

2023 - *What a year...*

Wow! What a year it has been!!

So many wonderful times in the Ephpheta community this year!

We have had fabulous community days out, a weekend Catholic retreat, Ephpheta Sunday, 5 visiting seminarians, deaf Cafes,

prayer group, craft group, Auslan Play Group and Mass at least each week just to name a few!



Our pastoral work of course remains at the heart of Ephpheta - supporting each other and the community through good times and bad. The Ephpheta community has remained strong in spite of tough times and continues to thrive.

You will see that we have lots of events and activities planned throughout November and December before the Ephpheta team take a much needed break. We look forward to seeing you at these events.

From all of the Ephpheta team - we wish you all a joyous and peaceful Christmas and a Happy 2024!

Thank you for your support of Ephpheta throughout this year. We look forward to working with you all in 2024.

Best wishes from the Ephpheta team!



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A message from Liz & Dave!

Liz's report

Welcome to our final newsletter for 2023!

It has been an incredibly busy year for us in the Ephpheta Centre and with our community. There have been some wonderful times but of course also some sad and challenging times. I have seen our deaf community rise to every challenge and continue to support each other with faith and love.

One of the highlights of the year was our deaf community retreat in August. To spend time with each other, to share Mass with each other and to pray with each other was a very special time for me. I am trying very hard to live what we learned on retreat each day - in meeting people with love, and of trying to love God more. A lifelong challenge indeed!

Thank you all for your support of the Ephpheta team this year. Your generosity and kindness to us makes such a difference to us - I feel it is a privilege to work in this wonderful community.

Wishing you all the peace of Christmas.

Until next time,

Liz



Dave's report

Hello readers! 2023 is almost over. We can't believe it is already November. What a very busy year for us all!

Our Deaf cafe get togethers, day outs and Auslan Playgroup are all going very well this year! We still have live streaming and Auslan interpreted Mass services at least once a week. We are lucky to have a small but strong community with joy and friendship! We see many animated faces and hands moving about in different events using the visual language, Auslan. This inspires us the Ephpheta team with joy and friendship. It is free to smile.

So let's make an effort to bring a smile or two to people's faces. Sometimes it is not easy when we also have a bad day too. It makes a big difference to someone when we smile at them and be friendly.



Saint Philip Neri was known by everyone in Rome, Italy as a man who could always be trusted to come with a smile on his face, a joke, and a sense of undeniable trust in God. Philip Neri was determined to live life to the fullest. He carried in his heart and soul lots of cheer and brought laughter to anyone and everyone he met!

Cheerfulness strengthens the heart and makes us persevere in a good life; wherefore the servant of God ought always to be in good spirits. — St. Philip Neri, the Apostle of Rome

As we approach Christmas, we all wish you a lovely joy filled Christmas and stay safe in the holidays. We will see you again in 2024 with new plans and events.

Please check the newsletter and the website for latest information.

Over and out,

David



Fr Michael's Reflection...

"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1



The world seems to grow more angry and confused every day. However, Christians are called to be hopeful and have peace in their heart. How can we be peaceful, when there are so many wars around the world? How can we be hopeful, when Christians find themselves opposed more and more?

The saints and martyrs give many examples, but I will go back even further, to Abraham.

Abraham learnt how to trust in God's promises and have faith. (His name used to be Abram, but God changed it to Abraham.) Abram was quite old before he left home. His father died and God called Abram to leave everything. God promised:

1. A great land
2. A great name (because a descendant of his would be a king)
3. Many children.

Abraham often only partly trusted in God. He was trapped in fears, which made him lie and do only part of what God wanted. Abram even sinned to try to make the promises of God come true. However, as the saying goes, Abraham learnt to "let go, and let God".

What made Abraham's faith so wonderful is that he believed God without seeing all God's promises happen in his own life. He saw only the beginning, with the birth of Isaac. Yet, Abraham's faith grew so strong that in his old age he believed that God could even raise the dead to life.

Faith is trusting in the things God has promised; hoping in things we cannot see yet, like,

1. the glorious life of the saints and angels in heaven, and
2. the face of God, and
3. the place prepared for us in eternal life, so long as we remain standing firmly in the faith of the Church.

In the Church, it is like we are standing on the deck of a great ship, which may roll about, pitch and turn, but will never sink beneath the waves. No matter what happens in the world, Christ's ship will never sink, but carry faithful, hopeful souls all the way to heaven. So, we have reason to have peace of heart. Nothing can threaten us. We have reason for hope, because, no matter what may happen to us in this life, Jesus assures us that those who have faith in Him, can never be separated from Him. They will have a reward and a place made ready for them in heaven.

God Bless, and Happy feasts of Christ the King and Christmas,

Fr Michael



ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US FOR

EPHPHETA COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARTY

MASS AND LUNCH

SUNDAY

3

DECEMBER

MASS - 11am

Our Lady of the Assumption

74 Underwood Road, Homebush

LUNCH - 12.30pm

Markets Hotel

268 Parramatta Road, Homebush

Join us for a delicious 3 course meal
\$25 per person

For payment options contact Ephpheta

Tickets will also be on sale for a
Christmas raffle

RSVP before 24 November
with any dietary requirements

Chrisso 0405 749 488 (SMS)
christiane@ephpheta.org.au



Advent Activity - 10 December

This year we will be helping Fr Michael decorate his parish at Homebush after 11am Mass.
Please join us for a cup of tea after Mass and after morning tea we will help set up his Christmas Tree!

When and where: after 11am Mass, Sunday 10 December.

Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church, 74 Underwood Road, Homebush.

So we have an idea of numbers please RSVP to Brett Beath
0407 064 872 or email brettb@ephpheta.org.au.



Christmas Mass Times

These are our plans for Christmas Mass. All are welcome to come and celebrate the joy of Christmas at Mass with us.

Masses are at **Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church**,
74 Underwood Road, Homebush.



PLEASE NOTE

Mass is at 5.30pm **NOT 11am**
NO SUNDAY MORNING MASS

Join us for a cup of tea or coffee in
the Hall after Mass

Sunday 24 December
(Christmas Eve Vigil)

5.30pm
Deaf Mass

Monday 25 December
(Christmas Day)

9am
Integrated Mass

Mass only

All of these Masses will be live-streamed so if you cannot come to Mass ,please watch the live-stream on Ephpheta Facebook

Any questions, please contact David Parker 0408 669 672 (SMS).



Ephpheta closing and arrangements through January

The Ephpheta team will be taking a break as usual over the Christmas - New Year period. We have all been working very hard to support the community this year.

So please only contact us if it is a **genuine emergency during this time**.

Ephpheta staff will be on leave from 3pm on Friday 22 December until 9am on Monday 29 January.



If you would like to go to Mass, please go to your local parish. You can watch “Mass for You at Home” with interpreters on Channel 10 at 6am each Sunday or on Aurora or 10play at any time.

Emergency Contact numbers from 23 December until 28 January:

David: 0408 669 672 (SMS only)

Liz: 0400 300 295 or liz@ephpheta.org.au

Fr Michael: 0466 319 290

PLEASE ONLY USE THESE NUMBERS IF IT IS AN GENUINE EMERGENCY

Community Day Out - 22nd February

First Community Day Out for 2024!

Join us for a deaf artist led guided tour of the Art Gallery of NSW.

We will have the opportunity to learn about an exhibition happening in the gallery.

The exhibition is named ‘This Living Being That Is Colour’ - a quote from the artist Vasily Kandinsky.



After the tour we will have lunch together at your own cost.

When and Where: Thursday 22 February. Meet at 10.30am for an 11am start.

Art Gallery of NSW - Art Gallery Road, Sydney.

Meet at the Welcome Hub in the Welcome Plaza.

Cost: Free tour. Lunch at your own cost.

RSVP: Chrisso 0405 749 488 (SMS) or email christiane@ephpheta.org.au before Friday 16 February.

Mini "Deaf Cafes"

Here is the list of our next round of mini Deaf Café's at different locations throughout Sydney - so we can all get together and meet in a safe way.

Please bring money to buy your own food and drinks from the club.

Friday 17 November 2023 Time 10am	Bankstown Sports Club 8 Greenfield Parade, Bankstown
Friday 15 December 2023 Time 10am	Dooley's Catholic Club 11-17 Church Street, Lidcombe
Friday 9 February 2024 Time 10am	Penrith RSL Club 8 Tindale Street, Penrith
Friday 15 March 2024 Time 10am	Central Coast Leagues Club 1 Dane Drive, Gosford

Please **RSVP** to Donovan 0408 697 773 (SMS) or email donovan@ephpheta.org.au)

or any Ephpheta staff to let us know **WHICH** mini café you are coming to.

Please do not come if you are sick.

We look forward to seeing you!



Craft Group

Ephpheta Craft Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at the hall behind Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church (74 Underwood Rd, Homebush).



We start at 10am and finish around 2pm.

Please **bring your own lunch** - Ephpheta provides morning tea for a gold coin donation.

See below for the November 2023 - February 2024 program.

Date	What's On
22 November	How to do Calligraphy by Heather Morris <i>All materials provided</i>
13 December	Craft Christmas Party <i>Last Craft Group of the year</i>
14 February	Welcome to 2024! St. Valentine's Day <i>Wear any RED clothes/jewellery</i> <i>Bring a plate of food to share for lunch</i>
28 February **	Bring your own craft/knitting project to work on

****** *On these days, please bring knitting needles and some wool.
Ephpheta will try to provide spare wool and needles if you don't have any.
If you don't want to knit, please bring your own project to work on.*

Numbers and space is limited so **please** contact the Ephpheta team to let us know you would like to come.



Please Join us for

CRAFT GROUP



Christmas PARTY

13 DECEMBER



FROM 10.30AM

Revesby Workers' Club

2B Brett Street, Revesby

10.30am - Morning tea at Café 240

12pm - Lunch at Firestone Kitchen & Bar

Buy your own coffee/tea and lunch

RSVP before 6 December:

Pat 0414 412 852 or Chrisso 0405 749 488

LENT

prayer • fasting • almsgiving

Lent 2024 - Save the Dates

Ash Wednesday Mass - OLA, Homebush 11am

Wednesday, 14 February

Lent Prayer Group

Friday, 16 February - Zoom

Friday, 23 February - Zoom

Friday, 1 March - Ephpheta

Friday, 8 March - Zoom

Friday, 22 March - Zoom

Stations of the Cross – St Mary's Cathedral

Tuesday, 26 March (TBC)

More details to come in the next newsletter.

Auslan Play Group (0-5 years)

Our Auslan Play Group - a social group for mums, dads, carers and their children aged 0-5 is going very well. Lots of interesting chats about baby's developing, starting to crawl, walk and sign. Ephpheta loves supporting new parents and watching them support others as their children grow.

It has been a wonderful year of getting to know the littlest members of our deaf community and watching them grow!



Saturday 9 December	10am - 1pm	Ephpheta Centre 4 Turner Street, Punchbowl (see page 11!)
Tuesday 6 February	10am - 12pm	Hall Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church, 74 Underwood Rd, Homebush
Saturday 9 March	10am - 1pm	Wentworth Hotel - 195 Parramatta Road, Homebush

What? A morning tea for mums, dads, carers and their children aged 0-5 years.

Ephpheta will supply morning tea for the mums and dads but PLEASE bring food and drink for your children. Parents are responsible for their children throughout this event and children CANNOT be left. If you or your child are sick, please stay home.

Want more information? Contact Chrisso at Ephpheta on 0405 749 488 (SMS).

This event is ONLY for children
0-5 years and their families

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN

Auslan
Play Group
Christmas Party

SATURDAY

DEC

9

10AM - 1PM

2023

THE EPHPHETA CENTRE
4 TURNER STREET, PUNCHBOWL

COME ALONG FOR A LOVELY FAMILY DAY!

WE HAVE SOME SURPRISES PLANNED
PLUS A VERY SPECIAL VISITOR!

RSVP BEFORE 1ST DECEMBER:

CHRISSE - 0405 749 488 (SMS)

PAT - 0414 412 852 (SMS)



Out and About in the Deaf Community

Marilyn Monroe Exhibition

On 21 September we had a very interesting interpreted tour of the Marilyn Monroe exhibition at Sydney Town Hall.

The exhibits and photos of Marilyn's life were very interesting. We all felt a little sad at the many difficult times this beautiful and intelligent woman had throughout her life.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for a great day.



Western Sydney Airport Tour

On Wednesday 1 November a group of over 60 people from our deaf community had an amazing tour of the site of the new Western Sydney International Airport.

The new airport – which will operate 24 hours a day – is a very important part of Sydney's future.

We learned many interesting facts about the construction of the airport, how it will operate and what infrastructure will be built before the new airport opens in late 2026. We hope to organise another tour in around 2 years time when it is close to opening.



Wrap with Love - Ephpheta Craft Group Visit

Over the past few years, our deaf craft group have donated many hand-made blankets to the organisation "Wrap with Love". This is an independent charity which provides donated hand-knitted or crocheted blankets to people in need throughout the world especially to people in refugee camps or in countries affected by war.

On 25 October our craft group visited the warehouse for this wonderful organisation. We learned about their processes, how they post blankets to all over the world and how they receive donations from all over Australia. We all felt very inspired after this visit and will make more blankets for Wrap with Love next year.



Auslan Prayer Group through Advent



Advent is a time where we prepare ourselves for the birth of Jesus and preparing for Jesus to come again.

During this time there will be an opportunity to pray together as a community as well as learning more about the saints that we celebrate during this beautiful season.

This is open to all deaf people.

Advent Prayer Group (Starting Friday 1 December)

During Advent we will be reflecting on the Sunday Gospel readings. Here is the list below:

Date and Time	Gospel Reading	Where?
Friday, 1 December. 2pm	Stay Awake	Zoom
Friday, 8 December. 2pm	The Proclamation of John the Baptist	Zoom
Friday, 15 December	NO PRAYER GROUP - DEAF CAFÉ	
Friday, 22 December. 2pm	The Annunciation	Zoom

Last Prayer Group of the Year - Friday, 22 December 2023

Prayer Group will resume - Friday, 16 February 2024

The Rosary in Auslan (Tuesdays at 2pm on Zoom)

The Rosary is a very old series of prayers. We pray and reflect on the birth of Jesus, his life, his crucifixion, and his resurrection.

During Advent we will be praying the Joyful Mysteries, focusing on the birth of Jesus Christ.

Last Rosary of the Year - Tuesday, 19 December 2023

Rosary will resume - Tuesday, 20 February 2024

Through 2024, we will have Rosary in Auslan once a month - the third Tuesday of each month

If you would like to join please contact Brett Beath 0407 064 872

Lives of the Saints – St Lucy

Born: around 283

Died: around 304

How old: 21 years old

Feast Day: 13th December

Patron saint of: Blind people



Lucy was born to very rich parents. They showed great love for her. She lived a very happy family life. When Lucy was five years old, her father died.

Lucy became a Christian at a very young age. During her time, it was dangerous to live as a Christian in public. They worshipped in secret. The Romans would punish any person who followed Christ. Lucy knew this and she did not tell anyone, especially her mother, that she was a Christian.



*Lucy giving money to the poor
- Giovanni di Bartolommeo Cristiani*

She offered her life to God as a virgin (single woman) as well and devoting her life to prayer and helping the poor people.

Lucy's mother was dying. Her mother wanted her daughter to marry a man from a rich family. Lucy obeyed her mother's wishes. One night, Lucy had a dream of St Agatha. Agatha told her that her mother was healed from her sickness. Her mother became a Christian. Lucy gave her money and things away to the poor. When her husband heard this, he was very angry and told the king about what she did and about her Christian faith. The king asked her to reject her faith. Lucy refused. She said that she will only offer sacrifice to God only and remain pure. She accepted what was going to happen to her.

The soldiers tried to burn her, then cut her eyes out. But Lucy continued to pray to God without her eyes and spoke to the crowd about God. The soldiers killed her with their sword. She was martyred for her love for the Lord.



Lucy before the King
- Giovanni di Bartolommeo Cristiani

The Church honors Lucy as a saint, and she is the patron saint for blind people. Her name means “light.” When we think of Lucy, we can remember that she teaches us to follow Jesus, the light of the world.



Prayer to St Lucy

Dear God,

I depend on your goodness. I humbly ask you,
through the prayers of St Lucy, Virgin and Martyr,
to help me to see the truth and avoid the
darkness of sin and evil.

St Lucy, pray for us.

Amen





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 Join us on Facebook!
<http://www.facebook.com/thecentrefordeaf>

*The Ephpheta Centre is
supported by the Charitable Works Fund.*



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Fr Michael	frmichael@ephpheta.org.au

EPHPHETA WEBSITE NEWS

Have you seen our website recently?

Our website is now being updated regularly so it is
always full of current information.

Please keep checking it!

If you have any ideas or feedback for our website
please contact David.

www.ephpheta.org.au

Please send your news, stories,
information and requests to Liz or David to be
considered for the next newsletter!



What does “Ephpheta” mean?

The name Ephpheta of our Centre came from the
bible - a story about Jesus meeting a deaf man, he
says “Ephpheta” which means “Be open”.

We are always open to you all!