



be open

Ephpheta

Deaf Catholic News

Special Edition:
December 2021– January 2022

Christmas wishes from the Ephpheta Centre

To our dear sisters and brothers,

It is hard to believe that we are coming to the end of 2021. It was such an usual year in many ways. So many events cancelled or postponed, lockdowns starting and stopping.

But here we are at the start of December and we think about Christmas. The birth of the baby Jesus in a stable at Bethlehem to Joseph and Mary. The baby boy who was God made man, who was to suffer and die for us. God loved us so much that He sent his only Son to come and live for us and die for us, that our sins may be forgiven.

So after such a hard year, when we have all missed seeing each other so much, we wish you all the peace, joy and love of the Christmas season to you and your families. May God's blessings be on you this Christmas and always.

***The Ephpheta
team x***



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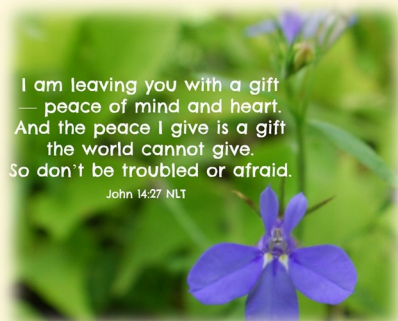
A message from Liz & Dave!

Liz's report

It has been a very hard year for so many people with all of the impacts of COVID-19. But as Christians, we are called to be people of hope. We know that the God who loves us is always with us and we are never without his love and the many graces and gifts He gives us.

I always think that the greatest thing we can receive is peace—the peace of Christ. At Mass each Sunday we wish each other peace. What does this mean?

For me, the peace of Christ is the feeling of peace given to us by God when we trust—not in ourselves—but in all that God promises to us. This doesn't mean that life will always be easy or that we will not have troubles, sometimes so great that we feel our hearts will break. For me, what the peace of Christ means is the strength, safety and comfort we feel when we place our trust in God. That God will always be with us. That God always loves and cares for us, and that we are all precious to Him.



So my wish for you this Christmas is the peace of Christ. That peace of heart, mind and spirit which the things of this world cannot give us. We know that Christmas is a stressful time— we may feel that we either have too much in our lives or not enough. In the crazy time leading up to Christmas, I wish you the peace of Christ.

Until next time, Liz.



Dave's report

Hello again! Only a month away to Christmas. Already!? I often wondered why we have this word, "Christmas". I did some reading on the good old Internet. As we know, **Christmas is celebrated for the birth of Jesus Christ**, who Christians believe is the Son of God. So it means, we have 'Christ-Mass' services that take place after sunset (and before sunrise the next day). That is how we got "Christmas" from the words, Christ-Mass! I love to learn this stuff. We will have Auslan interpreted Friday Christmas Vigil and Sunday Boxing Day Mass services. More information



November and December are traditionally very busy times for the Ephpheta Centre and the Ephpheta community. We do a lot of work for making and posting newsletters, organising get togethers, Mass services, and pastoral / community visits. We believe strongly in making sure as many people in the Ephpheta community are connected. This is the spirit of our work. We hope some of you will enjoy catching up with friends at these December Mini Deaf Cafes in some parts of Sydney. Hope your cup of coffee/tea is yummy!

As many of you may know, the Ephpheta Centre's email system was a victim of cyber attack. We quickly took steps to shut down the system and it is now being rebuilt. We will let you all know when we can use our Ephpheta emails again. We can be reached by SMS, FaceTime, Skype, Duo/Imo, Facebook Messenger and many other video platforms.

Please have a safe and lovely Christmas break and we promise the year 2022 is going to be a great year organised by the Ephpheta Centre with activities and events for the deaf community of all ages: Babies, Young people, other people and Seniors!

Stay safe please. David.



A Message from Fr Michael

I remember reading some writings of St Therese of Lisieux when I was a teenager. St Therese said that an older nun had sometimes misused her authority. She was making use of the convent grounds and the sisters to look after her family or friends. On one such occasion, St Therese was told to prepare for some visitors. St Therese was uncomfortable with the request. However, on reflection she decided it was best to obey, and not give in to resentment. Instead, she loved and served her guests, as if they were the Holy Family. This is similar to the teaching of Jesus that “whatever you do to the least of these, you do to me” and “if your enemy forces you to go a mile with him, go two miles”.

At Christmas we celebrate Jesus, the Son of God, being born into the world. We remember the arrival of the Holy family in Bethlehem, and God, who is love, being born in a humble stable for love of us. Each Christmas we imitate the generous love of God, in our love for one another.

Now, it is not very hard to love those who love us. It is much more difficult to love like God loves, and like St Therese loved. She loved others, even when they were unkind, rude, or selfish.

So, when we celebrate Christmas this year, let us set ourselves a challenge. Let us not only show kindness and generosity to our family and friends, but to those who aren't as close. Let us see something of the goodness of the Virgin Mary, St Joseph, and Our Lord Jesus, which God wants to be found in them. Then, we will begin to love like God loves, because God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son “to seek out and save what was lost”.

We were lost, because we had not returned love for God's love. Jesus was born to love us, so that we would love again, and live with God in heaven. As Jesus came from heaven to humble life on earth, let us challenge ourselves this Christmas. Let us think of people beyond our front door and circle of friends. Let's decide to show kindness to them, just as we would be kind and welcome the Holy Family.

May you and all you love, have a Holy and Merry Christmas.

God Bless,
Fr Michael.



Advent Activity 28 November

Advent is a time when we start to prepare for the coming of the baby Jesus at Christmas and a good way we can do that is to serve other people.



This year our Advent activity will be on Sunday 28 November at Fr Michael's church at Homebush. We will start the day with Mass at 11am, have light lunch and then spend a few hours with some of Fr Michael and people from his parish in setting up the Christmas decorations, Nativity set, helping in the garden and doing some light cleaning & maintenance work around the building. All are welcome.

When: Sunday 28 November. Mass starts at 11am

Where: Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church Underwood Rd Homebush

What to bring: We will provide a light lunch but you are also welcome to bring your own lunch. Please wear sturdy shoes, a hat, and some work gloves if you have them.

RSVP: To David Parker or other Ephpheta staff before Friday 26 November .

Community Lunch 5 December 2021—POSTPONED!!!

A reminder that our planned Christmas community lunch on Sunday 5 December is cancelled.. We will have a community lunch on Ephpheta Sunday 7 August 2022 instead. Please contact Ephpheta staff with any questions.

Mass on 5 December

On Sunday 5 December we will be joining the Parish at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Cathedral at Waitara for a special Mass of Inclusion led by Bishop Anthony Randazzo.

There will be no Mass at Homebush on 5 December. All are welcome to join us on this day. We will be live-streaming this Mass via Facebook.



When: Sunday 5 December 2021.

Time: Mass begins at 9.30am. Please arrive early to log in before Mass. Masks must be worn through Mass.

Where: 23 Yardley Avenue Waitara.

RSVP: To David Parker or any Ephpheta staff before Friday, 3 December 2021.

December Mini “Deaf Cafes”- REMINDER

So we can all see each other safely before Christmas, Ephpheta is holding some mini deaf cafes throughout December across Sydney. Ephpheta staff will be at each catch up (with a little gift for everyone!) and we look forward to seeing you. Please bring money to buy your own morning tea from the club.

When and where:

Monday 6 December Time 10am	West Gosford RSL 26 Central Coast Hwy, West Gosford
Tuesday 7 December Time 10am	Penrith RSL 8 Tindale Street, Penrith
Thursday 9 December Time 10am	Campbelltown Catholic Club 20-22 Camden Road, Campbelltown
Tuesday 14 December Time 10am	Wenty Leagues Club 50 Smith Street, Wentworthville
Thursday 16 December Time 10am	Dee Why RSL 932 Pittwater Road, Dee Why
Tuesday 21 December Time 10am	Canterbury Leagues Club 26 Bridge Road, Belmore

Numbers are limited. Please **RSVP** to Liz (liz@ephpheta.org.au) or any Ephpheta staff to let us know **WHICH** mini café you are coming to.

We look forward to seeing you!



Ephpheta Centre – Important notice



On or around October 2021, the Ephpheta Centre experienced a cyberattack in which personal information may have been accessed without authorisation.

It appears that the purpose of the attack was to send fraudulent emails from Ephpheta Centre email addresses.

The personal information includes individual's first and last names, personal and business contact details (such as their email address, telephone number and, in some cases, Medicare number), religious beliefs, health information (such as whether or not an individual is hearing and/or vision impaired and employee medical certificates), employment related information in respect of Ephpheta's employees (such as income information and tax file numbers) and financial information (such as account and credit card statements).



The Ephpheta Centre is also conducting extensive investigations to determine if there are any particular individuals at risk as a result of the attack and will notify those individuals directly (if any are identified). The Ephpheta Centre has notified the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and taken steps to immediately stop the unauthorised access and reduce the risk of future breaches.



For more information, including steps that affected individuals can take to reduce the risk of harm, you can contact us via phone (02 9708 1396) or

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. All Masses are at **Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church, Underwood Rd Homebush.**

Friday 24 December (Christmas Eve Vigil)	5.30pm Deaf Mass	Please join us for a cup of tea or coffee in the Hall after Mass
Sunday 26 December (Boxing Day)	9am Integrated Mass	PLEASE NOTE AT 9AM NOT 11AM

- Please do not come to Mass if you are unwell
- All of these Masses will be live-streamed so if you cannot come to Mass or do not feel safe coming to Mass, please watch the live-stream on Ephpheta Facebook
- On 25 December, Fr Michael will be having Mass with the hearing parish at 9am. You are welcome to come to this Mass but there will be no interpreter or Ephpheta staff at this Mass.



Any questions, please contact David Parker.

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 5pm on Thursday 23 December until 9am on Monday 31 January.

There will be no live-streamed or interpreted Mass from 26 December until Sunday 5 February 2021. 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 .

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



Auslan Play Group (0-5)

Our new Auslan Play Group—a social group for mums, dads, carers and their children aged 0-5— is going very well. Our last Auslan Play Group for the year on Zoom will be on Friday 26 November. We will resume next year in early February. We will have a face to face Christmas catchup on **Friday 3 December**.



When: Friday 3 December 10am—12 noon

Where: Hall, Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church, Underwood Rd, Homebush (the parish hall is behind the Church)

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. Please note that parents are responsible for their children throughout this event and children CANNOT be left alone.

Want more information? Please contact Pat at Ephpheta on 0414 412 852 (sms only) .

Prayer Group through Advent

Each Friday afternoon at 2pm we have our Ephpheta prayer group via Zoom.

Throughout the season of Advent we will be having special Advent themed meetings where we discuss what Advent means and how we can prepare for the coming of the baby Jesus at Christmas. Everyone is very welcome to join these meetings. The discussions and prayers are in Auslan and you do not need to prepare anything before prayer group. It is a very welcoming place!



So if you are interested in joining our Zoom prayer group, please contact our faith formation assistant Brett Beath (mob: 0407 064 872) and can give you more information.

We hope you can join us!



Christmas Word Search



G L E T W C R S T O C K I N G
 Y I P I D A E R B R E G N I G
 A C O V T R P Y A E C E F F U
 R E A S L E Q I X O C T A P Z
 E M I R Y H A U D P S A J O N
 S E A P O B E T H L E H E M I
 N R U L O L D O N T F O S P U
 A R L S L E I G H A A S U D O
 M Y N O K L T T O Y S I S H R
 W C E N E M E S I W F E T A N
 O B M K A J L O Z Y E G V M A
 N E R N O L U H M G O T E L M
 S O G I E O Y D N A C X O N E
 V E R B I J O T H U W B K A N
 R E E D N I E R Q C A E E R T
 L O O C H R I S T M A S T I



- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Bells | 9. Holly | 17. Sleigh |
| 2. Bethlehem | 10. Jesus | 18. Snowman |
| 3. Candy | 11. Manger | 19. Star |
| 4. Carol | 12. Merry | 20. Stocking |
| 5. Christmas | 13. Ornament | 21. Toys |
| 6. Elves | 14. Peace | 22. Tree |
| 7. Gifts | 15. Reindeer | 23. Wisemen |
| 8. Gingerbread | 16. Santa | 24. Yuletide |

Lives of the Saints – St Nicholas

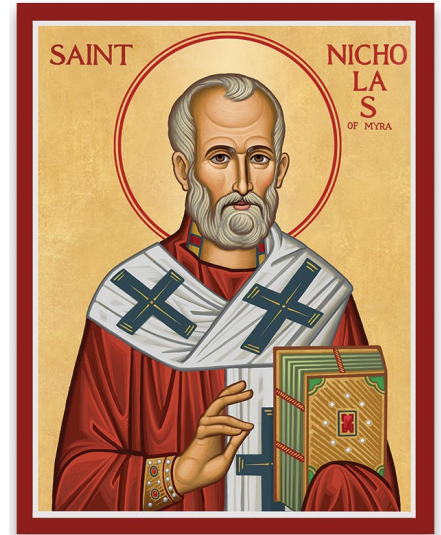
Feast Day 6th December

Birth: 270 AD.

Death: 343 AD.

Became a saint in 1446.

Patron of: Bakers and pawnbrokers, children, sailors, and fisherman.



Nicholas was born into a rich family in Turkey. He was an only child. Nicholas's parents were strong Christians. Both his parents died when he was young and was raised by his uncle, who was a Bishop. His uncle taught him how to read and he would later ordain Nicholas as a priest.

Nicholas loved giving gifts to people. He gave away his own money to help the needs of the poor, the sick people and those who are suffering. He gave three bags of gold coins to three poor girls who wanted to get married. He tossed them through the open window so that the women did not know who the money came from. Nicholas later found out that the three women all married good men.



Nicholas became Bishop during the 4th Century.

During that time Christians were persecuted. Nicholas was also tortured and in goal with the other Christians including bishops, priests, and deacons.

The prisons were so full that there was no room for murderers, thieves, and robbers. Nicholas was released from goal and he attended the Council of Nicaea.

St



Throughout his life, Nicholas appeared to powerful men, demanding that they free innocent men from prison and executions.

Nicholas is a saint because of his generosity to those in need. He continues to show us how we can be giving to those in our own lives, especially at Christmas.

St Nicholas, pray for us.



Prayer to St Nicholas during Advent

Dear St Nicholas, during Advent, help us to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ. Help us to spend time with Jesus in prayer.

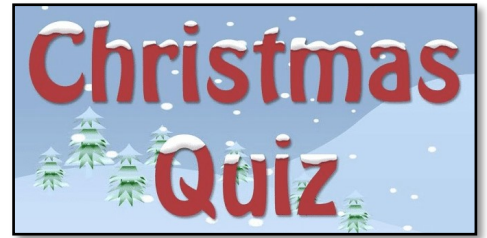
Let us be kind and generous to all people we meet. As we prepare for Christmas, may we see the true meaning of giving and receiving and to guide all people to Jesus Christ who is the greatest gift of all.

Amen.



Did you know.... Christmas Facts!

- Modern Christmas trees were first used in Germany in the 16th century. Fruits and nuts were used to decorate them instead of the glittering ornaments that we see nowadays. I am sure you didn't know this interesting fact about the Christmas tree!
- Christmas is all about receiving gifts from Santa Claus for youngsters. But, how did Santa Claus come to be? St. Nicholas is the inspiration for Santa Claus. St. Nicholas was a Christian bishop who helped the poor and needy. He also loved children and enjoyed secretly giving them gifts. As news of his story spread, he was called Sinterklaas, which became Santa Claus. We're guessing you didn't know either!
- Santa Claus used to dress in **green**, **purple**, or **blue** clothing. This was a frequent theme for the jolly old man at the North Pole for many years. **Coca-Cola**, on the other hand, chose to clothe him in colours that matched their brand, and it stuck. So that's why he's always dressed in red now!
- Have you ever wondered why the Christmas holidays are known as the "12 Days of Christmas"? The three kings travelled to the birthplace of baby Jesus for twelve days, which is why the Christmas holidays are known as the 12 Days of Christmas.
- A newspaper error gives way to NORAD's (North American Aerospace Defence Command) "Santa Tracker." The telephone number of a store where children could call and tell Santa what they wanted for Christmas was meant to be printed in a 1955 Sears ad. The listed phone number was for the Director of Operations for the United States Continental Air Defence. Colonel Shoup ordered his staff to give the children updates of Santa's flying coordinates. A tradition began and continues until this day. Every Christmas, NORAD continues to send flight updates through local news, the Internet, and iPhone app.
- During World War I, the British and Germans had a famous Christmas truce in the trenches in 1914. They exchanged gifts, played football together, and decorated their shelters across a neutral no man's land.



Live streamed Accessible Mass



Mass at our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church is open to the community.

If you feel ok to come to Mass, you are very welcome so long as you are not sick. You will have to socially distance, wear a mask and sign it at the door. Please note that there is NO morning tea after Mass.

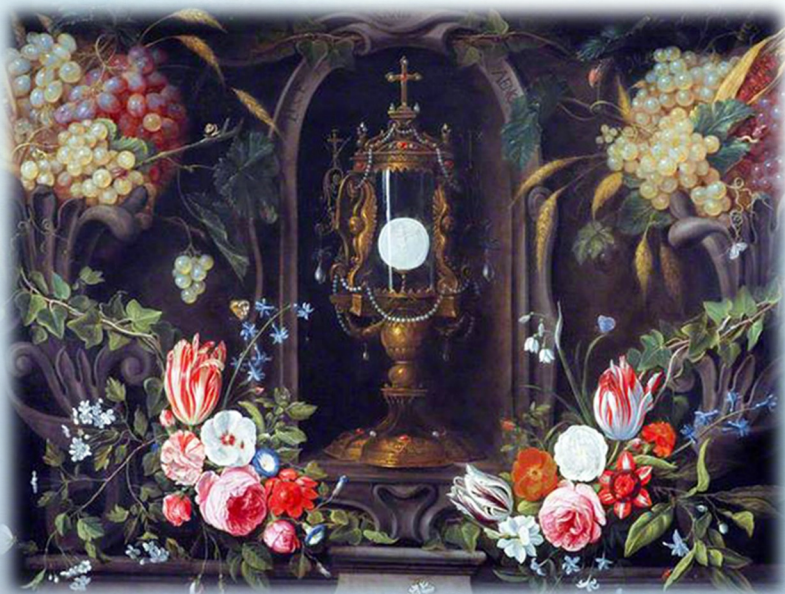
If you are not feeling confident enough to come to Mass, the Church has said that this is ok. You can say a prayer, read the Mass readings for the day or watch a Mass online. We are still filming and live-streaming Mass at 11am each Sunday with an interpreter from Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church so you can watch this on Facebook live on a Sunday or later on our Ephpheta website.

**PLEASE NOTE NO MASS AT HOMEBUSH ON 5 DECEMBER.
MASS IS AT THE CATHEDRAL AT HORNSBY THIS DAY.**

1. The last Mass for 2021 at Homebush will be on Sunday 26 December at 9am (not 11 am).

Prayer of Spiritual Communion when we cannot receive Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.



I embrace You as if you were
already there, and I unite myself
wholly to You.
Never permit me to be
separated from You.
Amen.

2nd Sunday of Advent—5 December

A Reading from the Scroll of Baruch

You Jerusalem, take off sorrow and distress, the same as a dress, and put on the beauty of God's glory for ever. Wrap around you the cloak of God's integrity (goodness). Put on your head the diadem (headband/crown) of God's glory. God will show your splendour (glory) to everyone under heaven. God will give you a name for ever: 'Peace through integrity (goodness) and honour through faithfulness.' You Jerusalem, arise. Stand on the heights and look to the east.

You will see your children from the west and from the east brought together because of the Holy One's command; and you will rejoice because God remembered them. With their enemies, they left you and they walked away. Now God brings them back to you, they are carried in glory like royal princes. God ordered all high mountains and hills become flat; the valleys filled up level; so that Israel can walk safely under God's glory.

Because of God's command, the trees will give shade to Israel; and God will lead Israel with joy by the light of his glory with mercy and goodness.

Psalm— We are glad because God's creation is marvellous.

The Lord helped us and freed us, it seemed like a dream become true!

We rejoiced, we sang and we were happy.

Other people said, 'The Lord did good things for them! Truly the Lord is wonderful.'

We were prisoners, but the Lord freed us.

The sad people with tears, are now happy.

People go out sowing seeds with tears.

But now, they gather the crops and they come back with joy.

A Reading from St Paul's Letter to the Philippians

Every time I remember you I thank God for you. Every time I pray for you all, I pray with joy because you helped me with the Gospel from the first day until now. I am sure God began this good work through you, and He will continue until the work is finished on the Day Christ Jesus comes. God knows I miss you all. I love you the same way that Jesus Christ loves you.

I pray you will love each other more and more. I pray that your knowledge will improve and that you will understand better so that you will see the truth and know what is best. This truth and knowledge will help you to become pure and without fault. It will help you to prepare for Christ's coming. Your lives will be filled with the true goodness that Jesus will give - for the glory and praise of God.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

In the fifteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod was ruler of Galilee, his brother Philip ruler of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias ruler of the land of Abilene, during the time of Annas and Caiaphas the High priests; the Word of God came to John the Baptist in the wilderness.

John went through the land near the River Jordan. He told the people to change their lives, to be baptised and receive the forgiveness of God.

In the book of Isaiah, it says: "Someone will shout in the desert: 'Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley will be filled, every mountain and hill will be made flat. Rough roads will be made smooth. Then all people will see God's salvation!'"



3rd Sunday of Advent—12 December

A Reading from the Scroll of Zephaniah

Daughter of Zion, shout with joy. Israel, shout aloud! Daughter of Jerusalem, rejoice and celebrate with all your heart. The Lord took away your punishment. Your enemies, God sent away. The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; fear evil no more.

When that day happens, someone will say: 'Zion, fear no more, do not let your hands be tired or drop.' The Lord God is with you, He the warrior (soldier) has won. He will rejoice with you; through his love he will make you new again. God will dance with shouts of joy for you as on a festival (celebration) day.

Psalm— Sing with Joy because the Lord is Great

Truly, God is my salvation.

I trust God, I will not be afraid.

The Lord gives me strength.

God saves me.

Give thanks to the Lord, praise his name!

Tell all people about his wonderful works.

Tell all people about his name.

Sing and praise the Lord, the Holy One of Israel.

A Reading from St Paul's Letter to the Philippians

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord. I say it again: I want your happiness. Show your patience to everyone. The Lord is very near. Don't worry about anything but if there is something that you need, pray to God and ask for what you need.

Always ask God with prayers and thanksgiving. God's peace is so great, we can never really understand. God's peace will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

People asked John, "What must we do?" John answered, "If you have two shirts, you must share with someone that has none. If you have food, you must also share it with someone that has no food."

Some tax collectors came to be baptized and they asked him, "What must we do?" John said to them, "Be honest, and don't charge people to pay too much tax." Some soldiers asked him, "What about us? What must we do?" John said, "Don't bully anyone.

Don't be cruel. Don't force people to pay you. Be satisfied with your wages. "People began to hope that John the Baptist might be the Christ. So John told them all, "I baptise you with water, but someone is coming.

He is more powerful than I am. I am not good enough to take off his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. He will separate the grain of wheat into his barn, and the straw that is no good he will throw into a fire that will never go out." In many different ways John preached the Good News to the people and he told them to change their lives.



4th Sunday of Advent—19 December

A Reading from the Scroll of Micah

The Lord says: 'You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, you the least important of the families of Judah, from you will be born someone to rule Israel. His family lived a long way in the past. The Lord will leave his people until the day a woman gives birth to a son.

Then his people (family) will come back and join the people of Israel. He will stand and feed his sheep with the power of the Lord and with the glory of God's name. His people will live safely because all over the earth people will acknowledge his greatness. He will bring peace.'

Psalm— Lord, let Your Face Shine on us and we will be Saved

Lord, shepherd of Israel, look at us.

Show your strength, come and help us.

Turn to us, O God!

Look down from heaven and protect your vine.

You have chosen your son.

Give him strength.

We will never leave you again.

Give us life and we will praise your name.

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

When Christ came into the world, he said: "You do not want sacrifices or blood from animals, but you prepared a body for me. You do not want animals burnt on the altar, or sacrifices to take away sins."

Christ said, "God, I am here. As it is written in the scriptures (Bible), 'I am ready to obey you.' "Christ first said to God: "You did not want sacrifices or animals burnt on the altar to take away sins."

Then Christ said to God, "I am here. I will obey you." So the old way of sacrificing animals on the altar is finished. Now Christ replaced the old way with the new way - the new offering (sacrifice) made holy by the body of Jesus Christ. One sacrifice of Jesus is enough for all people forever.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

Mary went quickly to a town in the hill country of Judah to visit Elizabeth. Zechariah lived there. Mary went into the house and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt (kicked) in her womb.

Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said aloud, "You, Mary, are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the baby in your womb. Why did you come to honour me, you, the mother of my Lord? When I heard your greeting, the baby inside me leapt (kicked) with joy.

Yes, you are blessed because you believed the Lord's promise would become true."



Christmas Vigil Mass—24 December

The Nativity of the Lord

A Reading from the Scroll of Isaiah

The Lord God said: “I will encourage Jerusalem. I will not be silent, I will help Jerusalem until she is saved. I will wait until Jerusalem’s goodness shines like light. Then all the world will see your goodness, and all the kings will see your glory. You will be like a beautiful crown for the Lord.

The Lord will give you a new name. No more will your name be ‘Rejected’ nor the land ‘Abandoned.’ Your new name will be ‘My Delight’, and your land will be called ‘Married’; because the Lord is happy with you. The Lord will be like a young man marrying you as his bride. As God created you, He will be with you. Like the man happy with his bride, the Lord God will rejoice in you.”

Psalm— Lord, I will sing about Your Love forever

I made a covenant (God’s promise) with my chosen one.

I promised David, my servant:

I said I will establish a kingdom that will continue for ever.

The people will be happy with their king.

The king follows God’s way.

God said: ‘I will love him, I will make him victorious.’



A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Paul arrived at Antioch in Pisidia, he stood up in the synagogue. Paul wanted people to listen, to look at him and be silent so he raised his hand and began to speak: "People of Israel, you that worship God, listen to me. The God of Israel chose our people of long ago.

When our people were suffering and living in a foreign land, the land of Egypt, God helped his people to escape. God made them become a great nation (people). Then God made David the king of our ancestors (people of the past).

God said, "I have chosen David, the son of Jesse. He is the man that will do all the things I want him to do." God promised that one of David's descendants (future children) would be Jesus. Jesus will be the Saviour for the people of Israel.

Before Jesus came, John the Baptist preached and told the people of Israel that they must be baptised to show their repentance. Before John the Baptist finished his work he said to the people, "You think I am the Christ - I am not. Christ will come later and I am not worthy to untie his sandal."

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew

This is how the birth of Jesus happened. The mother of Jesus Christ was Mary. Mary was engaged to marry Joseph. But before they married, Mary found that she was pregnant. She had a baby in her womb through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mary's husband, Joseph, was a good man. He did not want to embarrass Mary or give her a bad name, so he made plans for a divorce quietly. But the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.

The angel said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to accept Mary as your wife. She has the baby in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you must name him Jesus, because he will save people from their sins."

All this happened because God had made this promise through the prophet: 'A virgin will conceive and give birth to a son. He will be called Emmanuel, a name meaning 'God-is-with-us.'

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord told him to do: he took his wife Mary into his home. Joseph had no sexual intercourse with Mary; she gave birth to a son, and Joseph named him Jesus.

Feast of the Holy Family—26 December

Reading from the First Scroll of Samuel

Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Hannah named him Samuel and explained, “I asked the Lord for a son.

“A year later, the husband Elkanah and his family went to Shiloh to offer the annual (yearly) sacrifice and to keep the promise he made to the Lord, but Hannah did not go. She told Elkanah, “When the boy is old enough to eat proper food, I will take him to Shiloh. Then I will give him to the Lord. He will stay there all his life.”

When the boy was old enough to eat proper food, Hannah took him to the Lord’s house at Shiloh.

Hannah also took a three-year-old bull, 20 pounds of flour, and a bag of wine. Hannah and the boy child went to the temple. They killed the bull, then Hannah went to Eli and said to him, “Excuse me. Do you remember me?

I am the same woman you saw standing here praying to the Lord. I prayed asking for a child and the Lord answered my prayer. Now I give my child to the Lord. He will serve the Lord all his life.” Then Hannah left the boy there and worshipped the Lord.

Psalm— The People that live in Your House are Happy

Lord, your house is beautiful,

My soul wants to be in your temple.

My heart and my soul sing with joy to the living God.

The people living in your temple are happy.

They always praise you.

Lord, hear my prayer,



A reading from the First Letter of St John

God the Father loves us so much, he lovingly created us his children. We really are God's children! The world refused to believe God, and so the world does not understand that we are God's children.

Dear friends, now we are children of God, but we do not know yet what we shall become in the future. We know that when we see God we shall become like him because we shall see him as he really is.

Dear friends, if our conscience cannot condemn us, then we have nothing to fear when we approach God. Anything we ask God we will receive, because we obey his commandments and live the way God wants. God's commandments are: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and that we love each other the way God wants us to love. Any persons obeying God's commandments, live in God, and God lives in them. We know that God lives in us because of the Spirit that he gave us.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival (Feast). When Jesus was twelve (12) years old, they went to the Festival (Feast) as usual. After the Festival finished they went home, but the boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem and his parents did not know. They thought Jesus was with friends on the journey. At the end of the day's journey, his parents looked for Jesus among their relatives and friends. Then they realised Jesus was not there, so Mary and Joseph went back to Jerusalem looking for him.

Three days later, they found Jesus in the Temple. He was sitting with the Jewish teachers, listening to them and asking questions. Everyone listening to Jesus was amazed at his intelligence. When they saw him, his parents were so relieved and his mother said to him, "My child, why have you done this? Your father and I have been very worried looking for you." Jesus replied, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's work?" But they did not understand.



Then Jesus went back with them to Nazareth and he obeyed his parents. Jesus' mother, Mary, remembered many things in her heart. Jesus grew up and he became wise. God was pleased with Jesus, and people liked him.

The Epiphany of the Lord—2 January

A Reading from the Scroll of Isaiah

Jerusalem, arise. Your light has come. The Lord's glory is shining on you. Look, the world and all its people are still in the dark but the light of the Lord will shine on you. The brightness of his presence will shine on you. Other people and kings will come to your light.

Look around and see what is happening, all peoples are coming towards you; from far away your sons will come, your daughters will be carried to you.

You will see this and your heart will be filled with joy. Overseas, the wealth of other countries will be brought to you. Many camels will come to you, the young camels from Midian and Ephah. From Sheba everybody will come, they will bring gold and incense and they will praise the Lord.

Psalm— All People will bow in front of You, O Lord

God, teach the king to judge rightly.

Let the king judge poor people fairly.

God's justice and peace will spread.

God will rule from sea to sea.

God has pity on weak people.
He will save the lives of the poor.



A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

I'm sure you have heard about me that God, through his grace, showed his mystery to me so I can help you. In the past, people didn't know the mystery, but now God, through His Spirit, revealed (show) it to his holy apostles and prophets.

This means that the Gentiles (people not Jews) now share God's blessings with the Jews. The Gentiles (people not Jews) are members of the same body (the Church). They share the same promise of God, in Jesus Christ, through the Gospel.

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew

Jesus was born in Bethlehem during the time when King Herod ruled. The wise men saw a star and came from the East. They asked, "Where is the baby born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the East and we have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was very worried. All the people in Jerusalem were worried too. King Herod had a meeting with all the Jewish priests and scribes (writers). He asked, "Where will the baby be born?"

They replied, "In Bethlehem because in the scriptures (Bible), the prophet wrote: 'A leader will come from Bethlehem and he will shepherd my people Israel' ". Then King Herod asked to see the wise men privately. He wanted to know the exact date when they first saw the star. Then he sent the wise men to Bethlehem, telling them, "Go, look carefully for the baby, and when you have found him, let me know so I can come to worship him."

The wise men went on their journey and again they saw the star. They were filled with joy. They followed it and the star stopped over the place where the baby was. They went into the place and they saw the baby with his Mother Mary, then they knelt down and worshipped him.

They gave him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. But in a dream, they received a warning not to go back to king Herod; they went home a different way.

Jesus grew up and he became wise. God was pleased with Jesus, and people liked him.

The Baptism of the Lord—9 January

A Reading from the Scroll of Isaiah

God says, “Comfort my people, comfort them! Speak to the people of Jerusalem. Tell them they suffered long enough. I gave them double punishment for all the bad things they did, and now their sins are forgiven.” In the desert, a voice shouts: “Prepare a way for the Lord. Make the road straight for God. Fill every valley. Make all mountains and hills flat. The rough land will be made smooth. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed (shown), and all people will see God’s glory.

The Lord himself promised this. “Happy messenger to Zion, you bring good news. Go to a high mountain and proclaim the good news! Do not be afraid, tell all the people in the towns of Judah: ‘Here is your God.’ See, the Lord God comes with power. God uses his power to rule all people. The Lord wins all his prizes; our prize (reward) is to be with him. The Lord will lead his people, like a shepherd feeding his sheep, gathering lambs in his arms, and leading the mother ewes (sheep) to a place of rest.

Psalm— My Soul Praises the Lord, You are Wonderful

Lord God, you are wonderful.

Full of glory and power.

Your works are wonderful.

With wisdom you created everything.

The earth is full of your riches.

You keep everything alive.

Without your spirit, they die.

You give us your spirit, you make us new again

A reading from St Paul's Letter to Titus

God revealed (showed) his grace and his grace saved everybody. His grace taught us the right way to live and to give up all the bad things of the world. We must control ourselves and have good and holy lives here in this world, while we wait with hope for the coming of God our Saviour.

Jesus will come in glory. Jesus gave his life for us to free us from all evil. Jesus gave his life to purify (cleanse) our lives, so that we will belong to him, and do good in the world.

God showed the love and kindness of our Saviour to all and saved us. God saved us, not because of the good things we had done, but because of his own mercy. Through Jesus Christ our Saviour, God generously gave us the Holy Spirit, and saved us by cleansing water and new birth. Through grace we become right with God and receive eternal life.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

People began to think and expect that John the Baptist might be the Christ.

So John told everybody, "I baptise you using water, but one person is coming, this person is more powerful than me; I am not good enough to take off his sandals.

He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

After all the people had been baptised, Jesus was also baptised. While Jesus was praying, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit came down on him like a dove.

Then a voice from heaven said, "You are my Son, the Beloved. I bless you."



2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time—16 January

A Reading from the Scroll of Isaiah

The Lord God said: "I will encourage Jerusalem. I will not be silent, I will help Jerusalem until she is saved. I will wait until Jerusalem's goodness shines like light. Then all the world will see your goodness, and all the kings will see your glory.

You will be like a beautiful crown for the Lord. The Lord will give you a new name. No more will your name be 'Rejected' nor the land 'Abandoned.' Your new name will be 'My Delight', and your land will be called 'Married'; because the Lord is happy with you.

The Lord will be like a young man marrying you as his bride. As God created you, He will be with you. Like the man happy with his bride, the Lord God will rejoice in you."

Psalm— Proclaim the Wonders of the Lord

Sing to the Lord!

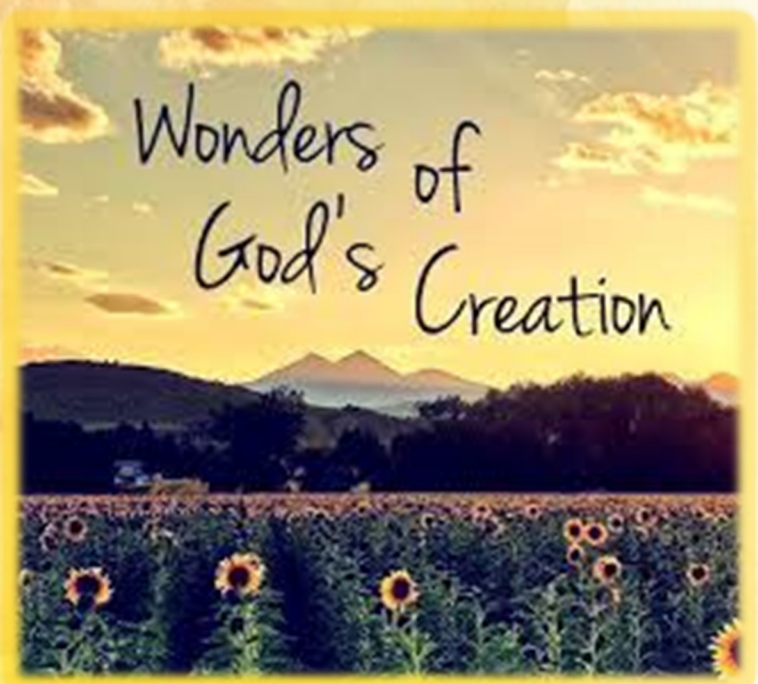
Tell all people about his help.

Tell all people about his glory.

Tell all people about his wonders.

Families and peoples, give glory and power to the Lord.
Praise his name.

Worship the Lord in his temple.
Tell all people, 'God is King.'



A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

There are many different spiritual gifts but they are all from the same Holy Spirit. There are different ways of serving, but all serve the same Lord. Different people work different ways, but the same God works in all of them.

The Holy Spirit shows God's power through each person for a good reason. The Holy Spirit may give one person the gift of wisdom; another person may have the gift of preaching; another may have the gift of faith; another may have the gift of healing; another may have the power of miracles; another may have the gift of prophecy; another may have the gift of being able to recognise (see) the difference between spirits that come from God or from the devil; another may have the gift of speaking and understanding languages.

All these different gifts come from the same Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different people as God wishes.

A Reading from the Gospel of John

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited. At the wedding, the wine was finished (empty), Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no wine."

Jesus said, "Woman, why come to me? My time is not yet ready." Jesus' mother said to the servants, "Do what Jesus tells you to do." The Jews have strict rules about washing, and there were six stone jars near the wall used for washing. Each jar could hold 20 or 30 gallons of water. Jesus said to the servants, "Pour water and fill these jars."

The servants poured water into the jars. Then Jesus said, "Now take some water and give it to the steward (chief servant)." The servants took some water and gave it to the steward (chief servant). The steward (chief servant) tasted it, but the water had become wine.

He did not know where the wine was from, but the servants knew. The steward (chief servant) said to the bridegroom, "People usually give the best wine first, and later when people are drunk, the servants offer the cheaper wine. But you have given the best wine at the end of your wedding feast!"

This was the first sign (miracle) Jesus did - this happened at Cana in Galilee. Jesus let people see his glory and his disciples believed in him.

3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time—23 January

A Reading from the Scroll of Nehemiah

On the first day of the seventh (7th) month, the people - men, women and children old enough to understand - met together for a meeting. Ezra the priest brought the Scroll of the Law. In the square near the Water Gate, in front of all these people, Ezra read from the Scroll of the Law; he read from early morning until twelve (12) noon.

All the people listened carefully to Ezra reading from the Scroll of the Law. Ezra the scribe (writer) stood on a wooden platform built specially so people could see him. Ezra opened the book and all the people stood up. Ezra said, "Praise the Lord, the Great God!"

All the people raised their hands and said, "Amen! Amen!". Then they bowed down, faces to the ground, and they worshipped the Lord. Ezra read from the Law of God; he translated and explained it so that the people understood what the Law meant. Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe (writer), and the Levites (those teaching the Law) said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord God. Do not be sad, do not cry."

Because all the people were crying as they listened to the Law. Then Ezra said, "Go home and eat. Celebrate, enjoy good food and sweet wine. Share with those that have nothing. Today is special to the Lord. Do not be sad: the joy of the Lord will make you strong."

Psalm— Lord, Your Words have Spirit. Your Words have Life

The law of the Lord is perfect.

The law gives new strength.

God's law gives wisdom to the people.

God's law makes people happy.

God's laws are good.

God's laws show people the right way to live.

All his laws are true and just and fair.



A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

A person has one body and the body has many parts (arms, legs, head, etc). The same with Christ. All of us are different, Jews, Gentiles (non-Jews), slaves or free people, but all of us received the one Spirit. The body is not made up of one part only, it has many parts. The foot is one part of the body. The foot is not the same as the hand, but the foot belongs to the body. The ear is not the same as the eye, but the ear belongs to the body.

If all your body was just one eye, how could you hear? If all your body was just one ear, how could you smell? No, the body has many different parts and God put them all together. If each part of the body were the same, how could it be a body? There are many different parts but they all form and become one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you." The head cannot say to the feet, "I do not need you."

All parts of the body are important. If one part of the body is weak, we look after it carefully and with great respect. God has put the body together in a wonderful way, so we need to respect it. There is no division in the body. All the different parts are important. So if one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is praised, all the other parts are praised too. In the same way, all of you together are Christ's body, but each one of you is a different part of Christ's body. In the Church, there are apostles, prophets, teachers; people with gifts of miracles and healing; good leaders that help, and people good with many languages.

Not all are apostles. Not all are prophets. Not all are teachers. They are all different. They all have different gifts, but they are all together in Christ's one body.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

Many people tried their best to write about the things that happened recently. They wrote exactly what the witnesses saw, and they themselves followed God's Word. I, myself, thought carefully about the story from the beginning, and I have decided to write everything for you, Theophilus. I do this so that you will know the full truth, everything about the teaching of Jesus Christ. Jesus, with the power of the Holy Spirit in him, came back to Galilee. News about him spread all over the land. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. Then Jesus went to Nazara, the place where he grew up. On the Sabbath, he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read. Some one gave him the scroll written by the prophet, Isaiah. Jesus unrolled the scroll and found the part he wanted to read: "The spirit of the Lord is in me because he anointed me."

The Lord chose me to go and tell the Good News to poor people; to those imprisoned (trapped) that they are free; to help the blind see; to tell those suffering from oppression that they are now free; and to proclaim the Lord's year of favour." Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue watched him. Jesus said to them, "This writing from the Scripture (Bible) is happening today, the same time as you listen."

4th Sunday of Ordinary Time—30 January

A Reading from the Scroll of Jerimiah

The Lord said to me, “Before I created you in your mother’s womb, I already knew you. Before you were born, I blessed you. I chose you to be a prophet to all nations (countries). You (Jeremiah), get ready; go and tell everybody everything I tell you.

Do not be afraid of the people, or I will make it worse and make you more afraid when you are with them. Listen to me Jeremiah, everyone in this land - the kings of Judah, the officials, the priests, and the people - all of them will be against you.

But today I will give you strength; you will be like a strong city, with pillar of iron and a bronze wall. They will fight against you but will not defeat you because I will be with you to protect you. I, the Lord, said this.”

Psalm— I Will Tell All People About Your Help

Lord, I come to you for protection.

Never let me be ashamed.

In your justice rescue me, free me.

You are my rock, my place of safety.

Lord, you give me hope. I trust you.

From my birth, from my youth, you always helped me.

You taught me, you protected me.

I will always thank you.



A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

Always try to have the great gifts of the Holy Spirit. I will show you the best way of all. I may be able to speak well like people or angels, but if I speak without love, I am nothing. If I have the gift of prophecy, and I understand all the things about God and know everything, but if I have no love, then I am nothing. If I have enough strong faith and can move mountains, but if I have no love, then I am nothing.

If I give away everything I have and if I let people kill me and burn my body, but if I have no love, then my sacrifice will be no good. Love is always patient and kind. Love is never jealous or proud. Love is never selfish or rude and is not quick to anger. Love does not want to know the wrong things other people do, but is always happy to know the truth. Love is always ready to forgive/give excuse, to trust, to hope, and always patient with whatever happens. Love will never finish. There are people with gifts of prophecy, but there will be a time when the gifts of prophecy will fail/end.

The gifts of languages will not continue for ever. The same with knowledge, it will fail. Our knowledge and our prophesying are not perfect. But when perfection comes, all the things that are not perfect will disappear. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and think like a child, and argue like a child. But now I am an adult I do not behave like a child. I leave behind childish things. Now we see something blurred, like in a mirror. One day in the future, we will see things clearly face to face. One day I will have perfect knowledge and know myself in the same way that God knows me. Only three things are important for ever: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

Jesus began to speak to the people in the synagogue, "This reading is really happening today at the same time as you listen." All the people agreed and said good things about Jesus. They were impressed with Jesus and said, "He preached very well." Some people said, "Is it true that he is Joseph's son?" Jesus said to them, "I'm sure you will quote (tell) me: 'Doctor, heal yourself'. You also want to tell me, 'We heard all the things you did in Capernaum. Why not do the same here in your home place?'"

Then Jesus said, "I tell you the truth: A prophet is never welcomed, never accepted in his own country. Long time ago, during the time of Elijah, there were many widows in Israel. There was no rain for three and a half (3½) years and the land became dry so there was a famine (no food). God did not send Elijah to help any of these widows in Israel, but He sent Elijah to a widow in Zarephath, a town in Sidon. Also, during the time of Elisha, there were many lepers living in Israel. No one was cured, only the leper named Naaman and he lived in Syria." When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were furious. They got up and pushed Jesus out of the town.

They went to the top of the hill. They wanted to throw Jesus over the cliff, but Jesus walked through the middle of the crowd and escaped.

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



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!