



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 2nd March 2026
Term 1 Week 6

P.O. Box 2027
Ballarat East VIC 3354
Phone: 5331 6311

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 1 (10 weeks)

Mon 27th Jan - Thu 2nd Apr

Friday 6th March

Pupil Free Day Literacy PD

Monday 9th March

Public Holiday - Labour Day
Pupil Free Day

Friday 13th March

2.40pm Assembly in
school gym led by 5ML

7pm-11pm Mix & Mingle
on lower oval

Wed 11th - Tue 17th March

NAPLAN Testing

Wednesday 18th March

Last day for Book Club
Issue 2 orders

Thursday 19th March

Student Led Conferences

Friday 20th March

Interschool Sport at STM
(Year 5/6)

No Assembly today

Monday 23rd March

5.30pm P&F Meeting

Wednesday 25th March

Regional Swimming at
Horsham (qualifiers from
Division swimming)

Thursday 26th March

Student Led Conferences

MDASA U9 Primary Schools

Swim Sports (nominated
students from F-Yr2)

Friday 27th March

Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations to support
Project Compassion

No Assembly today

Mon 30th & Tue 31st March

Year 4 Lady Northcote
Discovery Camp

On the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

We are now well into our Lenten journey. Throughout the school, our children are learning about the significance of this sacred season as they work faithfully towards their Lenten promises. I have been heartened by the thoughtful and generous commitments they have made. May their perseverance remain as strong as their desire to grow closer to God during this holy time.

At Mass last week, Fr Justin reflected on the unique convergence of sacred seasons occurring this year. As the Catholic Church observes Lent, our Muslim brothers and sisters are honouring Ramadan, and many families are celebrating Chinese Lunar New Year. Each of these traditions is sacred, and interestingly, each is guided by the rhythm of the moon. What a beautiful reminder of the interconnectedness of faith, culture and creation — and of the shared human longing to pause, reflect and renew.

This truly is a special and sacred time. I encourage you to embrace it in whatever way feels meaningful for your family. If you are unsure how to approach prayer, fasting or almsgiving, simply ask your children — they have some wonderful and inspiring ideas to share.

God bless,



Mark Hogbin



Parking Near the School

We kindly ask parents to refrain from parking near the driveway into the staff car park. Once again, we have had damage to the water pipes caused by cars parking on the verge. Your assistance with this would be appreciated.

School Closure Day

A reminder that our school will be closed on Friday 6 March for staff professional development. No classes will be held at school on this day.

Thursday 2nd April

Last day of term 1
2.20pm finish

The Big Water Walk

12.40pm Assembly
in school gym

Term 2 (10 weeks)

Mon 20th Apr-Fri 26th Jun

Tue 21st & Wed 22nd April

Year 5 Sovereign Hill
Costumed School

Friday 24th April

Start of Term 2 Mass

No Assembly today

Friday 1st May

Division AFL @ CE Brown
Reserve Wendouree
(selected Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in
school gym led by 4KB

Friday 8th May

2pm Mothers/Special
Friends Liturgy

No Assembly today

Monday 11th May

Division Cross Country @
Fed Uni (selected Yr 3, 4, 5
& 6 students)

Thursday 14th May

Last day for 2027
Foundation enrolments for
existing and new families

Friday 15th May

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 6MM

Friday 22nd May

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 1EM

Tuesday 26th May

Regional Cross Country @
Warrnambool (qualifiers
from Division XC)

Friday 29th May

Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations to support
Cystic Fibrosis

Division Soccer @ Ballarat
Regional Soccer Facility
(selected Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in
school gym led by 2MH

Friday 5th June

Pupil free day



NAPLAN Testing

Next week marks the annual period of testing across all schools in our country. Known as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, this assessment is administered to all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Information gained from NAPLAN informs Government of changes that occur or may need to occur in education as well as student progress across the nation. Individual results of NAPLAN are provided to parents once they are released to schools.

Foundation/Prep Enrolment 2027 – Existing and New Families

Enrolments for children of **existing** and **new families** who start Foundation/Prep in 2027 are open.

Parents of **existing** and **new families** who have a child to start in 2027 - must complete the **'Enrolment Application Form'** form by clicking on the following link to submit your application:

<https://dobcel.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolments-expression-of-interest-form/>

Please note this is an essential step for existing families in ensuring you child is enrolled in Foundation/Prep 2027.

Enrolments close 14th May 2026



Issue 2 catalogues should arrive home today. If you would like to order anything, please place your order on or before

Wednesday 18th March. Orders can be placed by either scanning the QR code on page 31 of the catalogue, by going to scholastic.com.au/LOOP, by downloading the LOOP App or by forwarding a completed order form with cash to the office. Please note that orders placed via the office don't qualify for bonus offers or discounts for parents. Our school receives reward points from orders placed to buy books for our Library. Thank you.
Enquiries: Sue in the Library - sshuttle@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

The Big Water Walk 2026

As part of our commitment to **Project Compassion during Lent**, we are inviting members of our school community to once again take part in Villa's Big Water Walk. This initiative has been inspired by our Year 3 students in response to their reflection on the Scripture of *The Good Samaritan* and the challenge to love our neighbours.

In Australia, we are incredibly fortunate. We can turn on a tap and have clean water whenever we need it. However, this is not the reality for many families around the world. In Tanzania, almost 40% of people do not have access to safe drinking water. Children often walk for at least 30 minutes, carrying heavy buckets of water multiple times a day. This means many children miss out on school simply because they are collecting water for their families.

Monday 8th June

Public Holiday-King's
Birthday
Pupil Free Day

Friday 12th June

Division Netball @ Selkirk
Stadium (selected Yr 5/6
students)

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 5CC

Friday 19th June

Interscholar Sport (Yr 5/6)

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 3LL

Friday 26th June

Last day of term 2

Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations to support
Ballarat East Vinnies group

12.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by FJS

2.20pm finish

Term 3 (10 weeks)

Mon 13th Jul-Fri 18th Sep

**Mon 13th July, Tues 14th &
Wed 15th July**

Year 6 Melbourne CYC
Camp

Friday 17th July

Start of Term 3 Mass
No Assembly today

Friday 24th July

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 4RR

Friday 31st July

Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 3ZP

Friday 7th August

Ballarat Catholic Primary
Schools Athletics @
Llanberris (selected Yr 3, 4,
5 & 6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by FBK

Friday 14th August

Pupil free day (to be
confirmed)

Division Basketball @
Selkirk Stadium (selected
Yr 5/6 students)

Friday 21st August

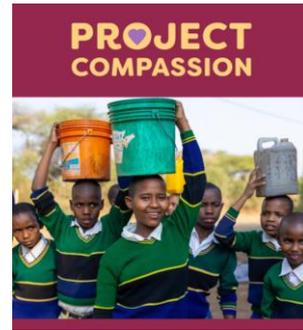
2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 1GH

This year, through our Big Water Walk, we are hoping to raise **\$6,000** to help establish a **25,000-litre water tank and collection point for a school in rural Tanzania**. This will provide safe drinking water for up to 1,000 students and ensure children can remain in school rather than spending their days collecting water.

On **Thursday 2nd April**, students will work in relay teams to carry buckets of water around the oval as a symbol of solidarity with children their own age in Tanzania. Through this experience, we hope to deepen our understanding of justice, compassion and gratitude — and remind ourselves how fortunate we are.

You can support our fundraising efforts by scanning the QR code below, which will take you directly to our school's fundraising page.

Together, we can make a real difference.



Curriculum News



NAPLAN 2026

Following the long weekend, students in Years 3 and 5 will begin NAPLAN testing on **Wednesday 11th March**. NAPLAN provides a snapshot of student progress in Literacy and Numeracy and is just one of many ways we monitor learning growth at our school.

We encourage families to support their children in simple, practical ways to help them feel calm and confident:

How you can help at home:

- Ensure your child gets a good night's sleep in the days leading up to and during testing.
- Provide a healthy breakfast each morning.
- Arrive at school on time so children can settle calmly before each session.
- Keep routines as normal as possible.
- Reassure your child that NAPLAN is simply an opportunity to show what they know — effort matters more than perfection.

At school, we will maintain a supportive and low-pressure environment. We will guide students through each session and ensure they feel prepared and confident.

If you have any questions about NAPLAN, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher.

We thank you for your partnership in supporting your child during this time.

Enjoy your week.

Jane Clark, Deputy Principal – Teaching & Learning



Friday 28th August
Casual Clothes Day - gold coin donations

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by FLP

Friday 4th September
Interscholar Sport (Yr 5/6)

Fathers/Special Friends Liturgy (to be confirmed)

No Assembly today

Wednesday 9th September
Division Athletics @ Llanberris (qualifiers from BCPS Aths – Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Friday 11th September
No Assembly today

Friday 18th September
Last day of Term 3

Footy Colours Day - gold coin donations to support Fight Cancer

No Assembly today

Term 4 (11 weeks)
Mon 5th Oct–Fri 18th Dec

Wednesday 7th October
Year 3 Day Camp

Friday 9th October
Start of T4/Mercy Day Mass

Regional Athletics @ Llanberris (qualifiers from Division Aths-Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)

No Assembly today

Friday 16th October
Division Tennis @ Ballarat Regional Tennis Centre (selected Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 5LD

Friday 23rd October
2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 1GT

Friday 30th October
Casual Clothes Day - gold coin donations to support MercyWorks

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by FTW

Monday 2nd November
Assessment and Reporting
Pupil Free Day

Tuesday 3rd November
Public Holiday-Melbourne Cup
Pupil Free Day



Introducing our Amazing Year 6 Wellbeing Leaders:

Bonnie, Milla and Lily are our Yr 6 Wellbeing Leaders for 2026 and they are full of wonderful ideas about ways to make our school even better! This week our leaders have introduced the Wellbeing Continuum to our whole school at assembly- it is a wonderful way for everyone to identify how they are feeling and seek help when they need support. It also gives us a shared language around our mental health.

Check it out here: [Animated Children's Wellbeing Continuum](#)

Community News

Free Parenting Workshops and Family Support:

Did you know CatholicCare Victoria has FREE parenting workshops?

Click on this link to check out what is available: [Parenting Workshops](#)

CAFS also provides a huge range of support services for parents and families.

Click here for more details: [CAFS Ballarat Support for Families](#)

Christine Meneely (**School Counsellor and Wellbeing/ MHiPS Leader**)

Contact me on : cmeneely@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au



Friday 6th November

Eureka Division Cricket @ Alfredton Reserve (selected Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 6JS

Friday 13th November

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 2TS

Friday 20th November

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 4ZA

Wed 25th-Fri 27th Nov

Year 5 Kangaroo Camp

Friday 27th November

Casual Clothes Day - gold coin donations to support Ballarat East Vinnies group

No Assembly today

Friday 4th December

End of Year Mass

Thursday 17th December

Last 2026 day for students

Yr 3 - 6 Athletics Day

After collating all of the results from the Yr 3 - 6 Athletics Day, I can happily announce the final scores from the day.

1st - Gargan (Green) - 1561

2nd - Xavier (Red) - 1497

3rd - McAuley (Yellow) - 1495

4th - Villa (Blue) - 1335

The following students have been awarded Year Level Athletics Champions for 2026 for their determination, effort and excellence:

Year 3 Girls - Annie Ludbrook Year 4 Girls - Milla Nicholson

Year 5 Girls - Milla Kingston. Year 6 Girls - Nellie Cheeseman

Year 3 Boys - Tom Green. Year 4 Boys - Noah McGregor

Year 5 Boys - Lawrence Wilson Year 6 Boys - Nixon George

MDASA U/9 Encouragement Swimming Sports

This event is available to all students that will be 9 years old and under as at 31/12/2026. It is being held in the 25m pool at the Ballarat Aquatic Lifestyle Centre on Thursday March 26 from 7pm. For further information and details on how to enter please refer to the email notification sent last week.

2026 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 1:

- Week 8 - Friday Mar 20th - Interschool Sport @ STM (Yr 5/6)
- Week 9 - Thursday Mar 26th - MDASA U9 Primary Schools Swim Sports (nominated students from F - Yr 2)

Term 2:

- Week 2 - Friday May 1st - Division AFL @ CE Brown Res, Wendouree - (selected students from Yr 5/6)
- Week 4 - Monday May 11th - Division Cross Country @ Fed Uni (selected students from Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)
- Week 6 - Tuesday May 26th - Regional Cross Country @ Warrnambool (qualifiers from Division XC)
- Week 6 - Friday May 29th - Division Soccer @ Ballarat Region Soccer Facility (selected students from Yr 5/6)
- Week 8 - Friday June 12th - Division Netball @ Selkirk Stadium (selected students from Yr 5/6)
- Week 9 - Friday June 19th - Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6)

Have an awesome week.

Shaun Carroll, **SFX Sport Coordinator**



- **P&F Meeting** – Monday 23rd March 2026 – 5.30pm
- **Mix & Mingle** – Friday 13th March 2026 – BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW it is only 11 days away!!! - Please purchase your tickets early for catering purposes
Join us for a night out under the stars! Meet fellow parents and make new friends!
SFX Lower Oval 7pm – 11pm
Book your Tickets via Flexi Schools \$25 – *includes drink on arrival, finger food & music*
- **TUITION RAFFLE**
WIN - \$1,500 OFF Tuition Fees – Raffle – tickets available via QR code
or <https://rafflelink.com.au/villa2026fees>
- **EASTER RAFFLE IS NOW LIVE** – See attached flyer – tickets available for purchase via QR code
or <https://rafflelink.com.au/villa2026-easter>
We are also taking Easter Raffle donations please – *please drop them into the office at your earliest convenience*
- **Hot Lunch Reminder** – Hot lunches every Friday, place your child’s order on Flexi Schools before 10am Thursday – no late orders will be taken – Volunteers needed to help pack – sign up available in your class chat group
- **Zooper Doopers** – Fridays at 2nd break - \$1
- **2nd Hand Uniform Shop** – our Second Hand Uniform shop has a lot of good quality second hand uniforms at an affordable price – all items \$5 with the exception of woolen jumpers & tunics which are \$10 -if you require any extra Uniform items please see the ladies in the office and they can assist you – we will be holding a Pop up shop in the next few weeks as well
- **RYANS IGA COMMUNITY REWARDS Program**
For the months of March & April 2026 – St Francis Xavier Primary School has been selected to participate in the **Ryan’s IGA Community Rewards program** at the **Pleasant Park store** – corner Sturt & Pleasant St
If you are in the area, pop in and collect your groceries and put your tokens in our token box.



2026 SFX TUITION RAFFLE



**Win \$1500 off
your school fees**

Buy tickets NOW



1 ticket \$10
3 tickets \$25
5 tickets \$35
8 tickets \$50

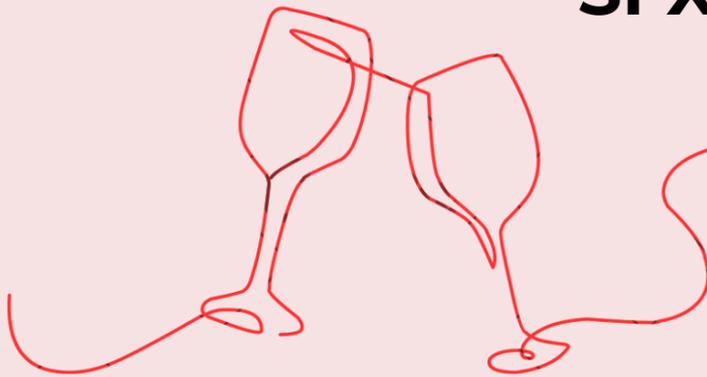
SFX Mix & Mingle

Join us for a fun night out under the stars! Meet fellow parents and make new friends!

Friday 13th March 2026

SFX Lower Oval

7pm - 11pm



Tickets. \$25

includes drink on arrival, grazing table/fingerfood & live music

Purchase your tickets on Flexi schools

SFX Easter Raffle

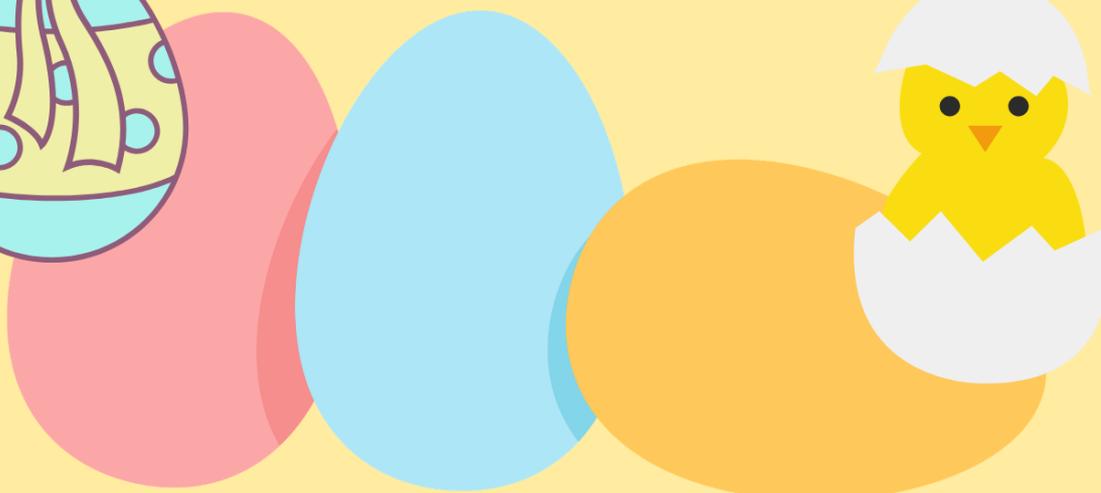
SCAN HERE AND BUY TICKETS NOW



1 ticket \$2
3 tickets for \$5
7 tickets for \$10
16 tickets for \$20



<https://rafflelink.com.au/villa2026-easter>



*drawn Monday 30th March

Attachments

ASSEMBLY AWARDS 27th February Hosted by 3JT Theme: Compassion

We treat others the way we would like to be treated.
Compassion means to feel the suffering of others and to help ease that suffering.
We show compassion to others because Jesus teaches us how to care.

FLP	Hugo Davis and Riley Brown	4RR	Matilda Bell and Wilson Quinlan
FJS	Layla Marshall & Noah Manning	4ZA	Oakley Smith & Ivy Dorning
FBO	Louis Ryan and Willow Begbie	4KB	Lachy Just & Darcie Richardson
FTW	Pali Shrestha and Ivy Grigsby	5CC	Flynn McKay and Isabella Carrick
1GH	Hudson Nicholson and Noah Stewart	5LD	Eddie Waldron and Ava Warr
1EM	Johnny Faull and Amelia Toohey	5ML	Isla Page and Abbey Williams
1GT	Amelia Whykes and Levi Heinrich	6PB	James Bosworth and Christian Wright
2GJ	Ella Finley and Jude Toohey	6JS	Gabe Dunne and Olivia Farrell
2MH	Lachie Skewes and Scottie Toohey	6MM	Levi Crowe and Isla Johnson
2TS	Callum Purtell & Sadie Porter	EE/ Sci	Lola Troon, Stella Hipke, Blake Pitman, Kingston Pitman, Georgie Dwyer, Aria Steinman, Harper Gilbertson
3LL	Ruby Miles Oscar Johnson	PA	River Harney and Will Allen
3JT	Howard Latchford and Olive Anderson	VA	Nevon Thuse & Meredith Bodnar (3JT)
3ZP	Birdie Toohey and Elliot Fulcher	PE	Amelia Reus and Jack Hingston
		Tch	Maya Ryan (1EM) & Callum Purtell (2TS)

Principal's Award: *Violet Toohey, Max Elliott, Saheisi Kariyawasam & Paityn Grant* assisted Miss Rose (without asking!) in collecting large amounts of rubbish that was discarded under the grandstand.
Elliott Evans and Archie Geaghan for showing compassion by inviting a friend to join them when he was having a bad day.
Christian Wright for seeing a need and doing something about it when he saw sports equipment left outside and put it all away properly.

Ministry District Newsletter

Priests Frs Justin Driscoll & Shaiju Mathew
Ballarat East Parish
 Cathy Prunty and Natalie Gleeson
 0437 505 517
 ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au
 Jackie Wrigglesworth (Finance Officer)
 5337 7128
 Jackie.wrigglesworth@ballarat.catholic.org.au
 Tuesday – Friday 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Incorporating the faith communities of Ballan, Ballarat East, Bungaree, Buninyong, Clarkes Hill, Dunnstown, Gordon and Springbank

Our parishes are committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults
Child Safety Officers: Ballarat East Parish – Emily Clarke; Bungaree & Gordon Parishes – Cathy Prunty

2nd Sunday of Lent Year A – 1st March, 2026

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES			
Weekday Masses			
Monday March 2 nd	10.30 am 7.00 pm	Funeral Prayers Suzanne Olive Buninyong Thanksgiving Mass Bishop Paul Cathedral	
Tuesday March 3 rd	11.00 am	Mercy Place Ballarat East	
Wednesday March 4 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East	
Thursday March 5 th	10.30 am	St. Brigid's Ballan	
Friday March 6 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East	
	9.30 am	St. Michael's Bungaree	
	10.30 am	Funeral Prayers Robyn Sexton Gordon	
Saturday March 7 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East	
Weekend Masses – 3 rd Sunday of Lent			
Saturday March 7 th		Sunday March 8 th	
6.00 pm	Ballarat East	9.00 am	Buninyong Bungaree
6.30 pm	Springbank	10.30 am	Ballarat East Ballan

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Peter Cash, Suzanne Olive, Robyn Sexton

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Patricia Briody, Antal Boka, Matt Jamieson, Maurice Conlan, Gabrielle Johnson, Kath Squire, Albert Small, John (Bernie) Ryan, Margaret & Douglas Trounce.

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

John White, Daren Vukmirovic, Irene D'Arcy, Troy Watson (Steenhuis family), Elaine Conlan, Evelyn Farrugia, Patricia (Patty) Gannon, Michelle Hall, John Healy, Sarah McLachlan, Thelma Keating, Carole Simmons, Owen Widdison.

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAMS

BALLARAT EAST PARISH:

Rose Consignano, Judith Glaubitz, Martin McGettigan, Dianne McKeegan, Claire Stewart.

BUNGAREE PARISH:

Damian Ryan & Chris Frawley (Bungaree), Barry Sheehan & Dianne Reynolds (Dunnstown), Dom Prendergast, Maurice Mahar & Marty Forbes (Clarkes Hill).

GORDON PARISH:

Sue Daly & Brendan Maher (Springbank), Joan Bourke & Shane Carey (Gordon), Mark Conlan & Jim Leahy (Ballan).

We acknowledge this land's traditional owners and custodians and pay our respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging.

St. Francis Xavier Primary School is a Child Safe School called to action through Gospel values and Mercy tradition. Through the mission of Jesus within the Mercy tradition, we are called to action in pursuing fullness of life for all.

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

Weekend of February 21 st & 22 nd	
Supporting our priests	\$1,070
Maintenance of parish buildings	\$657

Thank you to all parishioners who contribute to our parish. Your generosity is appreciated.

MISSION THROUGH ENCOUNTER

A Lenten Retreat Day – ‘Exploring our call to follow Christ rather than worldly desires.’

A retreat day of Ignatian contemplations of various Lenten gospels – incorporating the Arts (Optional – using simple techniques)

Date: Saturday 14th March

Where: Ss Peter & Paul’s Catholic Church
701 Fiskien St., Buninyong

Time: 10 am – 4pm

Bookings: Ministry District Hub by March 9th

ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Cost: \$25 (including morning tea and light lunch)

Retreat Facilitator: Anna Schlooz

INVITATION TO COMMISSIONING SERVICE

Rev Andrew Shearer-Cox will be commissioned to Pastor the Uniting Church communities of Buninyong, Sebastopol & Meredith, Creswick and Clunes on Tuesday, March 17th 2026, 7.30 pm at Buninyong Uniting Church (302 Scott St, Buninyong). Parishioners from Ss Peter and Paul and St Alipius are invited to attend.

2026 ROUNDTABLE ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY SESSIONS

Venue: Mercy Centre Ballarat East (Gent Street entrance). Dates: February 24, March 24, April 21, May 18, June 18, August 19, September 15, October 13, November 17. Times: Afternoon sessions: 1.30pm - 3.00pm; Evening sessions: 7.00pm -8.30pm.

To register, text Sr Veronica Lawson on 0408392297 or email veronica.lawson@mercy.org.au

CELEBRATING ST PATRICK’S DAY

All parishioners and friends from across our Ministry District are invited to celebrate St Patrick’s Day on Tuesday March 17th with 11.00am Mass at St Patrick’s Gordon followed by lunch in the school multipurpose room.

MASS OF THANKSGIVING TO MARK THE RETIREMENT OF BISHOP PAUL BIRD – UPDATED NOTICE

The Diocesan Liturgical Commission invites people of the diocese to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving to mark the retirement of Bishop Paul Bird CSsR, to be held on Monday, March 2, 2026 at St Patrick’s Cathedral Ballarat at 7.00pm. Supper will follow in the Hall. The Mass will be livestreamed at <https://youtube.com/live/yPV7UjsWoow?feature=share>

INTERNATIONAL WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Services will be held this year at the following places.

Fri March 6th 10am St. Columba’s, Ballarat Nth
Fri March 6th 2.30pm St. John’s, Skipton
Fri March 6th 10 am St. John’s Anglican Church Simpson St., Ballan

Thu March 26th 11am Nazareth House

These services are held each year to bring people of all faiths or none, together as one, to pray together for the world. This year the service has been prepared by the women of Nigeria. Services are also being held in other Christian Churches throughout Ballarat. Morning tea will follow the service at Ballan. For more information, please email - annekay1234@gmail.com or call 0401175045

RCIA – RITE OF ELECTION

Last Saturday Candidates and Catechumens from parishes in the Ministry District joined others who are also on the RCIA journey at St. Patrick’s Cathedral where they were presented to Bishop Paul. Each of these Candidates and Catechumens were named and welcomed and then invited to express their wish to enter fully into the life of the Church. The liturgy was followed by lunch, where the air was full of anticipation.



POPE'S LENTEN MESSAGE

At the start of Lent, Pope Leo XIV invited Catholics to open ourselves to listening, fasting, and community, urging us to abstain from words of hatred in order to make space for words of hope and peace. "I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbor." Pope Leo XIV made that invitation at the heart of his message for Lent 2026. The Pope said this liturgical season offers Christians an opportunity to place the mystery of God back at the center of our lives. Every journey of conversion, he said, begins by letting God's word touch our hearts, so that we may renew our commitment to follow Christ in the mystery of His saving passion, death, and resurrection. Pope Leo focused on the importance of listening to God and to those around us, allowing ourselves to enter into authentic relationships. "In the midst of the many voices present in our personal lives and in society," he said, "Sacred Scripture helps us to recognize and respond to the cry of those who are anguished and suffering." Christians, said the Pope, can cultivate inner openness to listening, as God does, by growing in awareness that the poor challenge our lives and economic systems, as well as the Church.

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF BISHOP-ELECT MARK FREEMAN

Thursday March 19th at 11.00am in St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat. Each of the parishes of the diocese are invited to send two delegates to attend the ordination and installation. In the parish of Ballarat East and Buninyong, parishioners are invited to enter the 'draw' to attend with one parishioner attending from St Alipius Ballarat East and one from Ss Peter & Paul Buninyong. To enter, please place your name on the pages in the foyer of the respective church **this weekend** or contact the parish office, indicating your name and church community.

WENDOUREE PARISH COORDINATOR

Applications are being invited from suitable candidates for the position of Parish Coordinator for the Wendouree Parish. Position description and application detail information available from the diocesan

website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/our-diocese/employment/>. Applications close Friday, March 6 at 5.00pm.

UPCOMING DATES

Monday Mar 2nd
Thanksgiving Mass for Bishop Paul Bird
St. Patrick's Cathedral
7.00 pm

Thursday Mar 5th
Baptism Preparation
Mary Glowrey Rooms – Cathedral
10 am & 5.30 pm

•

RCIC
St. Alipius Hall
4 pm

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Liturgy Coordinating Team Meeting
Parish Hub
5.30 pm

Wednesday March 11th
Parish Finance Committee
7.30 am

Thursday March 12th
Parish Pastoral Council
Hub
6.30 pm

Tuesday March 17th
St Patrick's Day Mass & lunch
Gordon Church & School
11.00 am

Thursday March 19th
Ordination & Installation of Bishop-Elect
Mark Freeman
St. Patrick's Cathedral
11.00 am

•

RCIC
St. Alipius Hall
4 pm

March 24th, 25th & 26th
First Reconciliation
St. Alipius
6.00 pm

BAPTISMS

Fern Kristen Ann Canty
Daughter of Erin & Tim

Called to Listen

Reflection on the Gospel

2nd Sunday of Lent Year A

(Matthew 17:1-9)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Last week's gospel invited us into a confronting habitat, namely the wilderness. This week, we follow Jesus and three of his companions to a high mountain, eventually a cloud-covered mountain. Both wilderness and mountain link Matthew's story of Jesus with the story of the Israelites of old and, in particular, of Moses' and Elijah's encounters with God. Wilderness and mountain also remind us that God's creation is the locus of wonder and mystery. The world we inhabit has an integrity of its own. It is, in a very real sense, God's dwelling place. It is, in addition, the place of human-divine encounter and the place of human encounter with the other-than-human material world. Attention to habitat can lead us to a clearer understanding of our own place in the scheme of things. It can lead us to ever deeper understandings of our relationship with God and of our responsibility to care for God's creation. The "transfiguration" seems to point to a time in Jesus' ministry when he comes to terms with the fate he is likely to meet: if he confronts the forces of oppression and injustice, he is certain to encounter opposition, even death. Jesus has struggled with that realisation in the wilderness. On the mountain top, his face shines with the power that emanates from his acceptance of what the path ahead might entail. The disciples witness the transfigured Jesus, God's new and definitive prophet, speaking with Moses and Elijah, the key prophetic figures of Israel. Peter wants to hold on to the experience of glory: he wants to "make tents" for Jesus, for Moses and for Elijah. He prefers not to face the difficulties involved in fidelity to a mission that elicits hostility. That is not, however,



the way of discipleship. Rather, Peter and his companions are to heed God's words calling them to "listen" to Jesus, the beloved of God. Listening to the words of Jesus of Nazareth and mutual listening are indispensable features of the journey in faith.

Matthew's account of the "transfiguration" is followed by a reminder that Jesus is soon to meet a violent death (17:23). Jesus' companions get a glimpse of God's glory shining on his face and penetrating even his clothing, a hint that God's grace is more life-giving than the forces of violence that oppose God's reign. Like Jesus and his companions, we too need the occasional glimpse of final victory. We need the wisdom to listen and to follow through on the path that leads to life, despite the pain. We can feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the challenges facing us and by the opposition we experience from the most unexpected quarters. If we are to sustain the struggle for a healthy, safe, and peace-filled world, we have to resist the temptation to hold on to the moments of glory and come to terms with the personal cost of being faithful to the gospel mission of justice and compassion with all its painful demands.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

2nd Sunday of Lent

Genesis 12:1-4
2 Timothy 1:8-10
Matthew 17:1-9

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

3rd Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17:3-7
Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
John 4:5-42

2026 BUNGAREE AUSKICK & NETTA PROGRAM



The Bungaree Football Netball Club is running "Auskick" and "Netta" program for girls and boys, aged 5-10. Netta will be run by Sophie Boyd and Piper Drew. Auskick will be run by Josh Quinlan.

Netta Registration:



Both programs create opportunities for children to learn basic skills, get some exercise, and make new friends!

The sessions will take place at the Bungaree Community Centre on Friday nights from 5-6pm.

Auskick Registration:



It will be a 10 week program running from April 24th until June 26th. The cost to participate for Netta is \$50 and Auskick is \$85.



Email: admin@phoenixbasketball.org

Bounce into Basketball

- Join our Under 8's and become part of the Phoenix community
- For girls & boys born 2019-2021
- FREE club fees & starter pack
- Fun, friends & first hoops



City of Ballarat and Partners invite families to...



Get Ready for Kinder Day!

Thursday 12 March 2026

10am-1pm

Vickers Street Community Hub

254 Vickers Street, Sebastopol

What's on offer:

- Explore kindergarten options and register for kindergarten
- Book Maternal Child Health Nurse and Immunisation appointments
- Receive culturally responsive kindergarten support
- Enjoy children's activities and giveaways
- Free BBQ (Vegetarian and Halal options available)





FREE School Holiday Program

Ballarat Primary School Students

Build confidence, connection and capability - this school holiday.

Since 2022, Paw Pals has partnered with local Ballarat schools to support student wellbeing through therapy dog-assisted learning.

We're excited to bring our school holiday program to Ballarat! Our free program builds on the foundation of Paw Pals with fun, engaging activities designed to strengthen peer connection, boost self-confidence, and foster independence.



thankyou so much for making me happy and making me enjoy my time ☺

Past Student

-  **Free to Attend, Limited Spots**
-  **Grades 4-6**
-  **April 7th, 9th, 10th, 10AM -2PM**
-  **Lucas Community Hub, 17 Coltman Plaza, Lucas**

Activities are based on the Paw Pals Curriculum, which aligns with the general capabilities in the Victorian Curriculum.

Applications close 20th March.
Get in touch with us today to secure your place.

Contact: Kate Maddocks

-  **0484 366 996**
-  **Kate.Maddocks@mackillop.org.au**
-  **mackillop.org.au/programs/paw-pals**



This holiday program is made possible thanks to the generous support of



Mackillop Family Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Elders in each of the communities where we work.
Mackillop celebrates and draws strength from diversity and respects the dignity of all people. We value an inclusive culture where lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, gender diverse, intersex and asexual people (LGBTQIA+) have the right to be safe.



Paw Pals School Holiday Program

Expression of Interest (EOI)

Paw Pals has been partnering with local schools and students in Ballarat since 2022. Building on this strong foundation, our school holiday program offers fun, engaging activities that strengthen peer connection, boost self-confidence, and support students in developing greater independence.



PROGRAM DETAILS

- Grades 4–6 Free
- April 7th, 9th, 10th
- 10 AM–2 PM
- Lucas Community Hub, Lucas
- Max. 8 Students per Group

KEY FOCUS AREAS

The program provides targeted activities to enhance students' **self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making**. Based on the Paw Pals Curriculum, which aligns with the general capabilities in the Victorian Curriculum. Topics include:

- **Understanding social cues** (e.g., taking turns, teamwork, problem-solving)
- **Coping with mistakes and building resilience**
- **Practice and persistence for success**
- **Mindfulness for wellbeing**, inspired by the way dogs live in the moment and spread joy

STUDENT INFORMATION

Full Name			
Date of Birth			
School		Year Level	
Parent/ Guardian Name		Contact Number	
Email Address			

<p>Does your child have any additional learning or support needs? (Please provide details)</p>			
<p>SESSION DELIVERY</p>			
<p>How many days will your child attend? (Multiple days welcome)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday 7 th April <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday 9 th April <input type="checkbox"/> Friday 10 th April	<p>would you like to explore 1:1 support sessions? (Outside of the School Holiday Program)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>How did you hear about the Paw Pals School Holiday Program?</p>			
<input type="checkbox"/> School referral		<input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social media		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____	
<p>PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT</p>			
<p>I confirm that I am the parent/guardian of the above-named student and give permission for them to participate in the Paw Pals School Holiday Program. I understand that submitting this Expression of Interest does not guarantee placement in the program, and I will be contacted regarding further details.</p>			
<p>Signature _____</p>		<p>Date _____</p>	

Applications Close 20 March | First-Come, First-Served

<p>Please email completed form to</p> <p> Kate.Maddocks@mackillop.org.au</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div> <p>Kate Maddocks</p> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> <p>Paw Pals Operations Coordinator</p> </div> </div>	<p>This holiday program is made possible thanks to the generous support of</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>CATHOLIC DIOCESE of BALLARAT</p> </div>
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DRAGONS

BASKETBALL

2026 WINTER REGISTRATIONS ARE NOW OPEN.

DON'T MISS OUT!

JOIN NOW!



DRUMMODRAGONS.COM.AU

