



The Journal of Killara Uniting Church Parish

"Fiveways" - Corner Arnold Street and Karranga Avenue

<https://killara.uca.org.au>

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Christmas comes to the Outback

CONNECTION



The young people (and friends) celebrate the work of God done through John Flynn, Frontier Services and the Flying Doctors. See more photos of our Christmas pageant inside.

Blessings on Zack Winslow for his future studies at ANU Canberra



As part of the morning service on December 8th, Zack Winslow was given a blessing by the congregation as he moves to Canberra next year to take up a Tuckwell scholarship to study at Australian National University.

Our Minister Yangrae led in the blessing and pastoral carers joined in praying for God's guiding and keeping as Zack moves to this new chapter of his life.

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From the Editor

Christmas time is joyful. From the time of the Hebrew prophets messages of hope echoed down the ages – messages that we see fulfilled in Jesus. The Angels' joyful message informs all our carols and we feel the joy as we sing.

Some shops seem to think that the essence of Christmas is feasting, receiving gifts and laying on the glitter. All these things are outward expression of joy, but we seek its essence as we see God's grace to us in the gift of Jesus.

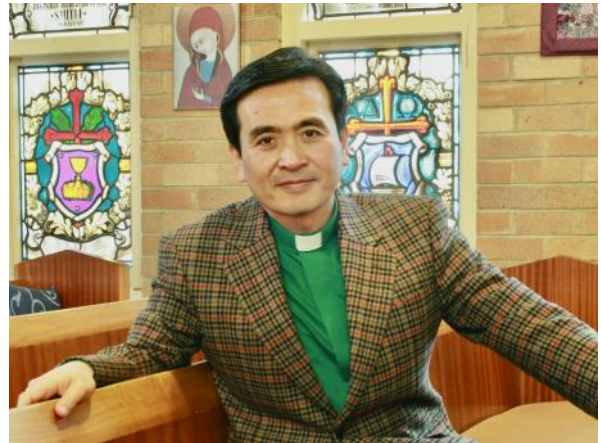
Our Church is already voicing that message and will do so further with Lessons and Carols and Christmas services. The young people have had their spirited Pageant which touched on the relevance of the light of Jesus to Outback Australia.

Again and again we are encouraged in Scripture to rejoice! Even in dark times we glimpse the grace of God. Let us joy in God's gift to us this Christmas.

Julie Sekhon

From the Minister's Desk.

There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. [Luke 21:25-28]



In the film, *Schindler's List*, Amon Goeth, the commandant of the concentration camp, embodied a pure evil who treated Jews empty-heartedly. He teased Oskar Schindler about his help of the Jews crammed in the train toward gas-chambers, "You're cruel Oskar. You're giving them hope. Now that's cruel!"

The Nazi officer, Goeth, understood that giving water to the agonising Jews was useless and even cruel because it might mislead them to hope that they could be saved and free. He thought Schindler was simply extending their time of agony. The Jews will die in the death chambers. Is it cruel to give hope to those who face impending disasters? Is it useless to show the final picture of the world to those who are in apocalyptic situations? What is hope?

Advent Season (Year C with St Luke's gospel), the church's New Year, starts, and we are called to focus on the future coming of the Son of Man. We are not looking to our own future, which looks despondent at the moment, perhaps as ever. The world is hopelessly falling apart around us; there are victims of wars and natural disasters, and frightening rumours of imminent wars in our generation. There are painful failures and shameful cracks in our individual lives.

It is precisely in a situation of hopelessness, of deadness, where we feel that there's no life possible, that new life can actually come. The image of the dead tree sprouting a branch is a sign of hope against hope. Leonard Cohen reminds us of hope, singing, "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in." Perhaps we may find ourselves among the Jews in the crowded train. In the middle of such hopeless situation, our Lord Jesus, our Saviour, is saying to us, "Stand up and raise your heads". Why? Because our salvation is drawing near. We are glad that we don't have to liberate ourselves from the crammed train. Instead, our salvation is coming to us. Hope-full Advent and joyful Christmas to us all.

Yangrae Son
[Minister of the Word]

Hiking for a great charity

Chris Hare

In mid-2023, I attended a very inspiring presentation by Peter Baines. He introduced the audience to Hands Across the Water, a charity organisation he founded in response to the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami.

Oli's school had recently decided to partner with Hands (among other charitable organisations), and there would be an opportunity for Year 6 students from Oli's 'house' to visit one of the schools, as part of a cultural 'immersion' experience (see Oli's report).

So, when I read an appeal for people to accept a challenge to 'Hike For Hands,' I figured, what better reason to get walking and raise money for a worthy cause at the same time?

The challenge was to walk 100 KM during the month of June. I figured if I could raise a few hundred dollars for Hands while out walking our dog, it would be a win-win.

After my initial fundraising target was passed within a few days, I thought I'd lift my game and set myself a bit more of a challenge. Averaging 10 km a day, and with June having 30 days, I decided 300 KM would be a decent goal.

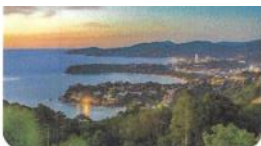
As part of that total, I decided to follow the Bondi2Manly walking trail—80 km around our beautiful harbour. I can't speak highly enough about this trail if you ever can walk it. While there are lots of famous landmarks and busy parts of the trail, there's also a lot of hidden history and quiet parts of natural beauty that you get to enjoy.

While it was a commitment to complete the 300 KM, whenever the walking started to feel like a bit of a challenge, I reminded myself of the children whose lives are supported and are given a life of choice by Hands Across the Water. This very quickly got my mind refocused on the task.

Thanks to the very generous support from members of our congregation and others, I was excited to raise over \$3,500 which made the walking so worthwhile. Thank you!

For more information about Hands Across the Water and the work that they do, please take a look at the website <https://www.handsacrossthewater.org.au/>

(Chris' son Oliver had a chance to see Hands across the Water in operation: see Oli's Thailand trip below and on next page - Ed)



Time at BTN

Spending time at the school and being with the children was the highlight!



Planting Trees

We planted mango and avocado trees with the children and cleared some land.

Playing

We took balls and bats and had an awesome time playing in their covered area.



Cooking

We divided into groups and helped make traditional Thai treats.



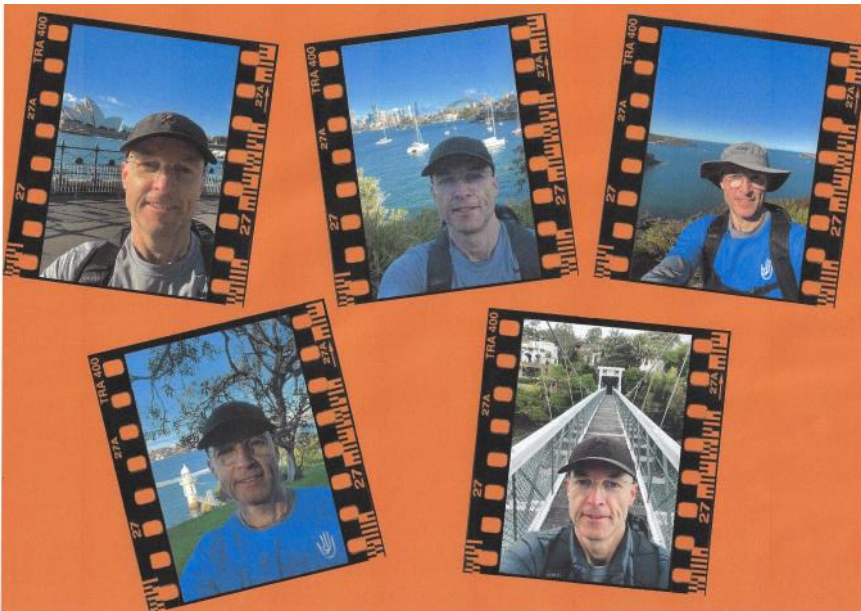
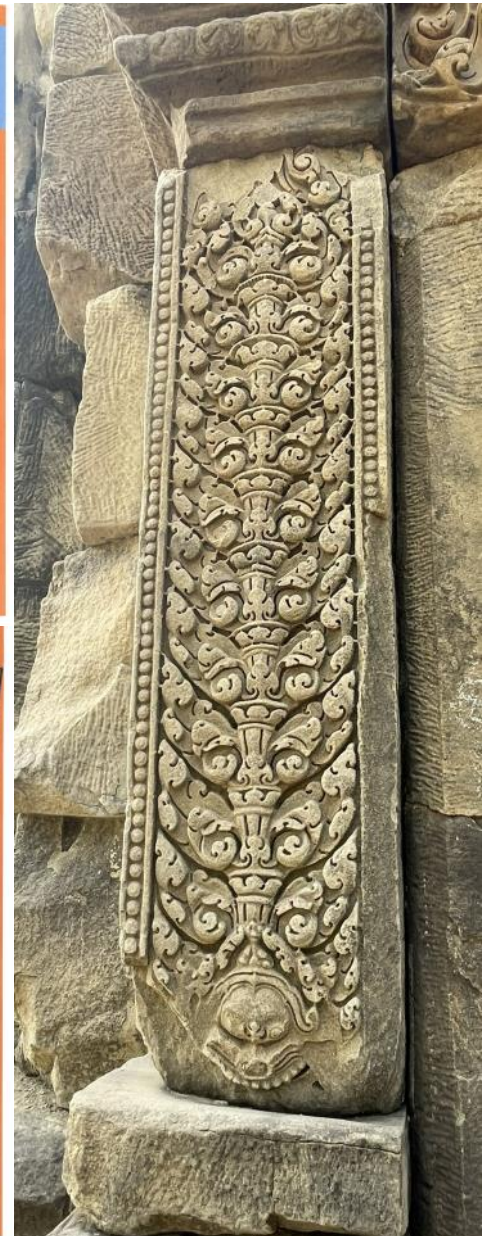
HANDS ACROSS THE WATER June Walking Challenge

300 KM's Walked

\$3,500 raised

Thank you!

The poster features a map of the Sydney region with a pink walking route highlighted. The background is orange and blue.



Oli's Thailand trip

Hello!

As many of you may know, a few months ago some parents and teachers, and several students including myself, went over to the Baan Tharn Namchai (BTN) school in Thailand.

Hands Across the Water (which runs the BTN school) was founded by an Australian police inspector named Peter Baines, who was tasked with identifying bodies in the aftermath of the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. He did so in order to give orphans a place to eat, rest up, and recuperate.

After we arrived there, we taught them how to play cricket, played games with them, made sweets etc. And this was all done with a significant language barrier.

As well as that, we also washed elephants, went to James Bond Island (Man With The Golden Gun... anybody?), went canoeing, saw walking fish (no, I'm not joking!), and fed catfish, among many other things.

So, all in all, it was a pretty good trip!

Oli

The Walking Group

walked in September ... and October ... and November and had a feast of great views and interesting subjects:



September walk was to the Coal Loader at Waverton. Established in 1916, the desecration of a pristine site by industry was decried by Henry Lawson. Now, however - since the de-commissioning of the site – it is becoming an environmentally and community friendly place with great views.



In **October**, we walked around Longueville. There was too much of interest for one walk so walkers broke into two parties. Jennifer Neilson led her group around some of the older houses where they discovered that big names had once lived there: aviator Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, artist Brett Whitely, barrister and broadcaster Geoffrey Robinson and actor Nicole Kidman. See Jennifer and Ian in front of Jennifer's parents' old home (now two-storey)



The other group discovered the spot on Woodford Bay where Lt Ralph Clark of the First Fleet is reputed to have landed in February 1790, and where, later, timber from the hinterland, drawn by bullocky, was loaded on ships. Two hundred years of colonial settlement suddenly seemed so short!

In **November**, Sue Mitchell answered a request to provide a tour of paintings at the Art Gallery of NSW – paintings specially chosen for their appeal. As always, Sue delighted her audience with her background knowledge.

...and, of course, there was always coffee to follow our walks.



Joan Allison Thomson
29 Dec 1934-26 Aug 2024

We remember Joan as a friendly, welcoming person, always with a smile, but she was much more than that. Bright, fun-loving, adventurous, Joan led a varied life, meeting challenges, bringing fun and celebration to those around her, and meanwhile raising three children, much of the time by herself whilst her sailor husband was overseas.

Joan was born in Brisbane and her early years were spent in that city, followed by time spent in Melbourne and finally in Sydney where she completed her schooling and went to business college. She also travelled: taking a working holiday on board the ship 'George Anson', she met the Chief Engineer, Bill Thomson in Hong Kong and a romance began which culminated in marriage in 1969.

Three children were born in the following years: Andrew, Duncan and Mary Lou. Andrew says: **With Dad away at sea a lot, Mum raised us all with a combination of imagination, great fun, endless love, hard work, and determination.**

Bill died in 1991. It was a severe loss for Joan: although Bill was so often away, it had been a happy marriage. Joan was aware that she needed to support the family and in fact, she had found her niche in real estate.

Before her marriage, Joan had worked in a real estate office, and finding the work enjoyable, trained as a real estate agent. When the children entered their teens, she went back to real estate. Initially, she had a franchise of another agency, but in 1993 she had courage to open her own business: Joan Thomson Real Estate. She was accepted into the Real Estate Institute and became its first ever woman President.

She retired from real estate in her 70s, and 'threw herself into everything' - bridge, bowls, knitting and catching up with friends.

Mary Lou says 'As life slowed down and cancer caught her, she battled through with determination and grit...despite all, she kept her positivity and humour always.

It was a measure of Joan's loving nature and fun-loving personality that all the family loved her greatly in return. Mary Lou says further:

She believed she had had an extraordinary life and was grateful for it every day. The journalist Hunter S Thompson said...Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out and loudly proclaiming "Wow! What a ride." Joanie believed in this theory, she used to say more gently "Life's an adventure, you've got to make every day count."

It is hard to sum up a life, harder to explain just how many lives she touched with sincerity, positivity, integrity, grace, and humour, and hardest of all to encapsulate the enormity of what she meant to those of us who were blessed to have her in our lives...

She had a strong faith and told me very late in life that she was at school when peace was declared after the war. They announced it at assembly, and they sang the hymn - O Jesus I have promised - and she silently vowed to serve God - something she quietly did all her life.



Further Transport Information: a service from Uber.

UBER ASSIST

Uber Assist is a service that provides extra assistance for riders with mobility needs, including those using wheelchairs, walkers, and other assistive devices. To request an Uber Assist ride, you can:

1. Open the Uber app and enter your destination
2. Select Assist at the bottom of the screen

Tap Confirm Assist

If an Uber Access or Assist driver is available and confirms your trip request, you'll see your driver's picture and vehicle details and can track their arrival on the map.

For older adults who may not be as comfortable booking rides via an app, dialling **13 82 37** any day will connect riders with an Uber team member who will assist with booking a ride on demand or scheduling one for up to 90 days in advance. The phone line is available between 5 AM and 8 PM local time.

Faith Gibson

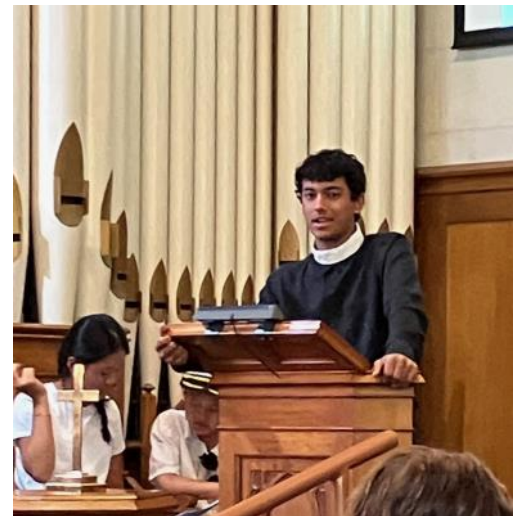
Transported in Thailand

Linda Brown and Peter Gibbs returned from a family visit in Thailand. We enjoyed a wonderful cultural experience in Bangkok and Prasat. Saw quite a few Khmer temples, visited an elephant village and recommend the Royal Thai Airforce Museum in Bangkok and the very easy to use Bangkok Transit System Skytrain.



Christmas comes to the Outback

We wish to express our big thanks to Julie S and the participants of this year's Pageant. It was a wonderful representation of Frontier Services and the Flying Doctors and the folk in need in remote Australia.



Christmas Comes to the Outback Youth Pageant December 2024

A hundred years ago remote Australia was a lonely place. A 'bushie' from the Outback and his wife agreed; 'Everyone has forgotten the Outback!'

---and a little outback lady said: 'If my baby is sick, I have no telephone and no one to ask!'

...But God had a messenger – a young minister named John Flynn. He argued for hospitals for the Outback, and nurses and doctors...

...and then he argued for radio – and the pedal radio was born...

...and then he argued for planes. Cliff, Air Force pilot, said they were 'just the thing for the Outback' and the Flying Doctor came into being.

The light born at Bethlehem inspired the bringing of light to the people of the Outback.



KUC FINANCE ANNOUNCEMENT 24-Nov-24

My first job is to thank those wonderful parishioners who have put their hand in their pocket to bolster our Church finances. We do understand there are some who cannot afford to donate anymore as, with current Australian monetary conditions, they're probably battling to keep financially afloat. We wish them well.

Because of these contributions, we have received sufficient funds to revamp the audio-visual system. This project has been on our books since Yangrae's arrival some 5 years ago and is necessary to prevent a breakdown of his Zoom broadcasts each week, as well as improve the audio and visual clarity of our wonderful Sunday morning services. Special thanks to Rob Muir who has persevered over the five years to bring this to fruition in a more cost-effective manner.

Property income. Every year we review the rental rates of the Church's property to ensure we are both providing good facilities and getting a just reward for what we offer. Danielle and several other Uniting Churches have compared hiring rates, and we seem to be in the top echelon of charges, and that is comforting. We are careful to ensure that we charge for each facility separately. If a renter uses hall and kitchen, they are charged for both, whereas hall use alone there is only one charge.

A further change over the years has been the way we invoice ballet dancing. In earlier years, they would book for a term and then cancel some of the times and require a credit. We contended that this was unfair to other potential users, as well as detrimental to our finance bottom line. They now pay 50% of the base rate as a **booking fee** with the other 50% of the base rate as a **usage fee**.

The result of this comprehensive approach has been quite good utilization of the hall but very little utilization of the Church apart from a few weddings, funerals and musical events per year. As we all know the Church acoustics are superb and it is sad that more use is not made of this wonderful facility, particularly when we have such a beautiful organ and piano and some excellent players that bring these instruments vividly to life. Obviously, we would welcome any opportunity to attract other users. Maybe we need a band to attract more young people!

The facilities have been advertised on our website.

Property Expenses. For over 30 odd years Jen and I have been attending Fiveways. We have not only seen the Link built – not during our watch, but also seen other significant improvements during our 10 year tenure as Joint Treasurers - the Church vents which are now copper to match the guttering - not galvanized iron; sound insulation in the hall – the ballet teachers no longer get headaches; reconstruction of the roof beams in the hall – fortunately partly paid for by the **Killara Seoul Uniting Church**; major sewerage expense and painting to both the Hall and Manse due to age, and recently mould infestation which had spread from the storeroom to the kitchen, adjacent toilets as well as the hall – we have taken more steps to arrest this problem and are considering a dehumidifier.

Accounts. I thought it would be informative and possibly interesting to view the accounts for a portion of the period under my watch. It is therefore proposed to send out a seven-year summary of our revenue and expenses where you can make your own judgement of our overall performance.

Future. I plan to ease back in my involvement in Treasury at my 90th birthday next February, confining my attention to account assembly, but will remain active on the Property Committee while I am capable and wanted.

I thank you again for your ongoing support and hope that you will continue to do so. We have a great team in all the facets of our Church's life – may it continue.

Thank you again

Ian Neilson

Snapshots from Fun and Games, November 3

Once again an enjoyable time was given us all, and thanks go to the workers,



including those hidden in the kitchen!



A Baptism

A special day: the baptism of Airlie on September 15 : an occasion for the congregation to celebrate with the family.





Annette in China

A photo of me in China riding a double humped camel in Tianshan Kuqa Mysterious Grand Canyon in October

Heritage Grant



Thank you to Julie Sekhon for successfully applying for a **Heritage Home Grant from Ku-ring-gai Council.** The money was used to paint some of the interior and exterior on the manse. Jen Neilson and Peter Gibbs also assisted through the process.



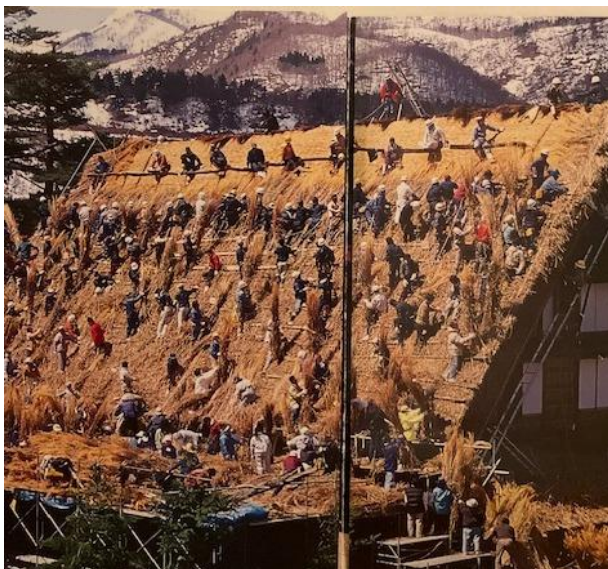


We've had the privilege of listening to amazing musicians over the last 3 months. Our dedicated organist Kyung-Hee Jung consistently concludes Sunday Service with a beautiful musical postlude.



Holiday Snaps

Liz and John Giles have seen interesting sights in Japan including a village where the whole village collaborates to re-thatch a house. Surely a message for our individualist society!





Advent 1 (1 Dec) - One Voice, One Body in Holy Communion
Advent 2 (8 Dec) - Christmas Pageant
Advent 3 (15 Dec) - Killara Chorale
Advent 4 (22 Dec) - worship @ 9:30am
Christmas Morning Service (25 Dec) - worship @ 9:30am

