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Deaf Catholic News

Christmas Edition
November 2026 - February 2027

Thank you for a wonderful year...



It is hard to believe that this is the final Ephpheta newsletter for 2026. I know we say it every year but....
Where has the year gone?!

The Ephpheta team have worked hard to support our deaf community throughout the year – in providing the retreat, community days out, accessible Mass, community groups, pastoral support and all the many things we have done in 2026.

Of course, there have been some sad times – we have walked with members of the community as they have struggled, and we have said goodbye (on this earth) to some people who are dear to us.

Through the good times and bad times, the amazing spirit of the Ephpheta deaf community has shone through – the joy of community, shared experience, beautiful Auslan. Thank you for your support of the Ephpheta team - it has been our joy to serve the community.

We look forward to seeing you as we head into Christmas – please look inside this newsletter for more information.

With all blessings for a happy and peaceful Christmas.

The Ephpheta Team



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A message from Chrisso



Hi everyone!
As we come to the end of another year and reflect on 2026 and all that has happened, there are always two things that surprise me:

- How quickly the year has flown by!
- The incredible spirit, love and faith of our deaf community

What a year it has been! From the highs and lows, the good times and sad times, the busyness of our everyday work and the 'big events' in our calendar there was no denying the wonderful spirit among us all that can be seen anywhere our deaf community is.

One of the many highlights this year was welcoming Fr Mike Depcik from America with us for one month. It was an incredible opportunity for so many in our deaf community to meet with a deaf priest and communicate in Auslan – the profound impact of his time with us is something many of us felt in different ways.

Through his visit we shared many wonderful moments as a community – celebrating deaf Masses together, deaf café, deaf festival, visiting Mary MacKillop Place and Eileen O'Connor House, and of course having him lead our community retreat (with over 40 people attending!). His visit was a beautiful reminder to us all that God's love has no limits and that we are all valued, loved and welcomed **just as we are**.



His visit reminded and encouraged us to trust in God's timing – even when we don't always understand the plan. Sometimes the most meaningful blessings arrive when we least expect them!

Throughout the year, our many events have brought us together, creating opportunities to celebrate, learn and support one another and make everlasting memories. Whether we were busy organising events, laughing together, supporting deaf people one on one or simply enjoying each other's company, it was the community spirit that truly made everything special.

As our Ephpheta team looks back at 2026 with deep gratitude, we also look forward with hope and excitement for what lies ahead. Thank you to everyone who has contributed their time, energy, generosity and wonderful spirit throughout the year. Each of you has played a part in making our deaf community a special safe space and place for deaf people to belong.

May we continue to share God's love, support each other and trust in His perfect timing – remembering that while we may not always know what the future holds, we can face it together with faith, joy and a little laughter!
Wishing everyone the peace and joy of Christmas. Here's to another year of faith, friendship and beautiful community moments!

With deepest thanks and love,
Chrisso

Fr Michael's Reflection...



Give thanks in everything

"Give thanks in everything.
For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for all of you."
1 Thessalonians 5:18



I once visited a family whose son was severely disabled. I spoke to his little brother, and remember him being frustrated with people who don't understand that suffering can be a gift from God. He spoke with wisdom and confidence, like a person who has learned through experience.

When St Paul taught "give thanks in everything", he meant in good times and in bad, in joy and in suffering. We are meant to live "in Christ Jesus". What is the life of Jesus like? Throughout Jesus' whole life on earth and on into eternity, He gives perfect thanks to God, His heavenly Father.

What is giving thanks? Everyone knows how to say "thank-you"! We say it to show love to another who loves us by giving us what is good. Giving thanks is just to say this to God from our hearts. We so rarely think about the gifts of God, even the good gifts that we understand to be good in every possible way. I think that, if our guardian angels were to only remind us about each of those gifts, we would die of old age before we thanked God for all of them!

And, then, we would have more to say, because God also knows how to give us good hidden in our sufferings. So, I thank God for the good and the bad, as I try my best to thank God always and for everything.

As we approach Christmas,
may God bless you abundantly and fill you with gratitude,
Fr Michael

ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US FOR

Ephpheta Community Christmas Party

MASS AND LUNCH

Sunday, 6 December

MASS - 10.30am

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

LUNCH - 12pm

The Auditorium, Canada Bay Club
8 William Street, Five Dock

Join us for a delicious buffet meal
with fun games plus our Christmas raffle
$45 per person
$10 per child (12 years and under)

For payment options please contact Ephpheta
Please arrange to pay before the event

Tickets will also be on sale for a Christmas raffle

If you have any interpreting requests or
dietary requirements let us know **ASAP**

RSVP before 27 November

Liz 0400 300 295
liz@ephpheta.org.au



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Advent Activity – 29th November

This year we will be getting together to set up the nativity scene in Fr Michael's parish. Materials and morning tea will be provided. All are welcome to join us.



When and Where: Sunday 29 November. After 10.30am Mass
Our Lady of the Assumption - 74 Underwood Road, Homebush
So we have an idea of numbers please RSVP to Brett Beath 0407 064 872

Christmas Mass



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

Mass is at **Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church, 74 Underwood Road, Homebush.**

Thursday 24 December (Christmas Eve Vigil)	**5.30pm** Deaf Mass	Join us for a cup of tea or coffee in the Hall after Mass

Please bring a plate of food to share (does not need an oven)

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

Any questions, please contact Liz 0400 300 295

Ephpheta closing and arrangements through January



The Ephpheta team will be taking a break as usual over the Christmas - NewYear 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 Wednesday 23 December until
9am on Wednesday 27 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 10 play at any time.

Emergency Contact numbers from 24 December until 26 January:

Liz:	0400 300 295 or liz@ephpheta.org.au
Chrisso:	0405 749 488 (SMS only)
Donovan:	0408 697 773 (SMS only)
Fr Michael:	0466 319 290

PLEASE ONLY USE THESE NUMBERS IF IT IS AN GENUINE EMERGENCY

Ash Wednesday – 10th February

There will be two Ash Wednesday Masses this year.

Homebush - Ash Wednesday
When: Wednesday 10 February, 9.30am
Where: Our Lady of the Assumption,
74 Underwood Road, Homebush

Penrith - Ash Wednesday
When: Wednesday 10 February, 7pm
Where: St Nicholas' Catholic Church,
326 High Street, Penrith

Mass at Homebush will be live streamed onto Ephpheta Facebook for those who can't attend.

Community Day Out – 12th February

Please **SAVE THE DATE** for our Community Day Out.



We are still finalising details and will have more information soon. We will announce the details once confirmed via Ephpheta Facebook page.

When: Friday 12 February 2027

RSVP: If you would like more information when the event is confirmed please contact Bowyn 0411 174 247 (SMS) or email bowyn@ephpheta.org.au



Community Presentation – 24th February



Diabetes Australia is the leading national organisation supporting people living with diabetes.

120,000 people are diagnosed with diabetes each year.
Diabetes Australia provides education, care and support to help people live well with diabetes.

We are very lucky to have Diabetes Australia come and lead an informative session with our deaf community that is aimed to help people living with diabetes and their families learn more about how to manage diabetes to stay well and healthy. We will also learn how we can reduce our risk of diabetes. This will be Auslan interpreted.

During this presentation we will learn:

- What is diabetes
- Types of diabetes
- Risk factors and symptoms of type 2 diabetes
- How to reduce your risk
- Where to get support

When and Where: Wednesday 24 February. Meet at 10am for a 10.30am start
Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church Hall – 74 Underwood Road, Homebush

Cost: Free. Ephpheta will provide morning tea (gold coin donation appreciated)

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

diabetes australia

Lent Groups 2027 – Save the dates

Lent is a very important time for us.



In the 40 days leading up to Easter, it is important for us to stop and think about our relationship with God and how God wants us to live.

Please **save the dates** for our Lent Groups.
More information to follow

Week 1 – Sunday 14 February (after Mass)
Week 2 – Sunday 21 February (after Mass)
Week 3 – Sunday 28 February (after Mass)
Week 4 – Sunday 7 March (after Mass)
Week 5 – Sunday 14 March (after Mass)

If you would like to join or more information, please contact Brett Beath 0407 064 872.



EPHPHETA CRAFT GROUP

All are welcome to get involved in our program of events or bring your own projects to work on.

We start at 10am and finish around 2pm. **Please bring your own lunch**. Ephpheta provides morning tea for a gold coin donation.

Dates for November 2026 - March 2027:

NO CRAFT GROUP ON 11 NOVEMBER

- **Wednesday 25 November 2026**
  - Christmas cards with Emily (all materials provided)
    - You **MUST** RSVP
- **Wednesday 9 December 2026**
  - Craft Christmas Party!
    - *See page 9 for more information*
      - Last Craft Group of the year
- **Wednesday 10 February 2027**
  - Welcome to 2027!
- **Wednesday 24 February 2027**
  - Community Presentation
    - *See page 7 for more information*
- **Wedneday 10 March 2027**
- **Wednesday 24 March 2027**

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month

Homebush Hall

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

For more information please contact
Chrisso Quartararo - 0405 749 488 (SMS) or email christiane@ephpheta.org.au

JOIN US FOR A CHRISTMAS PARTY!



Craft Group Christmas Party

WEDNESDAY | 9 | DECEMBER

Canterbury Leagues Club
26 Bridge Road, Belmore

10.30am - Morning tea at Bakehouse Café
12pm - Lunch at The Bistro

Buy your own coffee/tea and lunch

RSVP before 2 December:
Liz 0400 300 295 or liz@ephpheta.org.au

All deaf and hard of hearing people are welcome to join!

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DEAF CAFÉ

The Ephpheta Centre runs deaf café for our deaf community - social catch ups at different locations around Sydney.

Here is the list of our next round of Deaf Cafes at different locations throughout Sydney.

- **Friday 20 November 2026.** 10am
  - Wests Ashfield Leagues Club
    - 115 Liverpool Road, Ashfield

- **Friday 11 December 2026.** 10am
    - Revesby Workers' Club
      - 2B Brett Street, Revesby

NO DEAF CAFE IN JANUARY

- **Friday 19 February 2027.** 10am
  - Club Blacktown
    - 40 Second Avenue, Blacktown

- **Friday 19 March 2027.** 10am
  - Chatswood RSL Club
    - 1/446 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood

We meet on the 3rd Friday of every month

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

We look forward to seeing you!

For more information please contact
Donovan Mulligan - 0408 697 773 (SMS) or email donovan@ephpheta.org.au



AUSLAN PLAY GROUP

Auslan Play Group is for young families in our deaf community -
a social group for mums, dads, grandparents, carers and their children
aged 0 - 5 years.

Ephpheta loves supporting new parents and watching them support others
as their children grow.

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

New families are always welcome!

We have events for our deaf and hard of hearing families and their children aged 0 - 5 years old happening in ***November 2026, February 2027, and March 2027.***

For more information contact Kristen Elias.

For more information please contact
Kristen Elias - 0422 294 437 (SMS) or email kristen@ephpheta.org.au

Our month with Fr Michael Depcik (Fr MD)

We had a very busy month during Fr MD's visit to Sydney in August - September. We organised some fantastic events, had many weekly and Sunday Masses in Auslan, and so much enjoyed spending time with Fr MD and the community. It was such a special time - we are so grateful to Fr MD for his life of faith and service and his generosity in supporting us.

Thanks to Fr MD and thanks to the community for making this such a wonderful time!

Here are some highlights from the month:



Ephpheta Sunday

What a wonderful Ephpheta Sunday celebration we had on 23 August! Ephpheta Sunday is the day when the Catholic church throughout the world celebrates the many gifts which deaf people bring to the life of the Church.

Our day started with Mass celebrated by Fr Michael Depcik, Fr Michael Lanzon and Fr John Paul Escarlan - this was such a special experience for our Ephpheta deaf Catholic community

We then enjoyed a lovely lunch at Canada Bay Club - we enjoyed listening to a presentation by Fr MD about the Ephpheta gospel and we presented him with an award from the Ephpheta community for his life long service to the deaf Catholic community.

It was a happy faith filled day of community, love and laughter.











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Mary MacKillop Place





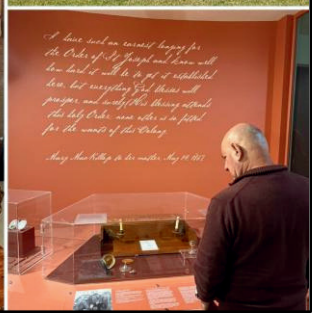


On 27 August we enjoyed a great day at Mary MacKillop place at North Sydney. During a very enjoyable tour, we learnt about Mary's early life, her setting up of the school at Penola, becoming a religious sister and establishing her religious order.

We learned more about Mary's deep faith and her resilience when she was ex-communicated, had to travel to Rome to meet the Pope (dressed in disguise as a widow) to gain approval for her religious order and her many years of hard work in establishing schools and support for people who were poor and disadvantaged. St Mary MacKillop is a great example to us all - of how to live a life of deep faith to God and dedicated service to each other. It is good for us to remember Mary's famous quote - "never see a need without doing something about it".







After the tour, Fr MD led a beautiful Mass in Auslan in the chapel and we enjoyed lunch together.

Fr MD was so inspired by the life and faith of our first Australian saint. At the end of our retreat, we gave Fr MD a statue of St Mary MacKillop to take home with him.

Deaf Festival





On 29 August Ephpheta had a fabulous day at the Deaf Festival at Sydney Olympic Park. The Ephpheta team and our deaf craft group had 2 stalls next to each other – so many people came to see us!

Fr MD enjoyed meeting old friends and making new friends!

It was so wonderful to see the Sydney deaf community all together on the day – we understand there were about 4000 people at the Deaf Festival on the day.

Thanks to everyone who came to say hello!

Eileen O'Connor Tour and Mass

On 4 September we had a fantastic visit to Eileen O'Connor's home and chapel in Coogee.

We learned so much about Eileen's life (born 1892 – died 1921) – she suffered serious health problems from a young age and had a life of constant physical pain.

This did not stop Eileen's determination to live a life of compassionate service to poor sick people and so she established a group called "Our Lady Nurses of the Poor" (often known as the Brown Nurses). This was a group of woman – devoted to Mary – who supported poor people and was recognised as a religious congregation.

Like St Mary MacKillop, Eileen was a devout Catholic woman who wanted to live her life in the service of God and other people. The Church is in the process of considering that Eileen will one day be a Saint – at the moment she is recognised as a Servant of God.

It was a very inspiring visit – learning about her struggles and her faithful determination to serve others. Fr MD led us in a beautiful Mass in Auslan (Eileen's body is buried under the altar in the chapel at Coogee).

After our Mass and tour, the community enjoyed lunch together at Coogee.









Catholic Faith 101

Fr MD led 2 very interesting sessions on “Catholic Faith 101” - Fr MD took us back to the fundamentals of our faith and how we practice our faith. They were such interesting sessions in Auslan – we could have gone on forever.





Retreat

Fr MD’s time with us finished with a wonderful residential retreat at Benedict XVI retreat Centre at Grose Vale – over 45 members of the community joined Fr MD and Fr Michael Lanzon for a fantastic weekend. Fr MD led some very interesting sessions where we learned more about our faith – how to pray, how to grow in faith, why going to Mass and confession is so important. It was such a special weekend in Auslan – the Ephpheta team worked hard throughout the weekend to make sure everything ran smoothly. Thank you so much to everyone who joined us to make this retreat so special.



















OUR VISIT FROM FR MD!

2026













WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME!

2026

Ephpheta Regular Sunday Mass times and places

A reminder about our regular accessible deaf Sunday Mass times and places.

Our Lady of the Assumption Church: 74 Underwood Road, Homebush (10.30am - Deaf Mass)	**St Paul's Catholic Church:** 40 Buckleys Road, Winston Hills (9.30am - Integrated Mass)
November: 8, 22, 29 December: 6, 13 February: 7, 14, 28	November: 15 December: 20 February: 21





1st Friday at Our Lady of the Assumption

On the first Friday of the month, we will be having the Rosary, Mass and Auslan Prayer Group at Our Lady of the Assumption (OLA) Homebush.

Upcoming dates	Where and time
Friday 4 December 2026	OLA Homebush Rosary 10.30am, Mass 11am **NO LUNCH OR PRAYER GROUP**
Friday 5 February 2027	OLA Homebush Rosary 10.30am, Mass 11am Followed by lunch and prayer group
Friday 5 March 2027	OLA Homebush Rosary 10.30am, Mass 11am Followed by lunch and prayer group



GOLD COIN DONATION FOR LUNCH

If you would like to join or more information, please contact Brett Beath 0407 064 872.

Auslan Prayer Group through Advent



Advent is a time to prepare ourselves for the birth of Jesus at Christmas. It is a time of hope, prayer and preparation.
Advent reminds us of the true meaning of Christmas: celebrating the birth of Jesus as our Saviour.

During this time there will be an opportunity to pray together as a community as well as learning more about The Nativity (the Birth of Jesus) and the Christmas season which is 8 days long.

All deaf and hard of hearing people are welcome.

	When	Where and Time?
Session 1: Advent 101	Friday 27 November	Zoom – 1pm
Session 2: The Nativity – presentation and activity	Sunday 29 November	Face to Face at OLA – after 10.30am Mass
Session 3: The 8 days of Christmas	Sunday 13 December	Face to Face at OLA – after 10.30am Mass

Fix
a quarrel.
Get in contact
with an old friend.
Get rid of suspicion
and replace it with trust.
Write a love letter. Share
some treasure. Give a soft
answer. Support youth. Show
you are loyal in word and deed. Keep
a promise. Forget a grudge. Forgive an
enemy. Listen. Say sorry if you were wrong.
Try to understand. Don't envy. Look at your
demands on others. Think first of someone else.
Appreciate. Be kind. Be gentle. Laugh a little. Laugh
a little more. Deserve confidence. Do not be self-satisfied.
Do not hurt others. Express your gratitude. Go to church.
Welcome a stranger. Make a child happy at heart. Take pleasure
in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love. Speak it
again. Speak it still once again. Christmas is a celebration, and there is
no celebration that is better than knowing the true meaning of Christmas.
Then, only then, is it possible to grasp the importance of that first Christmas.



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Email: liz@ephpheta.org.au
www: www.ephpheta.org.au

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

The Ephpheta Centre is supported by the Charitable Works Fund.

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Liz	liz@ephpheta.org.au
Fr Michael	frmichael@ephpheta.org.au
Kristen	kristen@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 Chrisso.

www.ephpheta.org.au

Please send your news, stories, information and requests to Liz or Chrisso 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!