over the next five to 10 years and how parish life can continue to grow in mission, participation and leadership.

As part of Dialogue Week across the Archdiocese, St Catherine's School also conducted its own session, focusing on *The Mission of Catholic Education and Being Church Together*, contributing the voice of Catholic education to the wider conversation.

The reflections gathered from our parish will now be shared with the Archdiocese as input to the Synod process, ensuring the voices of the Adelaide Hills Catholic Parish form part of the Church's collective discernment.

Thank you to Fr Fred, the Parish Pastoral Council, facilitators, scribes and all parishioners who participated so generously in this important moment of listening, faith and shared mission.



Lutzie's 'Von Trapp-like' journey to a long and fulfilling life in South Australia

Luzia Wohlfart's brother delivered the eulogy at her recent funeral, recalling her times in post-war Europe, her journey to Australia and a life well lived in the Adelaide Hills

Luzia 'Lutzie' Wohlfart was born in Italy in 1938. She emigrated to Australia in 1954 at the age of 16.

Think about that for a moment: she spent her childhood and early teen year in a post-war Europe. There were no cinemas, snack bars, sports events or video games. Just small amounts of food, oppression and lots of hard work. This reality gave her the grounding and work ethics for her life in Australia.

Our father was the only member of the family with the required papers to cross the border and organise the passage to Australia. When this was done, Mum, Karl, Lutzie and Anne had to do a Von Trapp family run over the mountains and towards freedom, by-passing the many checkpoints and crossing the border out of the Russian sector, all the while Lutzie carrying the family chiming clock strapped to her back!

Our family never talked about their life in Germany. It was taboo, and the only reason I heard the story of the clock was that Mum was adamant Lutzie was to end up with it given her efforts in getting it out in the first place!

On the boat to Australia, the family got to know other emigrants and friendships developed, many of them lasting for years. Indeed, one of these was to become Lutzie's future husband.

The pair married when she was 20 and moved to Mount Pleasant, where he gained employment at the local bakery.

It was not long after getting married that Lutzie was told it was her responsibility to look after me as both our parents worked. She did this for about two or three years, which explains why many of the locals mistook her for my mother, not my sister.

After I returned to Adelaide, Lutzie started her own family, giving birth to Annette, Robert, Craig and Belinda. She took over the bakery, running the retail side of the business and soon became an employer of local workers. In the process, Lutzie became a respected member of the community.

At this point, I'm sad to say I lost contact with her for many years, mostly over silly family issues. I did hear that they had eventually sold the bakery and retired, giving Lutzie – who had always doted on her grandchildren – the time to do it right.

The family also enjoyed holidays together and, in her retirement, Lutzie became pretty adept on her

computer. She was so much better than me, and that did burn a little...

I will now fast-forward to the last 12 months. I had no idea she was ill as no-one had contacted me. When I did hear about it, I ranted and raved like an idiot, furious that no-one had let me know. That's when I remembered that I had needed to change my mobile number and in the chaos of life, I had failed to pass it on to some people. If I didn't apologise for my outburst at the time, I humbly apologise now.

My last memory of my sister Lutzie was a call saying she had taken a turn. As it took me a day or two to travel up to Mount Pleasant, I fronted up at the reception desk fearing the worst, only to be told she was away on a bus trip to Murray Bridge.

I left smiling as it sounded positive and she was on the improve. I did get to see her a few more times and now I know she is resting peacefully in Heaven.

In closing, I need to give many, many thanks to the doctors, nurses and staff at Mount Pleasant Hospital for the excellent care given to our mother, sister and friend, Lutzie.



Luzia Wohlfart, RIP



St Catherine's Catholic School News

With Lent in full swing, St Catherine's APRIM, Krystina Dawe, shares a particularly busy period at the school, with a Project Compassion launch underscoring our Catholic Social Teaching of caring for others. She also touches on the school's contribution to Dialogue Week and Clean Up Australia Day, and highlights the special role Liturgy plays across the campus



Launch of Project Compassion

Our school captains were honoured to be part of the 2026 Project Compassion Launch, sharing in the celebration with representatives from St Joseph's, St Francis de Sales College and St Ignatius College.

To kick off our Project Compassion commitment, the travelling candle visited each school and students had the chance to learn more about Caritas and the important work which is undertaken by the organisation.

A shared Mass was also held at St Francis de Sales College, officiated by Archbishop Patrick O'Regan. Attention now turns to how we can place ourselves in the spirit of Catholic Social Teaching by undertaking fundraising and creating greater awareness of the important work of Caritas.

Having our say during Dialogue Week

Students, staff and families had the opportunity to take part in Dialogue Week and so have their voices heard in the 2026 Archdiocesan Synod. It's an invitation to have a conversation with someone else about the things that are important, and to share them with the Archbishop. The process gives us a chance to share both the celebrations and

challenges related to key questions, and consider ways to move forward into the future.

Thank you to our entire school community for their participation in this process. All feedback will be shared with the Synod members. This will also lead to a series of recommendations of actions which are shared with the Archbishop to help decide what will be enacted by the Archdiocese. As a school we are also excited to use this feedback to help direct some actions within our school too.

Caring for Creation: Clean Up Australia Day

Last week, our students proudly took part in Clean Up Australia Day, joining communities across the country to care for our local environment. Equipped with gloves, bags and a sense of responsibility, students worked together to collect litter from our school grounds and surrounding areas, making a visible difference to the spaces we enjoy each day.

This experience provided a meaningful opportunity to live out our call to *care for creation*. In the Catholic tradition, we believe that the world is God's precious gift, entrusted to us to nurture and protect. By taking practical action, our students showed that caring for creation is not just something we talk about—it is something we do.



Sharing in Sacramentality and Prayer

Liturgy continues to be a special part of our weekly routines. Our Reception and Year 1 class held a beautiful Liturgy about how God loves everyone. Students shared prayers thanking God for family and friends, as well as celebrated through songs with the message that God is all around us.

Our Parish Picnic in pictures...



The parish and school coming together commitment was clearly evident at this year's Parish Picnic at Oakbank Racecourse on 15 February when the children on the Sacramental Programme, most of whom are students at St Catherine's Catholic School, featured in both the Ritual of Remembering Baptism and the reading of the Prayers of the Faithful during Mass.

It was a well-attended and wonderful celebration of our togetherness, with the beautiful late summer weather and a host of fun activities adding to a memorable occasion that is shared here in a selection of photographs.



Captions, clockwise, from top.

Our CWL ladies, from left: Janet Harrison, Margaret Smitherman, Lea Crosby, Pam Broadbridge and Gayle Raven

The Sacramental Programme children read the Prayers of the Faithful

The barbecue fired up and a favourite. From left, Bob Guthrie, Deb Stapleton, Des Stapleton, Tom Kovac, John Leeton and Ben Sugars

Enjoying the day are the Sarmento family, back, Rhiannon Mya, John and Sebastian, and front, Isaac, Sue and Nathan Sachse

Fr Fred celebrates Mass at the 2026 Parish Picnic





Many green shoots for Ecology Group in 2026

With plenty happening across the parish's Ecology Group in the early part of 2026, we share just some of these, with report from **John Leeton** on a working bee and **Paris Huffman** on a planned outing, and **Helen Cantwell** offering a few suggestions for Lent

Working Bee keeps church grounds shipshape

By John Leeton

Our ecology-oriented Working Bee defied the predicted stormy weather on Saturday 28 February to attend to a raft of projects that keep our parish grounds at St Matthew's Bridgewater in shape.

The team, pictured from left, of Des Stapleton, Paris Huffman, Jeff Cantwell, Paul Somers, Tom Kovac, Lucas Clark, Ben Sugars and Christian Domancela (Helen Cantwell and I are missing) trimmed off the dead branches from the old oak tree at the Parish House, pruned shrubs and bushes and carted it all off to our new on-site composting system that not only eliminates the need for trailers and cartage but produces mulch for the gardens.



We also planted several new trees and shrubs, while Ben restored the underground sprinkler for the garden between the church and carpark.

We hope to have regular monthly working bees giving our parish family more opportunities to get together

RECREATE recce ahead of planned outing to recycling haven

By Paris Huffman

In keeping with our Ecology Group's commitment to share information and encourage best practice to care for God's creation, John Leeton and I met at Mount Pleasant last month to explore RECREATE, a delightful community hub of creativity and resourcefulness overflowing with recycled materials.



Volunteer Lea and the author

Lea, a volunteer and coordinator, showed us through the gardens, storage

sheds, plant nursery and shop and mentioned that they offer workshops using the craft supplies.

We plan to offer a Saturday excursion to RECREATE in autumn, with Lea conducting a tour and inspiring us to purchase recycled materials. Also available are copious information fact sheets on a myriad environmental topics

For lunch, we could either take our own picnic, visit the bakery or even dine at the lovingly refurbished historic Totness pub. Lea has sent us a proposed program for our visit, which we look forward to sharing once a date has been set.

More information is available on their Facebook page – facebook.com/recreatecommunity.

Carbon Fast for Lent

Ever wondered about carbon fasting over Lent? Well, thanks to a Carbon Fast for Lent calendar co-produced by the Global Catholic Climate Movement and the Anglican Communion Environmental Network and shared by Ecology Group member **Helen Cantwell**, here are just some of the things you can do...

You could reduce your meat consumption, aim for zero waste or buy only local. Perhaps plant a tree or be water savvy by only filling the kettle with as much water as you need. The calendar, with a recommendation for each day of Lent, also suggests things like clearing your home of unused clothes by donating them to a charity or hosting a garage sale and committing to a 'No electronics' day.

Lenten Programme 2026

Stations of the Cross

Every Friday at St Matthew's Bridgewater at 11.00am followed by Mass

Lenten Retreat

Sunday 15 March at Our Lady of the Adelaide Hills (OLAH) Hall, Bridgewater from 12.15pm to 2.00pm

Lenten Prayers/Adoration

Wednesday 18, 25 March at Mary O'Dea Community Centre, Birdwood after 9.00am Mass

Feast of St Joseph

Thursday 19 March – Mass at Our Lady of the Rosary (OLOR), Stirling East at 6.30pm

Penitential Rite

Friday 20 March – with the children doing the Sacrament of Reconciliation at St Matthew's, Bridgewater at 6.00pm

Feast of the Annunciation

Wednesday 25 March – Mass at OLOR, Stirling East at 6.30pm



The Way of the Cross to OLOR, Stirling East

Friday 27 March at 6.00pm – details to follow

Blessing of the New Way of the Cross

Saturday 28 March – blessing of the New Way of the Cross donated to St Matthew's, Birdwood by Leon and Leonie Holmes at 1.00pm

Mission Lenten Week

Monday 23 to Thursday 26 March—each day will have a Lenten reflection on the themes of the Synod, with Mass at OLOR, Stirling East at 6.30pm

Mission Lenten Week concludes with the Way of the Cross to OLOR, Stirling East on Friday 27 March at 6.00pm

The Passion of Jesus Christ

Tuesday 31 March – the Passion of Jesus through scripture and hymns, with the Adoration of the Cross at OLOR, Stirling East at 7.00pm



Palm Sunday

Sunday 29 March – Mass at St Joseph The Worker, Lobethal at 8.30am, at St Matthew's, Bridgewater at 10.30am and at OLOR, Stirling East at 5.30pm

Mass of the Oils

Monday 30 March – Mass at St Francis Xavier's Cathedral at 6.00pm

Holy Thursday

Thursday 2 April – Washing of the Feet at St Matthew's, Birdwood 6.30pm and at St Matthew's, Bridgewater at 7.30pm

Good Friday

Friday 3 April – Stations of the Cross at OLOR, Stirling East at 11.00am, and at St Joseph the Worker, Lobethal at 11.00am

Liturgy of Good Friday at St Matthew's, Bridgewater at 3.30pm, and at St Joseph the Worker, Lobethal at 5.00pm

Easter Vigil

Saturday 4 April – Mass at St Matthew's, Bridgewater at 7.30pm

Easter Sunday

Sunday 5 April – Mass at St Matthew's, Birdwood at 8.30am and at St Matthew's, Bridgewater at 10.30am

Note: There is no evening Mass at OLOR, Stirling East



Fr Fred leads the Sacramental Programme children through the Ritual of Remembering Baptism during the annual Parish Picnic Mass at Oakbank Racecourse on 15 February

Twelve children commence Sacramental journey in 2026

By Cathie Oswald

Twelve children enrolled in the Sacramental Programme this year, eleven of whom are students at St Catherine's.

The children commenced their Sacramental journey on 15 February during the annual Parish Picnic Mass at Oakbank Racecourse when they took part in the Ritual of Remembering Baptism.

With the support of their families and the Parish community, they committed to continue to learn more about Jesus as they prepare to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Preparation of the children to receive the Sacraments involves a partnership between the family, the parish and the school, with the acknowledgement that parents are the first and ongoing nurturers of the faith in their children.

To this end, parents are encouraged to actively engage in the workshops, to pray with their children and to commit themselves to give their child the best opportunity to know Jesus.

In the weeks leading up to Easter, the focus of the Programme is on the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which the children will receive for the first time on 20 March.

The children will learn of the unconditional love God has for us, and how the choices we make can either distance us from, or draw us closer to, God but secure in the knowledge that God never gives up on us; the Sacrament of Reconciliation gives us a way of restoring our relationship with Jesus.

The children will complete the Sacraments of Initiation when they receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist later in the year.

Parish thanks its legion of volunteers

By Pam Broadbridge

Some 33 parish volunteers joined Fr Fred for a 'Thank You' afternoon tea at the parish hall on Saturday 28 February to formally thank all for their generous and valuable contributions to parish life.

The message was clear: all volunteers are appreciated – and the spread laid on underlined that message, with Cathie Oswald and her loyal cooking supporters treating all the volunteers to delicious food.

It was also a great time to mingle with fellow parishioners and, to top it off, the Bridgewater Inn's gifted hamper was won by Karen Heusler; Maria Thompson presented Cathie with flowers to thank her for her continual care; and John Leeton also received a gift for his energy and enthusiasm within the parish.



From left: Maria Thompson presents John Leeton and Cathie Oswald with gifts, while hamper winner Karen Heusler celebrates with Di Golding and Mary Way

Birdwood ready for new tenant

By Lea Crosby

With a family vacating the premises last year, the old presbytery at Birdwood has received a long overdue restoration works and was blessed by Fr Fred on 13 March ahead of opening its doors to new tenants.

Parishioners Kevin Tipler and Eric Toome stepped up to rip out the old carpets and remove all rubbish from the site before the builders and tradesmen moved in to repair the cracks in the walls due to soil movement, replace the floors with timber laminate floorboards, renovate the kitchen and paint the walls.

The house was originally the presbytery where priests lived prior to the Birdwood parish became part of the Adelaide Hills parish, with Fr Noel Molloy the last Birdwood parish priest to live in the house.

A bit of history...Birdwood was originally part of the Mt Barker Mission before becoming a parish in its own right in 1885 and taking in the areas of Mannum, Woodside and Harrogate and as far afield as the Victorian border.



The new timber laminate flooring has added appeal to the old parish house at Birdwood

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 15 March
Children's Mass at 10.30am
Lenten Retreat at 12-noon

Wednesday 18 March
Parish Pastoral Council at 6.00pm

Thursday 19 March
Feast of St Joseph Mass at 6.00pm

Wednesday 25 March
Feast of the Annunciation Mass at 6.30pm at OLOR

Friday 27 March
Way of the Cross

Thursday 31 March
Passion of Jesus Christ

Sunday 29 March
Palm Sunday

29 March to 5 April
Holy Week—See Bulletin

Friday 3 April
Good Friday—See Bulletin

Sunday 5 April
Easter Sunday—see Bulletin

As this directory changes from time to time, anyone wishing to volunteer for any of the parish activities listed below is asked to please contact the parish office.

1 Wembley Avenue (PO Box 713), Bridgewater SA 5155

P: 08 8359 0674 W: www.adelaidehillsparish.com.au E: stmatthew@adelaidehillsparish.com.au

PARISH OFFICE

Parish Priest

Fr Alfred Farrugia 8359 0674

Parish Pastoral Coordinator

Cathie Oswald 8359 0674

Parish Secretary

Margaret Smitherman 8359 0674

Baptism Teams

Helen Cantwell 8390 3290
 Maria Thompson 0408 898 357
 Anne Moore 0417 861 373
 Eric Toome 0418 896 695
 Deb Stapleton 0408 835 990
 Pam Broadbridge 8339 5013

Catholic Women's League

Barbara Mott (Bridgewater) 8339 1083
 Anne McEvoy (Birdwood) 0438 682 784

Child Protection

Mark McGeough 0491 150 758

Children's Liturgy

Jane van Mierle 0438 723 259

Choir

Damien Mansfield 8339 4133

Christian Life Communities

Paris Huffman 0400 283 683

Ecology Group

John Leeton 0419 243 814

Faith Formation Team

Fr Fred (Chair) 8359 0674
 Paris Huffman (Secretary) 0400 283 683

Finance and Maintenance (F&M) Committee

Paul Howe (Chair) 8388 5281

F&M Birdwood Contact

Gayle Raven 8389 8410

Hills Combined Christian Churches

Maria Thompson 0408 898 357

Liturgy

Birdwood and Lobethal - Fr Fred 8359 0674

Men's Spirituality Coordinators

Paul Somers 8339 5118
 Dan De Fazio 8339 3393

Our Lady of the Rosary Community Representative

Debbie Somers 8339 5118

Parish Atrium

Sue Sachse 0431 117 840

Parish Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/adelaidehillsparish

Parish Pastoral Council

John Leeton (Chair) 0419 243 814

Rosary Group

Paul Anderson 0416 032 925

Sacraments

Call Parish Office 8359 0674
 Baptisms
 Weddings
 Reconciliation
 Communion to the Sick
 Religious Education

St Catherine's Catholic School

22 Ayers Hill Road
 Stirling SA 5152 8238 8238

Principal - John Low

School Board Chair - Ben Clements

St Matthew's Sewing Group

Stasia Duszynski 8339 4396

St Vincent de Paul Society

Marianne Berry (Stirling) 0407 903 382
 Lea Crosby (Northern End) 0431 092 725

Social Justice Group

Cathie Oswald 0428 244 958

The Bridge

Paul Robinson (Editor) 0408 855 178

WHS Volunteer

Marianne Berry 0407 903 382