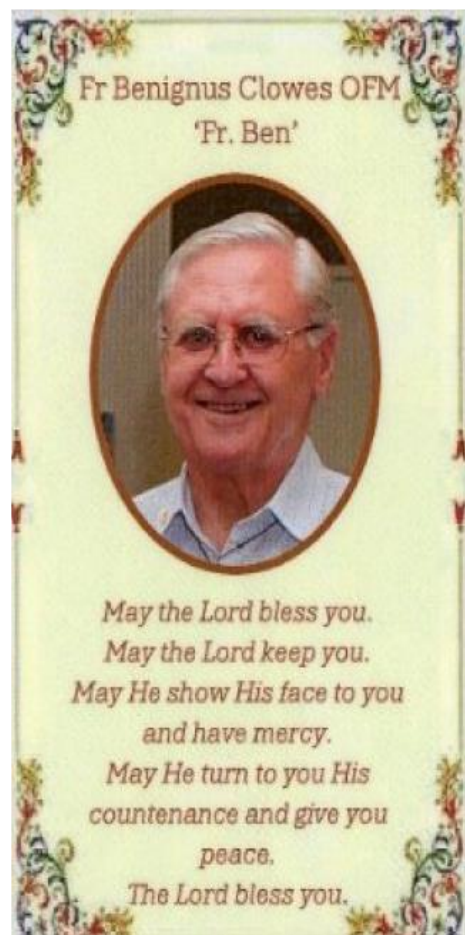




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PARISH PRIEST REPORT

Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. (Mk. 16:15) The mission of the Gospel is in our parish; the Greater Box Hill St Francis Xavier and St Clare churches. I believe God is with us, works with us and lives amongst us. God has witnessed everything in our parish activities and supports us in every aspect of life. Over the year 2025-2026 in our parish, there have been some extra improvements but there have been some challenges as well.

The setting of the two churches St Francis Xavier and St Clare has not changed with the schedule of mass, but we have welcomed some additional ethnic communities using St Clare to worship God. Apart from our English mass, we have three ethnic communities: Indonesian, Italian and Vietnamese. The parish has become a multicultural community, enriched by the diverse cultures and traditions of its members. This diversity brings life, vibrancy, and a strong sense of unity to our Church. Over May this year the Archdiocese of Melbourne called for annual mass count. Our parish attendance has increased a small amount.

Late November saw a small group from our parish, led by Tanya Salinas-Byrne attend the 2025 Australian Catholic Youth Festival at the Melbourne Convention Centre. The theme for the festival was 'Pilgrims Of Hope' and our group joined 6000 pilgrims, which included bishops, priests and nuns from all around Australia and the Pacific Islands, for the three day festival.

We have some aging parishioners within our parish community and are fortunate to have Sr Gemma, as our Pastoral Associate. She visits some of our elderly parishioners who cannot come to church. She distributes communion and assists them to connect to God and maintain faith.

Spirituality of Parish: Fr Ignatius and I have been providing some spiritual programs to assist parishioners with formation. Every Tuesday evening Fr Ignatius conducts a spiritual study program in the Friars Room. Approximately 15 people attend. Every Friday evening, I provide the Contemplation of the Gospel at St Clare and approximately 8 people attend. Fr Ignatius and I offer these programs to deepen our relationship with God which assists us to understand our spiritual life. Apart from these programs, throughout the year I also run three retreats for our parish; Lenten, mid-year and Advent season. Every Saturday morning at St Clare, we have adoration with Psalms and prayer. At 4pm at SFX we celebrate adoration to pray for religious and clergy vocations. One of our parishioners, Jasmine, who began adoration at SFX, hopes to join the Carmelite convent. We thank God for her vocation, and we pray for her religious life. Every First Friday and Saturday masses, we celebrate healing masses in both churches. The charismatic group pray on Monday afternoons, Mother and Father's group pray on Wednesday evenings, and Bible Study gathers on Friday evenings. Every weekday at SFX a rosary group pray before midday mass. It is a very spiritual and vibrant parish.

I give heartfelt thanks to our volunteers and deeply appreciate their commitment to their ministries in the parish. Especially Margaret Kwan our organist, who is very committed to masses at both churches every weekend while working full time. She encourages our choir members to practice weekly. Our sacristans and readers serve God with great joy and dedication, and it often seems that the churches have become their second home.

I am especially grateful to Annie Setiawan, who generously devotes so much of her time to St Francis Xavier-St Clare Parish while also working full-time at Bunnings. Her commitment and dedication are truly remarkable. Daisy Tan is also a tremendous help at both churches, always willing to assist wherever needed. Anne Large continues her valuable ministry in preparing families for Baptism. Her dedication, care, and commitment to supporting families is greatly appreciated and reflect her deep pastoral concern for those she serves. Jen Micheli also assists with the livestreaming and PowerPoints at mass and compiles Troubadour. This year we have welcomed some new lector readers and Eucharistic ministers. I am deeply grateful for all their assistance and for the generous contribution of their time and talents. However, I would like to call more young people to offer their time by serving God in the church. We need more projectionists, altar servers, and choir members. Fr Ignatius and I sometimes find ourselves short of helpers, and it is challenging organising everything at the same time as mass. Regardless, I would like to extend my gratitude to all volunteers; counters, social event organisers, cleaners, choir, flower arrangers, gardeners,

projectionists, morning tea and bread servers and all the altar servers. Serving God is an important part of our ministry.

Sometimes SFX Primary school children attend the midday Mass. They always behave with great respect and reverence in the church. I greatly admire the teachers for guiding them to remain prayerful, quiet, and respectful during the celebration. Their presence brings great joy to our parishioners and adds a wonderful sense of life and energy to our church community. Some grade 5 and 6 students engage in altar service on the weekends. It is wonderful to have them.

In May this year, Bishop Thinh Nguyen celebrated the Confirmation Mass for our Grade 6 students. The students especially remembered his homily, which focused on the three Bs: **belong, believe, and become**. During school Masses, the students proclaim the readings with great confidence and reverence, and I am truly impressed by their ability and commitment.

At the Easter Vigil this year we welcomed catechumens for baptism and a candidate for confirmation. Jonathan Hili has been a wonderful catechist and teacher of faith. He has a deep knowledge of Theology and his enthusiasm and vibrant spirit have inspired many people. Everyone has greatly appreciated and enjoyed his teaching. He warmly welcomes anyone who wishes to deepen their understanding of the faith and the Church. His dedication and commitment to this ministry is truly admirable. It is a great blessing for our parish to have Jonathan serving among us.

Parish mission: Every First Friday of the month we have a healing mass at St Francis Xavier church and every first Saturday we have healing mass at St Clare. Our parish desires to contribute and support overseas mission and local charity missions. Our overseas mission is dedicated to Klibur Domin in East Timor Leste which is under the charity organization of Ryder Cheshire Australia. Klibur Domin is a Medical Health Centre that helps the poor who are living in rural areas. Local charity groups we support are Mitcham Emergency Relief and Whitehorse Churches Care. We cannot be physically active overseas; however, we can contribute and support them through our prayer and financial support.

I am very grateful to Bishop Thinh Nguyen who lives in our parish, and it is wonderful to have him in our parish. His support and assistance are much appreciated while Fr Ignatius or I are away. Although he is busy with his many ministries, he continues to provide great support to our parish.

Unfortunately, last year our parish could not engage regular youth group gatherings. We could not find a youth leader. It is a challenge for us to form a youth group. However, encouragingly this year our weekend masses have some young people attending. The number of young people has increased. I am currently looking to find a youth leader and try to form a youth group later in the year. At present, our Friars Room is out of action, due to the school building renovations. I am hopeful that by the October we may commence. I encourage all young people to join, and I hope this will strengthen our spiritual and social life for the wellbeing of our parish community.

Last year we formed a Parish Council with young people, however they had many family and work commitments. It became challenging to maintain the ongoing Parish Council. According to the Canon Law, the Parish Council is to support the Parish Priest, but it is not compulsory to have the Parish Council. At present, I have not yet found a committed Parish Council. Therefore, I have decided to place this matter on hold and continue to pray for dedicated parishioners who are willing to serve on a new Parish Council.

In the past year, we have coordinated many sacraments, including baptisms, funerals and weddings. Staff have been kept busy. I am very appreciative of their hard work and generosity. Katrina Pirrie and Alicia Cleary arrange all the meetings, funerals and baptisms. Together we have a bookkeeper, Luisa May and Charlie Mellican who handle all the financial business and maintenance of our building sites. Unfortunately, since Malcom Bibby retired from our parish, several maintenance issues have arisen. These include roof leaks in the churches, problems with doors, and heating system faults. As a result, we now need to hire tradespeople to carry out repairs, maintenance and gardening.

Future vision: Next year 16th May 2027, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of St Francis Xavier church and school. It will be big milestone for our parish. The church and school have served and witnessed our faith for 100 years. Many elderly parishioners told me that they were baptised, schooled and married at St Francis Xavier church and school. God has journeyed with us for over 100 years. We are the beneficiaries of the prayers, faith, and dedication of our ancestors. Among those connected to our parish is Archbishop Christopher Prowse of Canberra, who was raised in Box Hill. The parish has also fostered several religious vocations, a testament to its strong spiritual foundation and lasting influence. As we reflect on its rich history and contributions, the church and school are most deserving of celebrating this significant milestone—their 100th anniversary.

The St Clare Primary school has been closed for many years. The building has been leased to the dance school and now they are planning to move to another place. The school building is deteriorating and requires ongoing maintenance. We consulted with the Archdiocese regarding the future of the building. They encouraged us to maximise its potential and consider various possibilities for its use. However, the project is substantial and exceeds the scope of what I can currently undertake. Therefore, we have decided to place the project on hold for the time being.

I would like to thank everyone, especially all our parishioners, for their dedication and support as we continue God's mission together.

Fr Phuong Vu
Parish Priest

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT – ST FRANCIS XAVIER SCHOOL

2025 was a fantastic year for the St Francis Xavier community. Launching our new school vision, a caring faith community fostering welcome, inclusion and a love of learning, was a wonderful way to start the school year. This is a lovely step forward for our school, where our vision and school motto, “Let Happiness Dwell Here,” go hand in hand to shape who we are and the culture we strive to make visible together every day.

We have worked hard this year to realise our School Improvement Plan, and we have made significant progress in all three of our priority areas. Our Catholic Identity remains central to who we are and is supported by a close working relationship with the Parish. Our students have deepened their understanding of the story of St. Francis Xavier and how it inspires us daily to be the best versions of ourselves, as God created us. Our staff have worked tirelessly to embed High Impact Teaching strategies, which have been enhanced by the MACS Vision for Instruction released early in the year. Our focus on understanding and embedding Explicit Instruction has been unwavering, and it has been gratifying to see the consistency developing across the school. Our work in the Inquiry learning space has led us to use the Inquisitive platform, as this enables us to blend Inquiry pedagogies within a knowledge-rich curriculum.

We valued the opportunity to once again participate in the School Improvement Learning Collaborative (SILC) through the Eastern Region Office of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS). Facilitated by Dr Simon Breakspear, this program of learning and collaboration enabled the Leadership Team to set direction, plan strategically, take stock and reflect on growth, and redirect and refine where needed. This year's focus on the Vision for Instruction was valuable; it enabled the team to consider how best to lead staff in this work while maintaining focus on our own School Improvement priorities.

This year, we enhanced the role of our well-being leader, Ben Higgins, which has positively impacted our well-being program and its cohesion. We once again partnered with the REACH Foundation and Phoenix Soar to support our senior students in understanding their ability to self-advocate and continued to work with Inform and Empower to support our students in being eSmart. Our Wellbeing program ran weekly through classroom and Library sessions, with a consistent theme each term across the school. Additionally, we have run bespoke well-being programs for our students on protective behaviours, acceptance, racism, teamwork, and anti-bullying. We participated in the National Day of Action Against Bullying, the Day for Daniel and Safer Internet Day.

We continue to feel very proud of how we support individual students. We have a very high percentage of students who receive NCCD funding. Our team of Learning Support Officers, alongside classroom teachers and learning coaches, continued to support these students in learning and nurture their well-being. Our extensive Social Skills programs proved invaluable for many of our students. This year, we partnered with Speech Pathologists in School and have had a Speech Pathologist working with us each week. She has been a fantastic addition to our team, working collaboratively with staff on assessment and planning and providing small-group intervention for students.

Our staff have continued to collaborate to support student learning and well-being. Our Professional Learning Schedule included opportunities for teachers to reach out to families, regularly review Personalised Learning Plans, and update and reflect on their own Professional Learning Plans. Alongside a continued focus on goal setting, teachers effectively used Bright Path for writing assessment and planning and regularly used the Elastik platform for data analysis to target student learning at the point of need.

Significant time and energy were again placed into boosting enrolments at St Francis Xavier for 2026, with great success. Connecting with our local kinders has proved exceptionally fruitful, and we have built some lovely ongoing relationships with several of them. We found that our school tours at the beginning of the year were well attended and drew many new enrolments. We have received a lot of positive feedback about our school website, and it remains a great tool for attracting new families because it is dynamic and up to date.

Our Parents & Friends have once again hosted some wonderful community events this year. We enjoyed Coffee Mornings, Family Picnics, PJ and Toastie Day, a fabulous Outdoor Cinema Night, the Colour Run and our first Carols by Candlelight. We have a small team of incredibly dedicated parents who go above and beyond for our school. Planning will soon commence for our SFX Fair 27, following last year's success, and the whole community is looking forward to it in October next year.

Our close connection to the St Francis Xavier Parish remains integral to who we are. Fr Phuong, our Parish Priest, meets regularly with staff to collaboratively plan Masses and other opportunities for connection between the parish and the school. Fr Phuong also sits on the School Advisory Council, sharing a parish report each month and sharing in the decision-making process with other members. We are blessed to have Fr Phuong and our assistant priest, Fr Ignatius, working with us to build the Kingdom of God here in Box Hill.

We are immensely proud of the work we have done in 2025 and what we have achieved together as a community. St Francis Xavier would be rightly proud of the community spirit, outreach, and support for one another that have been shown this year.

Mary Jones
Principal

PARISH PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Since the early church, the care for the elderly and the widows was deeply mentioned and lived. Dedicating time to them is one of the most fulfilling things a person can do. Looking back to when I started a year ago, this experience far exceeded my expectations. It goes far beyond simple charity; it is about showing people that they are seen, valued, and not forgotten by the church they always loved. When you sit down to listen to their stories, share an encouraging word, or praying together you aren't just giving your hours, you are building a bridge of true community, a welcoming family they can count on.

And it is not a "one person job". Fr Phuong and Fr Ignatius bring warm, pastoral care and a listening ear, while the office team does the behind-the-scenes work to organize visits and make sure no one is left out. Together we want to turn our parish into a supportive family where everyone has a place to belong.

Gemma Alsawalha
Pastoral Associate

SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION GROUP

Hearing the Bible being read weekly during Mass is good but reading it with a group of friends and discussing it, raises the bar. This is the level where we put God's Message into practice, or in other words, live the Bible. Some inspiring verses in the Bible are:

- But be doers of the word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. James 1:22 NRSV
- All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, **not neglecting to meet together**, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and even more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25
- Therefore, encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Our meetings are held Friday nights from 7:30pm to about 9:00pm in the St Francis Xavier Friars Room.

We study a chapter from the Old Testament, and one from the New Testament every week and end the meetings by reading a Psalm and prayers. We are a group of about 10 members, and we are studying Proverbs and The Gospel of Luke.

Dominic Amato
Convenor
Scripture Discussion Group

BAPTISM PREPARATION REPORT

Baptism preparation is a requirement for all parents planning to have their children baptised into the Catholic Faith. Our parish continues to provide meetings to assist parents in this process.

These meetings are offered monthly, usually the first Wednesday evening of each month. Parents and Godparents are invited to attend as we acknowledge the significance of this important first sacrament. Here, parents are encouraged to appreciate their obligations in nurturing a supportive environment for the faith development of their child. They are the primary educators of their children and their role is vital. We all have roles to play on our faith journey.

Our meetings are scheduled through Alicia in the parish office. Alicia continues to assist with the provision of baptism candles for families should they choose to purchase one and she also prepares the baptism stoles. These are often presented to parents on behalf of the parish at a 10.15 am Sunday Mass at St Francis Xavier.

Across both parish churches, 23 children under the age of seven received the Sacrament of Baptism during this twelve month period.

Anne Large

COLUMBARIUM REPORT

The Columbarium at St Clare consists of three walls—Francis, Clare, and Kelly. To date, 78 niches have been reserved, and we have had 48 interments, including 2 interments in the past year. In addition to the Columbarium, we also have a Memorial Wall, which offers a meaningful way to honour loved ones who are buried elsewhere. Currently, 16 plaques on the Memorial Wall commemorate past parishioners and family members.

Parish Admin staff

FIRST FRIDAY COLLECTION

We are grateful to our parishioners for their generous contributions at the Healing Masses held on the First Friday of the month at St Francis Xavier Church. In the twelve months from July 2025 – June 2026, almost \$7,000 was raised for various charities. We donated \$3,425.60 to *Klibur Domin* in Timor Leste. These funds go towards the running of a range of programs which provide aid and free healthcare to people in dire need in Timor Leste. We also gave \$750.20 to *Whitehorse Churches Care*. This contributed to the running of the Whitehorse Community Space at Forest Hill Chase. \$918.15 was given to the *Eastern Emergency Relief Network* in Mitcham. They are a volunteer-run organisation that supply recycled furniture and essential household items to disadvantaged families. In response to the local bushfires over summer, we donated \$760.85 and to the parish group that attended the Australian Catholic Youth Festival \$1,101.25 was donated.

Thank you for your continued compassion and generosity. Your support makes a tangible difference in the lives of many, both locally and internationally.

Parish Admin staff

GIRLS DRINKS

Since 2005 'ladies' from the Parish have gathered for an informal chat over a coffee or glass of wine & cheese. We get together on the **2nd Friday of the Month** from 5pm to 6.30pm in the Friars Room.

In November 2025 we celebrated 20 years of "Girls Drinks". It was a great catch up & to acknowledge why we meet as a community group. Reminder notice will be displayed in the parish Bulletin.

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Come along & catch up with some new & old friends. *Gold coin donation*

We would love to see you there. All Welcome.

Jill Kitch

RCIA – THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

The past year in RCIA demonstrated a record number of adult converts in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. St Francis Xavier Box Hill also shared in this extraordinary spiritual growth. Over the RCIA year 2025-2026, the parish had six candidates receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil and be brought into full communion with the Catholic Church. In addition to this, we were also able to shepherd a few individuals closer to the faith, who are still discerning God's call on their lives. The candidates this year came from various backgrounds: some with prior faiths and some with no previous religious commitment at all. All, however, showed a great hunger to learn more about the Catholic faith and grow in their spiritual lives as they participated in the 30-week program at the parish. May God continue to bless them and their families.

Special thanks should be made to Frs Phuong and Ignatius for their consistent attendance and support of the prayer-life of the candidates. Furthermore, my heartfelt appreciation to Jennifer Micheli and Anna Scarano for their support and contributions through the program.

Jonathan Hili
RCIA Co-ordinator

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The Conference has had a very busy 12 months. We have currently 10 members. Sadly, one of our members passed away this year following her battle with cancer.

We dealt with 218 home and other visits involving 330 adults and 159 children. The value of our support was \$43,443 for the year which equates to nearly \$200 per visit*. Most of our calls involve providing emergency relief in the form of food from our Vinnies pantry, Woolies and Coles shopping vouchers and Vinnies vouchers (which can be redeemed from the Vinnies Op Shops); The vouchers are supplied by St. Vincent de Paul head office. We also provide part or full payment of select bills (usually arrears). Furniture, white goods and bedding is sourced mainly from Eastern Emergency Relief Network (EERN) which is free. We pay an annual membership to EERN and pay for deliveries.

The Conference is planning to conduct a Bunnings Sausage sizzle on the 11th July which will add to our budget next year. This is an opportunity to promote both Vinnies and our parish. A number of parishioners and family members have offered to help with this fundraiser. We had a Sausage sizzle organised for February this year but because that day was a declared a Total Fire Ban Day it had to be cancelled.

The range of people we assisted were:

1. a number of homeless people (those who are sleeping rough, several slept in their car for months, some had been recently evicted)
2. several refugee families including one that is also supported by the Brigidine Asylum Seeker program. We provide the last mentioned with regular emergency relief, we pay for the registration of their car and recently bought them a clothes dryer. They have 4 children
3. Families and individuals facing financial hardship, running out of food, not able to pay for their medicines, requiring assistance paying urgent bills and catching up on arrears.
4. Individuals and families escaping family violence, and
5. Individuals with mental health issues and other disabilities.
6. We were able to pay for the moving costs of one family to the country with the financial assistance of a kindly benefactor from our parish.

The Parish continues to provide much appreciated support enabling our work:

1. Vinnies pantry located in the old counting room
2. monthly donations of food and vouchers collection in both churches
3. donations to the Poor Boxes located in both churches,
4. individual parishioners' donations directly to the Box Hill Conference (this adds to our capacity to provide assistance above the centrally allocated budget from St Vincent de Paul head office)
5. holding two fundraising appeals, the Winter Appeal and the Christmas Appeal, and
6. community's prayers for the success of our work.

We regularly provide brief quarterly reports on our activities in the Parish bulletin.

St Francis Xavier Primary school conducts a social justice project annually for the two higher grades which raises over \$600.

Our Lady of Sion College conducted two fundraisers for us, a mid-year food drive which was overwhelming in the volume of food collected and a Christmas drive which focuses on toiletries and health care products. These are particularly appreciated by our clients as those items are often foregone when money is tight.

Our members' caring concern is an invaluable aspect of our work. We sometimes get the impression that interested and friendly visitors are most welcome along with the practical assistance we can offer.

We find it very rewarding to brighten up so many people's lives with our efforts. Often, even a small bit of assistance goes a very long way for a person facing a bleak period.

The St Vincent de Paul Box Hill Conference is a valuable outreach and vital service of our Parish provided to the general Box Hill community with the support of the St Francis Xavier Primary School, Our Lady of Sion College and our wonderful Parish family.

*The figures include an estimate for June 2026 as the report is written prior to year's close.

Milan Poropat
President
St Vincent de Paul Box Hill Conference

THE KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS

The Knights of Southern Cross is an Order of Catholic Layman whose objectives are to.

- (1) Promote the advancement of Australia.
- (2) Foster the Christian way of life throughout the nation.
- (3) Promote the Welfare of its members and families.
- (4) Encourage social and intellectual activities amongst its members.
- (5) Conduct and support educational, charitable, religious and social welfare works

Based on these objectives we have supported Catholic Charities such as Priest Education Fund and St Francis Xavier, St Clare Parish during 2025/26. We assisted with March for Babies. Financial assistance was raised by our members.

During 2025/26 Box Hill Knights of Southern Cross have been able to meet regularly for combined day and evening meetings with Doncaster, Templestowe and Nunawading Branches. Knights of Southern Cross celebrated mass on 8th August to celebrate St Mary of Cross Feast Day at St Clare with State Chaplain Fr Phuong and Bishop Tinh. This will be on again this year and parishioners are invited to attend. We combined mass for deceased members on Thursday 11th December with Fr Phuong and enjoyed a Christmas social function afterwards.

We have participated in Formation programs and write to Politicians on issues that affect the moral wellbeing of our community. We visit members for special presentations, who are sick in hospitals, nursing homes and pray for them at our monthly meetings. We also attend funerals.

We are grateful for the support of Fr Phuong, Fr Ignatius, parish staff and parishioners of St Francis Xavier-St Clare. Fr Phuong continues his ongoing support of Box Hill Branch as State Chaplain and attends our meetings when he is available. Fr Phuong also celebrated mass at 7pm on Thursday 21st May followed by supper with parishioners.

Membership of the Knights of Southern Cross is open to Catholic men committed to the practice of their Catholic Religion. We welcome new members. The order is an Australia wide Organisation affiliated with the world body of Catholic Knights.

Bill Cleary

LITTLE FRANNIE'S PLAYGROUP

Little Frannie's Playgroup has been going for three years. It is a combined parish and school playgroup run by Goody Muling, a Learning Support Officer employed at St Francis Xavier School. It is held every Tuesday morning during the school term in the Friars Room or school staff room during the building program. It attracts both parishioners and school families. Mothers, fathers and grandparents attend this playgroup, which caters to children ranging in age from newborn babies to 5-year-olds. The cost is \$20 per term. On average, seven to ten families attend the sessions. The playgroup is promoted in the school newsletter, posters hung up around the school and parish, the Whitehorse City Council web page and flyers distributed in school enrolment packs and given out at the school gate. Thank you to the parish and school for the wonderful way they promote and support Little Frannie's.

Little Frannie's Playgroup is a great place to build and strengthen relationships between the school, parish and wider community.

Goody Muling
St Francis Xavier Primary School

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The Safeguarding committee of Greater Box Hill Parish is dedicated to ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable adults. It is part of the Royal Commission's recommendations from the Enquiry into Institutional Abuse. We have undertaken an in depth review of our policies and procedures. We have undertaken the training, working with children check and signing of the code of conduct. We are involved in ensuring all volunteers have undertaken the training, have valid working with children checks and have signed the code of conduct. We all want our children and vulnerable adults to be safe and protected.

Ann-Marie Diggins
Child Safety Officer

SPIRITUAL STUDY GROUP

Aug – Oct 2025: 10 Sessions in Eucharist

Exploring Eucharist through a series of ten sessions provided by the Augustine Institute from USA. These sessions are immensely helpful in providing knowledge of Eucharist from the Old Testament and New Testament.

Nov – Dec 2025: Reflecting Sunday's gospel reading during Advent

The reflection of the readings on each Sunday conducted with the material "*In Holy Stillness*," a publication from **Archdiocesan Ministries** of the Archdiocese of Brisbane. The content helped us to reflect deeply into the love of God in the incarnation of our Lord.

Feb – Apr 2026: Reflecting Sunday's gospel reading during Lent and Easter

The reflection of the readings on each Sunday conducted with the material from the Archdiocese of Singapore, covering from Lent through Pentecost Sunday. The materials provided reflections of all readings and enable us to relate the scriptures to our daily lives.

May – July 2026: Bible study focuses on The Gospel of Matthew

Jonathan Hili conducted a series of 9-week sessions on the Gospel of Matthew via Zoom. These series of sessions had provided the authorship, and detail teaching of the Gospel. The sessions helped us to understand the historical and spiritual contexts of the gospel.

Our parishioners are very willing to learn and engage in sharing in a small group. We hope to attract more parishioners to come together to learn and enrich their faith.

Fr Ignatius Tan
Assistant Parish Priest

PARISH SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The Parish Office organise a few social lunches e.g. Christmas in July, Volunteers Lunch etc but a group of parishioners also meet, mostly monthly and attend local restaurants, hotels or the RSL for lunch or dinner. We would dearly like more parishioners to attend these outings but have found it extremely difficult to interest people. Everyone is invited, everyone and the regulars who attend these outings are a friendly group, so please, when you see the notice in *The Bulletin* don't ignore it, take a chance and join us, we would love to have you attend. A few parish outings for the past year are noted as follows:

A very happy and festive *Christmas in July* was held on the 25th July in the Friars Room. The room looked appropriately festive. Parishioners were treated to a traditional Christmas lunch. It was pleasing to see Ron, our parish organist for many years at the lunch with his wife, Alice.

A small but lively and enthusiastic crowd attended the Ultimate Movie Quiz held on the 23rd August in the Friars Room. Guests tested their observation and listening skills while watching short videos of movies. All agreed the evening was enjoyable and much fun.

Our Parish 2025 Italian pilgrims joined the friends they made on the Pilgrimage with Fr Tony for a reunion in October last year and again in May this year. Both events were wonderful to attend, catching up with people who they spent two fantastic weeks together in Italy and especially catching up with all the news.

Twenty-six Parishioners and friends attended the Village Green Hotel on Friday the 3rd October. It was a fantastic turnout, especially to see a few newcomers attending the dinner. Everyone had a wonderful time, great company and great food.

Over 60 Parishioners and friends attended the Annual Parish Lunch on the 7th December. It was a fantastic gathering, and everyone enjoyed the beautiful food, especially the visit from Father Christmas who was helped by young elf, Andrew. The lunch, held in the School Hall is always a wonderful opportunity for parishioners to meet up with friends. The smooth running of the lunch was ensured by the assistance of volunteers.

Parish volunteers were acknowledged for their dedication to our Parish with a BBQ lunch in the Friars Room in December. Everyone who attended had an enjoyable time catching up with friends and some were lucky enough to receive a raffle prize. This is always another opportunity to thank our volunteers who unselfishly give of their time and talents in making our Parish a happy and vibrant place to be.

Parishioners at St Clare Church welcomed the Lunar New Year with a lavish morning tea on the 15th February after the 9.00am Mass. Tables were brightly decorated and much *groaning* occurred with the number of cakes, biscuits, Fortune Cookies and other Asian goodies, on offer.

Our Lenten journey started with a Shrivng Service at St Francis Xavier on Shrove Tuesday followed by a pancake supper in the Friars Room provided by Fr Phuong and ably assisted by Fr Ignatius. Parishioners enjoyed their pancakes smothered with butter, jam and/or honey.

Parishioners celebrated St Patrick's Feast Day with morning tea at both Churches on Sunday 13th March after the 9.00am and 10.15am Masses. Parishioners enjoyed a wide range of goodies with their cuppa, some with an Irish theme of course.

St Clare hosted the Cancer Council Biggest Morning Tea (this was the 10th) in June after the 9.00am Mass. A lot of fun was had with the raffle as always and people donated most generously to the Cancer Council. Combining donations and raffle, the grand amount of \$1,150.00 was raised.

Jennifer Micheli

ST FRANCIS XAVIER TENNIS COURTS

Currently we have about 80 memberships to the club. This covers family membership, couples, single adult, student and junior members.

The coach, Jose Fernandez, coaches the primary school children 3 days per week (weather permitting) and does other coaching, again weather permitting, 5 afternoons a week. 3 of these are junior coaching and he has a team playing in the Eastern Regions Tennis Association (ERTA) juniors competition on Sunday mornings. Jose also provides

an additional lunchtime training session to the primary school because he likes to see the kids enjoy the game and has hopes that more of them may wish to enter the competition.

We also provide Sion College with access to the courts early mornings several times a year.

We have teams playing night tennis on Monday nights and Wednesday nights. We did have 2 ladies' teams on Monday nights, but one team has had to pull out due to injuries reducing the team numbers. We have 1 team playing on Wednesday nights in an open competition. An open team is one made up of men and women in any combination. Our team is currently all men, but over the years (we have been together for more than 25 years) we have had various combinations of men and women.

If there are any ladies interested in joining the Monday night competition I can put them in contact with the team captain. It is already too late for the next season starting in July, but the season starting February 2027 would give any interested ladies time to meet and have a social hit with the remaining ladies in the team. Be not afraid, the team was in division 10, so it is more about the social aspects of tennis rather than the serious business of winning the competition. In fact, if there are any members wishing to join either the Monday or Wednesday competitions, please feel free to contact me.

We have in the last year replaced the court surfaces and the nets. This was done because the existing surfaces had been down for nearly 10 years and there were splits in the carpet that had become trip hazards and as such were making the courts unplayable. When we went to replace the nets, we found that the inner mechanisms on the net posts were beyond repair and had to be replaced as well. The posts had been in place since moving from the en tout cas courts at the other side of the school grounds over 20 years ago. Hopefully the new surface will last us another 10 years. We hope everyone likes the new blue courts. The court surfaces were replaced with money from the club funds raised from membership fees over the previous years.

The renewal of memberships is due and given the problems with cost of living, we will not be increasing the fees this year. Please see the Parish website for the membership application form. Apart from the Monday and Wednesday night competitions court usage of an evening is not heavy, but we charge \$25.00 per hour per court when the lights are used. Bookings are required for members to use the courts at night as the lights have their own access code. We also need to know who is booking the courts to prevent double bookings and ensure that the lights are paid for.

Mike Cervetto
President
SFX Tennis Club

MOTHERS AND FATHERS PRAYER GROUP

Our Mother and Father's prayer group is a welcoming community of parents from St Francis Xavier parish who gather to support one another through prayer. We meet every Wednesday at 8.00pm until 9.00pm to lift up our children, our families, and our community in prayer.

We pray for our children's physical protection, emotional well-being, spiritual growth, and future decisions. Our group has been gathering since 2023 and we currently have seven regular members. Our gatherings are casual and supportive. A typical meeting includes hymns, prayers to Our Lady, St Joseph and St Michael, a reading and the recitation of the rosary.

All parents, grandparents, godparents and those with children in their lives are welcome to join us in prayer.

Tanya Salinas Byrne

CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP

Pope Leo when meeting members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal recently, described the movement as a gift with which God has blessed the church.

Once again, the wind of the Spirit has blown and has deposited us back at St Clare Church.

We meet every Monday (excluding school and public holidays) at 1.00pm in the Narthex for a BYO lunch. Coffee, tea and biscuits provided.

Praise and Worship, (which is an integral part of a charismatic prayer group) starts at 1.30pm with Divine Mercy, followed by singing songs of praise then a scripture sharing, teaching, or a talk by a guest speaker. Meeting concludes at 3.00pm. *PRAYER MINISTRY is available for anyone in need.*

Anna Scarano

PARISH CHOIR

Over the past 12 months, the choir has continued to provide music for most weekend Masses. Membership has remained stable, with members showing great dedication in offering their time and talents to help foster a prayerful and uplifting celebration of the Eucharist. During the year, some members also took on new roles, beginning to play the organ and serve as cantors.

Choir practice was held weekly at St Francis Xavier on Wednesdays at 6:45 pm. During the winter months, rehearsals were moved to St Clare, where the heating provides a more comfortable environment.

Christmas was a joyful time, with strong participation across the parish. At the Seniors' Mass at St Francis Xavier, Nina Hughes, Merryn Hughes, and Joseph Hourigan led the music. The St Francis Xavier and St Clare choirs provided carols before the Family Mass and music during the liturgy. At St Clare, the Indonesian Choir led the carols before Mass and joined the St Clare Choir for the Christmas Eve Mass, while the Midnight Mass was led by Brother Trieu Nguyen and the Vietnamese Choir. It was wonderful to see people from many different nationalities coming together, reflecting the universal nature of the Church.

Easter followed soon after Christmas and remains a central part of our Church year. The choir played an important role in supporting these sacred liturgies, with all members contributing generously to preparation. We were especially grateful for the support of Nina Hughes, who served as cantor for Holy Thursday, and Allegra Salinas-Byrne, who led the singing for Good Friday and the Easter Vigil. It was also lovely to welcome back our former Music Director, Merryn Hughes, cantor, who supported the choir at the Easter Sunday Mass.

Due to other commitments, the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) brothers have ceased leading music on a monthly basis. We are grateful for their contributions over the past year.

Singing together is an important part of our prayer, and we warmly invite all parishioners not only to join in the singing at Mass, but also to consider joining the choir. New members are always welcome, and it is a great way to become more involved in parish life.

Margaret Kwan

VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY

We officially moved to St Clare Church on 1 January 2026 from St Timothy's Church, Vermont. Since then, we have been welcomed and received with open arms and an inspiring spirit of hospitality, especially by the Parish Priest, Fr Phuong Vu, and the Parish office team. Over the last five months, we have truly found our 'new home' at St Clare with the support of Fr Phuong and the Parish community.

We have seen many new faces at our weekly mass at 5pm on Sunday. Some come from the local area, while others come from further away. Our Mass attendance, which varies from 100 to 150 people, has been a wonderful sign of God's presence within our community. Apart from weekly mass, we also hold special prayer times (Divine Mercy

during the Holy Week and Easter Week), solemn and important masses in the liturgical calendar (e.g. 19 March the Feast of St Joseph, or 12 June the Feast of the Sacred Heart) and some other activities in the school hall (e.g. community parties for Lunar New Year, Easter celebration, 'Pho' Night Fundraising for the choir, Full Moon Festival for the Youth). Furthermore, under the new pastoral team and leadership style, we have felt a deep sense of peace, harmony, and unity amongst us all. Over the Easter Triduum, we were able to integrate well with the wider parish celebrations on Holy Thursday and at the Easter Vigil with our attendance at these celebrations.

In the future, we look forward to contributing more to the Parish wherever we can and wherever the Parish may suggest. For now, our presence within the Parish community is a certain sign of our desire to integrate and live in harmony with the Parish as a whole.

On behalf of the St Agnes Thanh Vietnamese Community, I would like to renew our gratitude to the Parish community for your inspiring support. You have helped our community not merely to exist, but to flourish into what it is today.

Fr Peter Khoi Nguyen
Chaplain of the St Agnes Thanh Community

ITALIAN COMMUNITY

Mass is celebrated by the Italian community at 11.00am on Sundays by Monsignor Franco Cavarra at St Clare Church, Box Hill North. The Mass is attended by between 40 to 100 parishioners, mostly elderly Italians. A few non-Italian speaking parishioners also attend on a regular basis. The format of the Mass is that the Bible readings and prayers are read in the Italian language; however, Monsignor Franco caters for the mixed congregation by having two homilies, one in Italian and the other in English. His thorough preparation for the Mass is much appreciated by all attending. We have previously celebrated the Feast of Christ the King with about 140 attending, and God willing, we hope to do this again this year.

Dominic Amato

SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

ST FRANCIS XAVIER - ST CLARE PARISH SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

CATEGORY	2025	2024	2023
Receipts			
Thanksgiving - Stewardship Program	133,620	158,369	166,842
Loose Funds	95,878	88,673	50,675
Thanksgiving Income	229,498	247,042	217,517
Donations	3,464	7,909	2,926
Interest and Dividends	100,832	106,362	48,088
Rent	289,539	282,886	260,534
Bequests	-	25,000	
Sundry (Funerals, Baptisms, Weddings, Other Income)	31,701	39,669	74,771
Sub-total	425,536	461,826	386,319
TOTAL RECEIPTS	655,034	708,868	603,836
% of Thanksgiving /Total Receipts	35%	35%	36%
EXPENDITURE			
Administration	142,203	170,535	167,273
Pastoral (Incl Nurse Advocate)	10,330	16,887	18,530
Property (R&M, Insurance & Utilities)	139,558	148,910	151,586
Fundraising		909	
Archdiocesan Levy	52,928	45,264	44,052
Insurance	30,656	29,833	32,362
Other Sundry Costs	74,311	83,791	106,516
Interest on Loan	4,323	6,385	7,535
TOTAL OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE	454,309	502,514	527,854

Capital Loan Repayments	30,000	30,000	30,000
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WEEKLY AVERAGES

Thanksgiving - Stewardship Program	\$ 2,570	\$ 3,046	\$ 3,209
Loose	\$ 1,844	\$ 1,705	\$ 975
Thanksgiving Income	\$ 4,413	\$ 4,751	\$ 4,183
Expenditure	\$ 8,737	\$ 9,664	\$ 10,151
Other Income	\$ 8,183	\$ 8,881	\$ 7,429
Weekly Surplus	\$ 3,860	\$ 3,968	\$ 1,461