THE BRIDGE

November 2026
Issue 487



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Advent comes alive only through our participation

By Fr Fred

Every year, our parish publishes and distributes the Christmas and Advent programme, and in 2026, it will be distributed during the weekend of 14 and 15 November.

The programme lists the many spiritual activities that unfold during Advent and Christmas. One may ask the question: Do we follow the programme? As we prepare to celebrate the First Sunday of Advent, we realise how time is so short, we struggle to comprehend that it is already Advent and Christmas awaits.

As the program can come alive ONLY through our participation, we need to ask how we are going to prepare ourselves during Advent. Coming to Sunday Mass is not enough!

In our parish, like most Christian churches, the two largest celebrations are those of Jesus' birth and of His death and rising. The heart of faith lies in God's love for us shown by Jesus' dying and rising from the dead.

The feast that celebrates it is preceded by five weeks of prayer and followed by many weeks of celebration

The four weeks of Advent look forward to Christmas, which is followed by its own week of celebration.Behind these rhythms of waiting and celebration lies the deeper Christian vision of life as a period of waiting and preparing with Christ for the joyful celebration of eternal life with Him in heaven.

Advent is a period of promise and of hope that might sustain us in even the hardest of times. The Mass readings of Advent draw again especially on the Book of Isaiah. These scriptures readings are full of hope, peace, joy and of a God who is with the people.

Continued on page 2



St Matthew's Bridgewater



St Joseph's Lobethal



St Matthew's Birdwood



Our Lady of the Rosary Stirling East



St Catherine's Stirling



The parish group, pictured here during their visit to 'Recreate' in Mount Pleasant last month, left the tour with a better understanding of caring for the environment by promoting sustainability, education and engaging with community and schools

'Recreate' tour inspires visitors to care for our precious environment

By Lea Crosby

Friday 16 October had Fr Fred and 9 parishioners travel to Mount Pleasant to visit the Mount Pleasant Environment Centre, aka 'Recreate', where I opened our tour with a short talk about the centre and its history of caring for the environment by promoting sustainability, education and engaging with the community and local schools.

The successful project has functioned for 26 years, with a coordinator and several volunteers. After a tour of the shop, once a workshop of the Mount Pleasant Council, we strolled through the community garden, native plant nursery, 'Treasure Yard' and craft shed.

We encourage more parishioners, families and friends to visit the centre to be inspired to see how many ways we can all care for our precious environment. 'Recreate is open every Wednesday to Saturday from 10am to 3pm. You can also follow the centre on Facebook (recreatecommunity) for information, updates and workshops.

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Advent comes alive only through our participation

In Isaiah's time, the world was one the Jewish people, including himself, would have seen as a time of darkness, full of dark nights. The people had been overrun by war, sent into exile, and lost their temple, their land and their confidence in their God.

Today, we might recall the suffering of the people of Gaza and Ukraine. In contrast, Isaiah's vision was a return to their own land in peace, where they would enjoy respect and plenty.

He does not describe their current miserable life in exile as the new normal but as a time of waiting for a glorious return to their homeland. He reminded the people that God's special friends are those who are doing it hard, and that God will rescue them.

Our Advent program encourages us also to enter the experience of people in our own world who are exiled from their home, wait on the kindness of strangers for survival, and survive as best they can. Among these are refugees who share the experience of Isaiah and the Jewish people. They have also had to leave their homes, often separated from their families, struggling without support in a wealthy land, and unable to do anything more than dream of a decent life.

We may not be able to give them a home, but during Advent, we can keep them in our hearts, and through our support, doing for them what Isaiah did for his own people. We can encourage them to hope that one day a Christmas will come when they will be able to begin living full lives.

Advent gives way to Christmas. The first Christmas was a quiet occasion in which the celebrating took place deep within human hearts. It had the intensity of joy that comes with the birth of a new-born and eagerly awaited baby at the end of a hard pregnancy. That joy spread and changed the world.

Ecology Sunday changes venue, retains appeal

The parish's Ecology Sunday Mass might have moved venue from the sports fields of St Catherine's to the grounds of the parish house in Bridgewater but it proved to be just as big a success, with over 100 parishioners – and a good few animals – in attendance on Sunday 18 October.





The occasion marked the closure of the Season of Creation – and creation provided us with the perfect day of mild spring temperatures and clear blue skies.

Mass concluded with a sausage sizzle and Social Justice Group market stall, with its trading table of cakes, biscuits and condiments raising $352 which was donated to the Ecology Group for the creation of a Meditation/Prayer Garden at St Matthew's Bridgewater. Indeed, an anonymous parishioner was so impressed she took to penning a 'thank you' letter to Fr Fred that read:



Dear Fr Fred

Thanks so much for organising and facilitating today's celebration of Ecology Sunday.

It was a beautiful setting under the tall tree in your backyard – grass, greenery, shade, breeze, sunshine and lots of dogs! The music was beautiful and the Mass was joyful and thankful. All finished off with home cooked baking and sausages.

It was also very nice to see the kids participating and the message of the day being understood and acted upon. What a great idea to hand out packets of seeds for us to plant. Not sure what sort of seeds…but a good idea nevertheless.

Thank you for all the work you do around the whole parish and the times we are all able to come together to celebrate our beliefs and faith and to be people of action.Take care and God bless.



Here's a selection of photographs from the day.



St Catherine's Catholic School News

You could call this a very special St Catherine's monthly report as school APRIM Krystina Dawe shares some outstanding achievements and events - among them our students recognised as environmental leaders and Children's University graduates, and that annual special day, Grandparents' Day.

Celebrating Success As Environmental Leaders

We are thrilled to share some exciting news from the recent KESAB and East Waste Schools Showcase, where the wonderful efforts of our student environmental leaders were recognised

Throughout the year, our students have been working hard to promote sustainability, reduce food waste and inspire positive environmental change within our school community. Their creativity and dedication were celebrated when our student-produced video was announced as runner-up in the competition! This is a fantastic achievement and a wonderful acknowledgement of the students' teamwork, creativity and commitment to making a difference.

Adding to the celebrations, Quinn (Year 5) was also commended for her fantastic calendar artwork, which has been selected for publication in the 2027 calendar! What an incredible achievement to have her creativity and message shared with the wider community

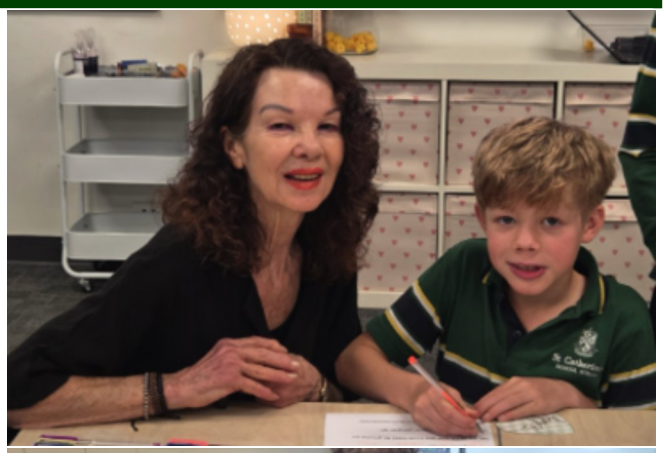
We are extremely proud of all students involved. These achievements highlight the power of student voice and leadership, reminding us that even small actions can make a big difference in caring for our common home. Congratulations to our young environmental champions



Grandparents' Day Always Special!

What a wonderful day we shared as we welcomed grandparents and special people into our school community for our Grandparents' Day celebrations!

It was a joy to see our school filled with smiling faces as students proudly spent time with their grandparents and loved ones.The day provided a beautiful opportunity to celebrate the special relationships between generations and to recognise





the love, wisdom, encouragement and support that grandparents and significant people bring to the lives of our children.

Children's University Graduation – Celebrating Our Young Learners!

We are incredibly proud to celebrate the achievements of 12 St Catherine's students who recently graduated as part of the Children's University program!

This wonderful milestone recognises their commitment to learning beyond the classroom, embracing new experiences, exploring their interests and developing a love of lifelong learning.

Throughout the year, these students have demonstrated curiosity, perseverance and enthusiasm as they participated in a variety of learning opportunities. The graduation ceremony was a special occasion, providing an opportunity to acknowledge their dedication and celebrate their achievements alongside family and friends.

Congratulations to our graduates! We are so proud of your efforts and hope you continue to approach new opportunities with curiosity, confidence and a passion for learning. A special thank you also goes to the families who have supported and encouraged their children's learning journeys.



Georgia Farrugia shares a Biblical story with Leo Irons and, looking on, Allesandro Dumancela, at St Matthew's Bridgewater's Children's Liturgy

Giving back to a community that has always felt like home!

By Georgia Farrugia

Hi everyone! My name is Georgia, and I have been part of the St Matthew's community for as long as I can remember.

I recently was blessed with the opportunity to serve with NET Ministries (which stands for National Evangelisation Teams) for two years, where I had the privilege of sharing my faith with young people through highschool retreats, youth groups and parish ministry. I have since returned home to Adelaide and am currently studying a Bachelor of Primary Education, and have been involved in Children's Liturgy at St Matthew's.

Children's Liturgy has been such a beautiful way to reconnect with the younger children of the parish. I love hearing their little perspectives on love, God and the world around them.

I have always had a real passion for working with children and young people, particularly creating spaces where they feel seen, and truly valued. I love being able to have fun with them and get to know their little personalities.

As someone studying to become a teacher, this experience has been so encouraging for me. Seeing the children engage with what I'm sharing, listen, ask questions and respond in their own ways has helped me grow in confidence and reminded me just how much I love teaching.

I always come away feeling happy to have been there and incredibly grateful for their enthusiasm and willingness to share.

It is such a privilege to be part of their faith journey, even in a small way, and I feel very blessed to be able to give back to a community that has always felt like my home.

Meet the new PPC secretary

By Mark McGeough



Originally a backpacker from England, I have lived in Australia for 45 years and in the the Hills, in Heathfield and Aldgate, since 1996.

A retired exploration geologist, I attend the Saturday Vigil Mass. I am a regular reader and the parish's Safeguarding Contact Person, and outside of the parish, I am a member of the Playford Trust that helps University and TAFE students with scholarships.

I have been active in the parish since 2005 when I served on the Parish Finance Council (PFC) for the first time. I am currently secretary of the PFC. Since March 2025, I have been attached to the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) in my role as Safeguarding Contact Person.

Although not a member of the Ecology Group I like to help at OLOR and Bridgewater during working bees, with my favourite job-removing the cobwebs around the Church windows.

On the PPC, I hope to assist the dedicated members to help our parish live the Gospel through a strong and enduring faith, striving to be a vibrant community that welcomes all, celebrates diversity, reaches out to those in need and cares for God's creation.

Melbourne Cup lunch raises $1,400 for charity

By Social Justice Group's Cathie Oswald



As in previous years, the Adelaide Hills Parish celebrated the running of 'the race that stops the nation' in true style. Our Parish Hall was a delight to see on Tuesday 3 November, beautiful white tablecloths, colourful serviettes and Paul and Gloria Howe's magnificent roses; if you couldn't be at the track, then the Adelaide Hills was the place to be.

Parishioners and their friends and families came through the doors, stopped briefly to buy raffle tickets but wasted no time heading to the back of the hall to enter the sweeps. There were shouts of joy by those who were fortunate enough to secure one of the favourites and looks of puzzlement by others who had a horse they had never heard of.

Again, this year chicken, 'champagne' and pavlova were on the menu. Once the main course was complete, Paul Howe, as our Master of Ceremonies took charge. His Cup Quiz produced lots of laughs and those in the know were rewarded with chocolates. The raffle which had endless prizes was drawn and then the Best Hat parade took place. In past years, Geoff Oliver had been our judge, but Geoff was watching the Cup from heaven this year and so Colleen Sim took on the mantle.

Colleen, a worthy successor to Geoff, inspected the participants' teeth and hooves, and using these criteria somehow settled on Sue Arthurson as "Best Hat" although there was some agitation from the crowd that it be awarded to Mary Way.

Pavlova was served and the dishes cleared away. The crowd quietened as the race began. There was great excitement as Royal Supremacy lead the pack by such a margin that it seemed there was no hope of it being overtaken. Then in the closing moments of the race, the gelding was run down by Point of Law. Elation for some, disappointment for others as the crowd swamped the sweeps table to collect their winnings.

Tables and chairs were packed up, dishes washed and put away. It was a most enjoyable day and raised a little $1,400 for the various charities supported by the Social Justice Team. My thanks to our team of helpers, supplemented by parishioners Paul and Gloria, Stasia and Judith who worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of the day. My thanks too, to those parishioners who organised groups of friends and to those parishioners who always support the Social Justice initiatives. The funds raised for charity are always welcome, but to see you all enjoying yourselves is just as welcome.

Thanks, finally, to Fr Fred, who made sure the TV was working and on the 'right' station.





Top right: 'Best Hat' competition was again a hit, if with a touch of controversy!
Above left and right: The well-attended event treated 'racegoers' to a delicious lunch of chicken, 'champagne' and pavlova

Excellent speakers, great turnout mark a successful CWL State Conference 2026

By Pam Broadbridge

The CWL State Conference 2026, held at St John the Baptist Hall in Plympton on Saturday 31 October.

Under the banner theme of 'Walking Together We Can Do Amazing Things', the conference attracted some 50 ladies and CWL Adelaide Archdiocesan Chaplain, Fr Brian Angus, with delegates treated to a collection of excellent speakers added to a most successful day.

Birthline Pregnancy Support Director Grace Juanta opened proceedings with a thought-provoking presentation on the organisation, established in 1972, to give hope, compassion and practical care – in the form of face-to-face counselling and a 24-hour Phone Counseling Service – to pregnant women.

Co-Regional Director Catherine Edwards (addressing the Conference by telephone from Canberra) and member Angela Hart (in person at the conference) introduced those present to the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH).

They shared its message of 'People are NOT for sale' and encouraged us to always seek to purchase slavery-free products, from tea and coffee to chocolates, clothing and so much more.

Annie Harvey then injected some lightheartedness into the gathering with a highly entertaining address.

She was quick to remind us that fake laughter is as good as real laughter as laughter of any form releases oxytocin, serotonin and endorphins. She also suggested that we pause to take a look in the mirror each morning and say "You are gorgeous!", assuring us that we will instantly laugh out loud…

Annie is also the author of 'The Little Book of STILL – Calm for Busy Lives', a book she wrote after her 50th birthday.

Finally, Dr Sarah Moller, the Head of College and Academic Director at Aquinas College, took us on a brief history of the school, established by Catholics donations and fundraising 75 years ago, for a Catholic boarding school for students living away from home.

The College's first female Head, Sarah added that the boarding facility currently provides a sense of family to 197 co-educational students.

Before closing with Fr Brian celebrating Mass in the wonderful St John the Baptist Parish Church – complete with organist and choir members – we fittingly took time to acknowledge CWLSA deceased members who supported this League over so many years.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable day in the company of like-minded women...and, of course, our Chaplain, Fr Brian Angus.







Top: CWLSA State President Sue Williams with our Chaplain, Fr Brian Angus

Middle: CWL Birdwood members and forever friends, Jenny Evans and Leonie Holmes

Bottom: The International Secretary of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations, Karen de Sousa, Queensland State President Shona Cobham and Sr Catherine Seward RSM

Ecology is not exclusive, it is everything

By John Leeton





The OLOR mulching crew, above left, and, above right, the burn-off of what remained.

Over the last six weeks, we completed the Season of Creation, concluding with the feast of St Francis and our Ecology Sunday outdoor Mass and blessing of the pets on the grounds of Fr Fred's parish house in Bridgewater. It proved to be an ideal venue, the lush green lawn surrounded by trees and shaded by a huge oak to create God's cathedral.

After Mass, everyone enjoyed a free sausage sizzle and an assortment of cooked vegetables, while the Social Justice Group hosted a trade table with cakes, biscuits and condiments.

On an ecological basis, with an emphasis on reducing waste, reusing and recycling, we added red wine vinegar to the items on sale, made from a large quantity of wine past its best.

It's a waste to tip the wine down the drain; so much better to add cider vinegar, allow it to age and end up with a nice soft red wine vinegar!

The crowd was good, with people from all Mass Centres and St Catherine's attending and hanging around after Mass to enjoy each other's company and share a laugh or two. God blessed us with fine weather, good company and a great day.

The Ecology Group continues to be kept busy and contribute to our environment, recently participating in a two-day gathering in our parish hall with likeminded people from the neighbouring parishes of Mount Barker and Blackwood/Aberfoyle Park.

The focus 'Living Water', with a special connection to the indigenous people and their spirituality with the land and water.Other happenings saw us undertake our visit to 'Recreate' in Mount Pleasant (see article on page two) and held a number of working bees at St Matthew's Bridgewater.

Other happenings saw us undertake our visit to Recreate' in Mount Pleasant (see article on page two) and held a number of working bees at St Matthew's Bridgewater and OLOR.

I am pleased that the new composting system at Bridgewater is working well – we haven't made a single trip to the dump and have compost aplenty for our gardens. At OLOR, the mulching crew recently had a great day getting the grounds in ship-shape.

Regular working bees help with maintenance, too, we have a great time and always take a break to enjoy a cuppa with Fr Fred. While we thoroughly enjoy and appreciate the volunteers who are part of the working bees, we're very much in need of new and enthusiastic friends to lend a hand.

Lack of funds and volunteers have slowed down our ambitions. The link between Earth Care, working bees and ecology is not always obvious. But then ecology is not exclusive, it is everything. You just have to look at the clouds, a sunset, the stars or a mountain, or sit in a quiet valley, to be with God. God gives all Christians a duty to care for his earth.

On a global level, the Laudato Si movement's 'Catholics for our common home' initiative this month focuses on the African nation of Cameroon, where the devastating effect of mining 'Extractivism' has poisoned the River Kadei and displaced people for the lack of drinking water.

The indigenous communities frequently face dispossession, land and water grabbing, unsafe working conditions, slave wages and even child labour. Anyone with any power or influence should do their utmost to stop this. For you and me, we can only pray.

Next month, we'll take a look at something that might be news to many of you. Yes, St Francis is rightly considered the patron saint of ecology, but there are another 10 saints associated with care of the earth and the connection of God with nature.

Advent and Christmas Programme 2026

WEEKEND SUNDAY 14/15 NOVEMBER
Vinnies to launch its Christmas Appeal

SUNDAY 22 NOVEMBER
Feast of Christ the King
Distribute to each family a copy of Sunday Advent Reflections
Vinnies set up the Jesse tree
Advent Retreat in the OLAH Parish Hall Bridgewater, from 12.00 to 2.00pm

SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER
First Sunday of Advent
Blessing of the Advent wreath
Lighting of the First Advent Candle

WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER
Mass/Advent Prayers
Mary O'Dea Community Centre Birdwood, at 9.00am

SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER
Second Sunday of Advent (Peace)
Light the Second Candle of Advent
Launch to bring Toiletries for Charities
End of Vinnies Christmas Appeals
Stirling Christmas Pageant – we have a food stall at the Stirling Oval from 11.00am to 4.00pm

TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER
Feast of the Immaculate Conception
Mass at OLOR Stirling East at 9.00am and 6.30pm

WEDNESDAY 9 DECEMBER
St Catherine's Catholic School Graduation
Mass at the school at 9.15am

FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER
Penitential Rite
St Matthew's Bridgewater at 6.30pm

SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER
Decorate church for Christmas
OLOR Stirling East from 9.00am

SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER
Third Sunday of Advent (Joy)
We light the Pink Candle
Launch of the Christmas Hamper Raffle

MONDAY 14 DECEMBER
Decorate church for Christmas
St Matthew's Bridgewater from 5.00pm



WEDNESDAY 16 TO THURSDAY 24 DECEMBER
Christmas Novena, with Mass
Wednesday 16 to Friday 18 – OLOR Stirling East at 6.00pm
Saturday 18 – Vigil Mass at St Matthew's Bridgewater at 6.00pm
Sunday 20 – during 5.30pm Mass at OLOR Stirling East
Monday 21 – Carols by Candlelight at OLOR Stirling East at 7.00pm
Tuesday 22 – at OLOR Stirling East at 6.00pm
Wednesday 23 – at OLOR Stirling East at 6.00pm
Thursday 24 – at St Matthew's Bridgewater Family Christmas Vigil Mass at 6.00pm

SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER
Fourth Sunday of Advent (Love)
We light the fourth Advent candle
Blessing of small cribs, baby Jesus

MONDAY 21 DECEMBER
Carols By Candlelight
OLOR Stirling East at 7.00pm

THURSDAY 24 DECEMBER
Christmas Vigil
Mass at St Matthew's Birdwood at 6.30pm
Mass at St Matthew's Bridgewater at 6.30pm
Carols and Midnight Mass at St Matthew's Bridgewater at 11.30pm
After Mass, we celebrate with cake and champagne

FRIDAY 25 DECEMBER
Christmas
Mass at St Matthew's Bridgewater at 9.00am
Mass at St Jospeh the Worker Lobethal at 11.00am

THURSDAY 31 DECEMBER
New Year
Mass at OLOR Stirling East at 6.00pm

FRIDAY 1 JANUARY 2027
New Year
St Matthew's Bridgewater at 10.00am



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precious moments become precious memories

It's again time for our 'annual report' issue

With 2026 rapidly drawing to a close and Christmas just around the corner, it's time to remind all those who head up the many groups across the parish that our final issue of the year in December will again double up as an annual report.

This bumper issue, to be published on the weekend of 12 and 13 December and with a deadline of Tuesday 1 December, will share, in words and photographs, the many happenings across our parish over the past 12 months,

We then take our customary Christmas and January break, returning in February 2027 with our first issue of the new year.





Upcoming Parish Activities

Sunday 15th November – Ecology Meeting at OLAH Parish Hall at 11.45am

Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th – Launch of Vinnies Christmas Appeal

Tuesday 17th – OLOR Community Meeting at OLOR at 6.00pm

Wednesday 18th – Northern End Meeting at St Matthew's Birdwood at 9.45am

Saturday 21st – Baptism Afternoon Tea at St Matthew's Bridgewater at 2.30pm

Sunday 22nd – Feast of Christ the King

Sunday 22nd – Advent Retreat at OLAH Parish Hall from12.00-noon to 2.00pm

Tuesday 24th – Liturgy Meeting at Parish House at 11.00am

Friday 27th – Memorial Mass at St Matthew's Bridgewater at 7.00pm

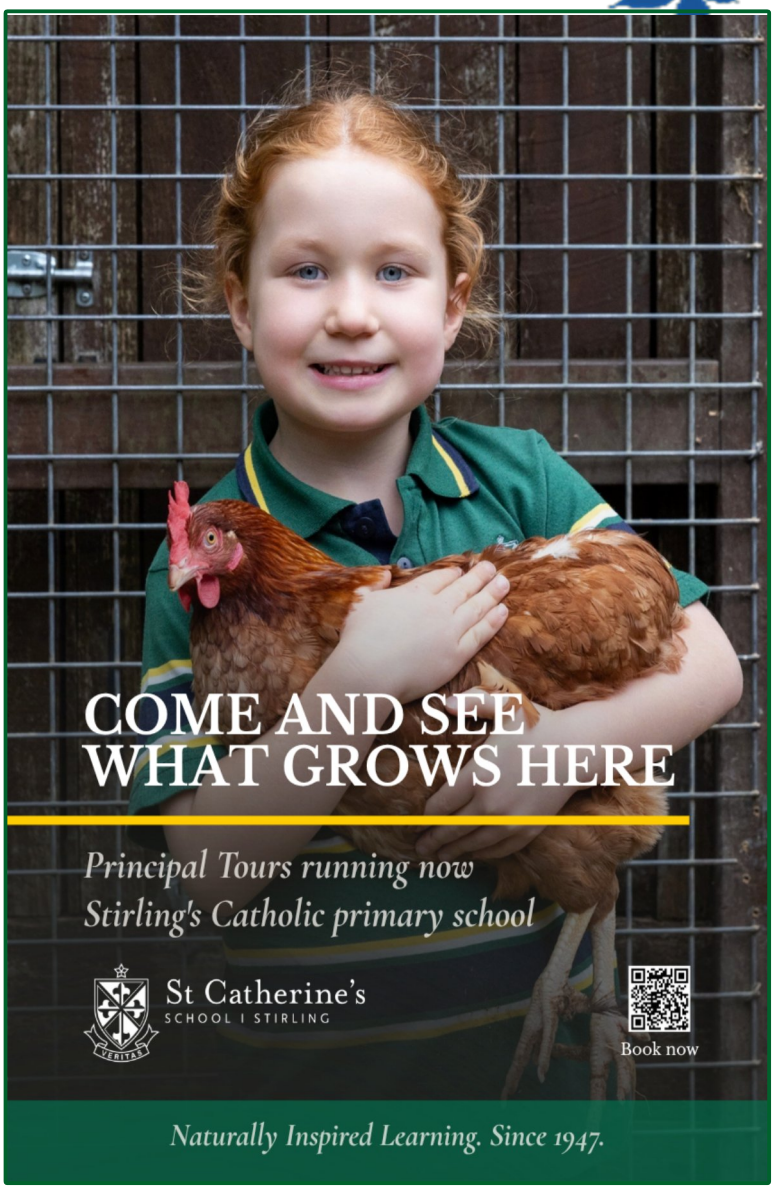
Sunday 29th – First Sunday of Advent

Sunday 6th December – Second Sunday of Advent

Wednesday 9th – St Catherine's Graduation Mass at school

Friday 11th – Penitential Rite at St Matthew's Bridgewater, 6.30pm

Saturday 12th – Decorate OLOR Church, Stirling East, from 9.00am





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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.

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Eric Toome 0418 896 695
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Liturgy Birdwood and Lobethal
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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
Inge Parodi (Chair) 0430 829 244

Rosary Group
Paul Anderson 0416 032 925

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

Safeguarding (formerly Child Protection)
Mark McGeough 0419 150 758

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School Board Chair - Ben Clements

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The opinions expressed in The Bridge are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Parish Priest, Pastoral Coordinator, Editor or parish