

# COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY NAME



**Summer 2019/20  
Newsletter**

## IN THIS ISSUE...

*We explore the history of our Associates and their work. Also, diary dates for 2020.*

### Also in this issue:

Letter from Sister Carol	2
Sr Josephine Margaret's story	3
Oblates' Advent Quiet Day	4
Associates' Retreat	5
Oblates' News	5
Diary Dates 2020: Oblates & Associates	6
<i>From the Archives:</i> The history of the Associates	7
'New in the Library'	8
Prayer Days 2020	8

Editor: Liz Johnstone

### **Community of the Holy Name**

*We are a Community of Anglican Sisters who have been living, praying and ministering in Melbourne for more than 125 years.*

*Nowadays, our main ministry is hospitality, offering a place of spiritual renewal and refreshment.*

Community of the Holy Name  
Esther House  
31 Lorna Street  
Cheltenham, Victoria 3192  
Phone 03 9583 2087  
Email: [chnmelb@bigpond.com](mailto:chnmelb@bigpond.com)  
[www.chnmelb.org](http://www.chnmelb.org)

## **A reflection on the Magi**

*by Geoff Johnstone, ALSM, St Paul's Frankston*

Children's church is a lot of fun. Last week we studied the Magi and I asked a couple of pre schoolers to be my wise men.

"Oh, wise men," I tried to look very serious. "What should I buy Jesus to say happy birthday?"

After several seconds of whispered suggestions they came back with an answer.

"An elephant," they said in unison.

"An elephant!" I exclaimed.

"Where is he going to keep an elephant?" "In his backyard, silly," they replied.

Children can see the obvious. My lesson was designed to teach them that the smartest people in the world recognized the son of God and worshipped him.

Today there are protests in the city of Melbourne. Climate activists are blocking the streets and gluing their hands to the roads. I know these people. I grew up with some of them.

"Human beings are the problem," they have told me on several occasions. "This planet was a paradise before we came along." I humbly disagree.

The wise men came from the East, to see for themselves what God is saying to the world. They found a child, a small human being. Jesus was nearly two years old when they rode into town.

The mind can create three ideas every two seconds. So, take a moment to picture Jesus. Imagine his black, curly hair and olive coloured skin. See him as he takes his first steps while his father holds his hands. Watch him take in the faces of aunts and uncles through those dark brown eyes. I wonder what he

thought when strange men in fancy robes started laying gifts at his feet.

The lesson is obvious. God's answer to the problems in this world is a human being. And our problems are huge. In the space of one week we have faced war in the middle East, bushfires that are now an extinction event, air that is difficult to breath and the collapse of trust in government. And the week isn't over!

Epiphany means that God has revealed something to us. It is a light bulb moment.

The visit of the Magi means much more than just saying, "God is on our side."

It means the Son of God is one of us. He is one of us.

A human being survived the hatred and fear of Herod.

A human being defeated death and wiped away the tears of grieving mothers.

A human being brought us to God who delights in being our Father.

A human being survived as a refugee and is even now preparing a place in our Father's house.

Redemption is happening! Can you see it?

I wonder what the Magi reported to their patrons? Everything had changed. The future would be very different to the past.

This is the hope we cling to in these difficult days.



*Dear friends,*

Christmas is always a wonderful time as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus. Unfortunately, it has not been that for many people who have lost their homes and or livelihoods to fire, volcanoes,

floods, famine; not only in our own country but countries across the world. We must also remember those men and women who have given up their own Christmas with their families to be out there for others.

We hear a lot about the bad side of human nature but this certainly is an example of the good in so many people; the love and actions of Jesus to those in need.

This year has been one which has shown us that with the Spirituality Centre we are on the right path, reaching out to others and offering a space for reflection and prayer. We would not have been able to do this without the help of our staff, both paid and those who volunteer and we look forward to that help continuing next year also. We have been truly blessed.

I write this letter at the request of Liz who edits and produces this Newsletter which is, I know, valued by many people who receive it by email or post. Liz had a difficult time just before Christmas when she had to fly back to Scotland as her mother was dying. She was there at the end but then there were problems with the funeral. She missed her 60th birthday celebration and a long-awaited cruise, but was transferred to a later one. The upside of this is that the cruise they missed was the one where lives were lost on White Island New Zealand.



Sr. Hilary celebrated her 60th Profession Anniversary on 21st December, St. Thomas's Day.



She gathered with the sisters and friends in the main chapel for a service celebrated by Fr. Ken Letts, who also gave the sermon. Fr. Ken was assisted in the sanctuary by our Warden the Revd Graham Reynolds. Following the service, we all enjoyed a light lunch prepared by our favourite caterer Kate and her team. At the lunch some of the guests spoke about the ministry Hilary has offered to many people.

**Little Lon' : Mission House**

In 1885 the Mission to Streets and Lanes was established opposite this spot. It was to be an Anglican ministry to the women and children in the crowded housing, brothels and hotels around 'Little Lon'.

After an initial struggle, the Mission prospered under the leadership of Emma Silcock who recruited a group of women to provide food and clothing, nursing, clubs and classes for their immediate neighbours and outreach to women before Melbourne's courts or in its prisons. As Sister Esther, she laid the basis for Australia's first Anglican religious order for women, the community of the Holy Name.

Details have been finalised for the plaque that will be placed in Little Lonsdale Street to mark the first Mission House run by the Mission to Streets and Lanes and Sister Esther. We are looking forward to seeing it and being able to attend a 'service' for the unveiling at a date to be announced.

We are looking forward to 2020 and all the challenges, joys and sorrows it may bring but knowing that we are in the care of a loving God who knows our future and will guide us forward and we trust Him and his promises.

May 2020 be a year of blessings for you all

With love and prayers

*Carol* CHN .

## Sister Josephine Margaret's story

I grew up in Murrumbidgee, in a happy Christian home. The second-born of four girls and the most 'religious'. As the quiet one, I was a bit of a puzzle with little interest in social life. I loved studying and learning, and recall having a picture of the boy Samuel, waiting and listening, fixed in my mind. At our little parish school, I enjoyed Divinity lessons every day.

Our church was very supportive of the Anglican Board of Mission and I was part of a little group called 'Heralds of the King' who prayed for the missionaries. A young headmistress at our school had resigned to go to New Guinea, where she founded the Martyrs' School, and was then killed in the Mount Lamington eruption of 1951. I was eleven years old and resolved I would go into teacher training.

I thought of giving myself to God as a fulfilling life, stretching out before me. Also, I became aware of a fascination for religious Sisters in sweeping black habits. I had no contact with any, except Sister Winifred Muriel who knew my father. I was aware of a faster heartbeat and a lump in my throat when I heard of the religious life and read about religious history and biographies for myself. I held this quietly in my heart – missionary work for New Guinea and the religious life.

After the matriculation exams, I got a Commonwealth scholarship to study Arts and a Diploma of Education, at Melbourne University, so the fees were provided and I was free to go on to New Guinea. I truly loved my time there – living the missionary lifestyle, working with the school children and ministering to their families. We lived very simply and walked everywhere.

I came back in 1967, to join the Community of the Holy Name, and completed the ThL (Licentiate of Theology), the course undertaken by most Anglican clergy at the time, at Ridley and Trinity. I also did a course for Spiritual Direction in Perth over three years, staying for three weeks a year. This was challenging and widened my experience of life and relationships as I met people from all over Australia.

I still love to reflect, study, explore and question. In 2001, I went on a one-month course, on the life of Jesus, at St George's College in Jerusalem. We visited many holy places, including the Sinai desert, where we camped overnight in the sands, stayed at St Catherine's Monastery and climbed up Mount Sinai on camels.

I have been in a variety of ministries at CHN. From our Mission House at Fitzroy, for ten years, I was an adult probation officer for women in Melbourne

Magistrates' Court, and Anglican chaplain for Fairlea Women's Prison. I also did general parish work, at Canterbury, visiting mothers and working with young families who couldn't come to church often. At Sunshine, I taught English to refugees and worked at the Court, especially with family violence issues.

I have been involved in leadership, as Novice Guardian, Assistant Community Leader, then Leader of the Community at a time of great change. We were moving from institutional work to individual ministries, from non-negotiable directives to individual decision-making and responsibilities. We also needed to develop systems of administration for health insurance, powers of attorney, etc. After this work, I was burnt out, exhausted.

However, whatever was in my heart, paths have opened for me, despite difficulties, temptations, suffering, pain and disappointments along the way. When my younger sister died from lung cancer, I was shocked and lost, feeling inadequate to minister to family, and had to learn to put all into God's hands, as it was not up to me.

At school and our local church, the Prayer Books, patterns of prayer, and church traditions and practice were a wonderful foundation for me. Scripture and the daily Eucharist are fundamental to my life and prayer, and the rhythm of the Offices nourishes me.

Over the years, my prayers have become less formal, interceding for people and causes as they come to mind, rather than using lists.

Today, I am the Sacristan for Esther House, serving the other Sisters, priests and visitors. We have revised the Offices and they are now simpler. I like to seek out new ideas for worship and liturgy.

I also organise and publicise our monthly Prayer Days which I see as an important outreach, together with our little shop of cards, crosses, Prayer Aids, etc.

I live as simply as I can and try to practise contemplative living, having respect for God's creation and for people. I like to make myself available for visitors, to offer a listening ear and be there for them.

We are each on a personal journey. God is calling me and I'm here, responding to his loving invitation.





## OBLATES' ADVENT QUIET DAY, 7 DECEMBER

The Revd. Colleen O'Reilly led our 2019 Advent Quiet Day, and provided talks, a midday Mass and times of silence to reflect. In the afternoon, we had the opportunity to share our thoughts with others.

This end of year Quiet Day was a wonderful time of refreshment, it was good to be together again at the Spirituality Centre and in the silent times we enjoyed the fine weather to walk or sit in the gardens.

Colleen began her main address by asking us a question: 'What are we like in the dark?'

For most of us as city dwellers we are seldom without light of one sort or another. Unlike our pre-electricity ancestors who depended on candles, sunlight, moonlight or firelight, we can be afraid of the dark, and due to our affluence and the easily accessible sources of powered light we are not used to darkness. Darkness is often associated with the 'dark ages', 'the dark night of the soul', or the 'black dog' of depression; still today, light houses still shine in the darkness to warn seafarers of danger.

Perhaps, if we are unable to sleep and lying awake during the dark midnight hours, we find that difficult things seem more difficult at night.

Colleen linked this experience with the words of Psalm 30. 5

'Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning'

In Genesis (1: 1-5) God's work of Creation began in darkness; even then, God's light pre-existed before the creation of the sun, moon and stars.

In John 12:46 Jesus declares, 'I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not stay in darkness'.

Revd. Colleen spoke of the noticeable differences in the daylight between hemispheres, and as the days during Advent grow longer rather than

shorter, we are less attentive to the symbolic darkness of a European Advent and less able to grasp fully the significance of the coming of the light of Christ at Christmas.

Colleen illustrated her address by displaying a print of the famous Pre-Raphaelite painting by William Holman Hunt. (1851-1853) entitled 'The Light of the World'.

In this image the figure of Jesus stands before a rustic wooden door, the weeds growing in front of it a sign of neglect. The stately figure of Jesus, wearing a

crown and a jewel-encrusted robe, holds a brass lantern, his hand, still bearing the wounds of crucifixion, is poised to knock on a long-unopened door, a symbol of the obstinate human soul. Holman Hunt's painting refers to the scripture from Revelation 3:20: 'Behold! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me'. This painting, rich in symbolism, powerfully portrays Jesus' words from John 8, 'I am the Light of the World'.

In this masterpiece, the dawning light in the background extends to cast away the darkness of the night and to illuminate the path that Jesus invites the occupant to take. Looking carefully at the painting there is a second source of light from the lantern that Jesus is holding, and just as a lighthouse warns of danger, so Jesus' lantern shows the way to a safe haven. The third and most powerful source of light is Christ himself, his light eclipses all other earthly light. Jesus chooses this way of humility and vulnerability as he waits patiently and

does not demand entry, so this image of Jesus waiting at a door that can only be opened from the inside illustrates Christ's undemanding patience, waiting for the dawn to awaken in ourselves and in our behaviour, asking us to watch and wait, prepared for his coming. The Gift of Advent offers riches in hidden places, encourages patience and the capacity to wait in the darkness to welcome with joy the coming of the light in



*The Light of the World by Holman Hunt*

*Contributed by Sue Retschko, Oblate of CHN*



## ASSOCIATES' RETREAT, 6-8 SEPTEMBER

Our Retreat leader, Val Dyke, had invited us to bring our favourite cup, as this was to be at the centre of our prayer and meditation.

As we gathered in the Prayer Room and began the silence Val said that our cup is a Cup of Life, a symbol of our life – our inner journey. As we hold our cup, look at it and think about our life. A cup can be filled (taking in), it can also be emptied (letting go); our spiritual life journey is just like that, a constant process of emptying and filling, of giving and receiving, of accepting and letting go. Val mentioned that our lives can hold stale things that need to be discarded, and we can feel wounded like a broken cup. At the same time the contents of our life are to be given and shared in generous gestures of compassion, a sharing of what is within. We were invited to hold our cup and notice its style, shape, colour and size, to be aware of God's hands as well as our own holding our cup and to accept our uniqueness and goodness and to thank God for creating us as we are.

On Saturday morning, we reflected on "The Open Cup" and being open as a prerequisite for growth in the spiritual life. For God to enter our lives, we need to be receptive to what God is offering us. Openness is about wonder and surprise, leading to inner freedom and growth. We reflected on our lives, "What keeps us from being open?" Sometimes we have so much inner clutter there is no room to receive, clouding our minds and hearts. Things like anxiety, resentment, harsh judgements, self-pity and mistrust. Harsh voices, negative thoughts, useless fears and worries, old wounding messages, the have's and want's, the should's and ought's push us around. Even prayer itself can become clutter if we are concerned about whether we are good or bad at prayer, about achieving when this is at the expense of our relationship with God. We considered what clutter we need to empty out, and what gifts of God we need to receive. Then we took our cup, turning it sideways to empty it out symbolically – as if emptying out the clutter of our lives. Then we let our cup be filled, with the living water that Jesus offers us.

In the afternoon we focussed on "The Broken Cup." We all have flaws, chips and stains like a well-used mug. We feel that if we can get rid of these flaws, we can hope to find God, gain friends, deepen relationships and heal any rifts or issues with family members. We want to be perfect but we will always have flaws and they can help us to come nearer to God. They can

be our treasures, like the grain of sand in an oyster which becomes a pearl. They are our growing points, and help us to understand others. Accepting our less than perfect selves is important for our growth.

We are challenged to see things as they really are - not as we think they are. Focusing on our flaws can hold us back. We lose sight of God being there to help us grow. We need to accept and value ourselves. Our negative characteristics are only sinful when we use them to harm ourselves and others. Like coffee mugs we need to be regularly cleansed. When we ask God to cleanse us from our stains or negative emotions that hold us back or hurt others, we come closer to God. We will still make mistakes but our failures can lead us to greater truth. It is through our ordinary, flawed lives that Jesus finds us. We need to come to a place of forgiving ourselves and others, as well as seeking forgiveness from God for the things that have harmed us or those we care about.

On Sunday, we meditated upon "Take this Bread and Cup of Wine" and considered the best-known cup in Scriptures, the "The Blessing Cup". It is derived from the Jewish Passover Rite, meaning not only that the cup is blessed but that the cup itself holds a blessing. It holds a gift of life for us. All creation is sacred because it is blessed by God. Every place and thing can become a blessing when we become aware of its beauty and learn to acknowledge the Sacred Presence. Attentiveness to the present moment, therefore, to each person, animal, tree or flower in nature can fill us with joy, happiness and blessings as we recognize the sacred. Sometimes blessings come disguised in pain, and can only be recognized in hindsight. We can be wounded by memories of past experiences, but can we learn to wrestle with them like Jacob until we are able to let them go and leave them with our God? Many bless us in our lives, maybe often without being aware of it – perhaps through something as simple as a smile.

Many thanks to our Retreat Leader, Val, who helped us to recognize our Cups, our Clutter and our Blessings.



*Val Dyke, Retreat Leader*

*Contributed by Faye Murphy, Associate of CHN*



## OBLATES' CALENDAR 2020

21 March	Lent Quiet Day, with Jamie Miller, Benedictine Oblate
9 May	Oblates & Associates Meeting, with Bishop Brad Billings
17-20 September	Annual Oblates Retreat - leader to be arranged
5 December	Advent Quiet Day—leader to be arranged
13 October	Celebratory lunch for Oblates, with partner or friend, to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the CHN Order of Oblates.

*Please note a change in the date of the Oblates & Associates Meeting.*



## ASSOCIATES' CALENDAR 2020

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Feb. <u>Annual General Meeting</u><br>10.30am Morning Tea<br>11.00am AGM<br>12.45pm Midday Office<br>1pm Lunch provided ( <b><i>Please book in.</i></b> )<br>2pm Sister Avrill will share some highlights of her journey, 'in the steps of St Paul'<br>3pm (approx.) Afternoon Tea   | 9 May <u>Combined Meeting with Oblates</u><br>12.45pm Midday Office<br>1pm Lunch provided ( <b><i>Please book in.</i></b> )<br>2pm Guest speaker: Bishop Brad Billings who will speak to us about his considerable experience as a Tour and Pilgrimage Leader. |
| As usual the election of office bearers will be on the agenda. Please think about whether there is someone you would like to nominate for the office of Treasurer or Secretary. Before nominating anyone, you must obtain their permission. Office bearers need to attend most meetings and the Treasurer also needs to visit CHN regularly to keep the books up to date.<br><b><u>A reminder:</u></b> Annual Subscriptions (now \$20) are due at the AGM, or near that time for those unable to attend. | 31 July-2 August <u>Annual Retreat</u> , led by Carol O'Connor, Manager, St Peter's Bookroom<br>6pm Evening Meal, Friday—start<br>1pm Midday Dinner, Sunday—finish   |
| 4 April <u>Lent Quiet Day</u> , led by the Revd. Emily Payne, Vicar, St Faith's, Glen Iris and Priest Associate of CHN<br>10.00am Morning Tea<br>BYO Lunch<br>3.30pm Afternoon Tea   | 14 Nov. <u>Corporate Communion</u><br>Celebrant, preacher and guest speaker TBA<br>11.45am Arrive<br>12 noon Eucharist with address<br>1pm Lunch provided ( <b><i>Please book in.</i></b> )<br>2pm Speaker<br>3pm (Approx.) Afternoon Tea                      |

## REST IN PEACE

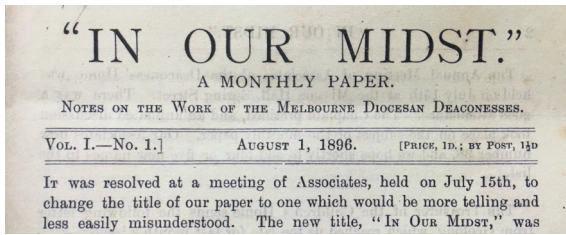
Our Associate, Gina Macpherson, died peacefully on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2019, after a short illness. A beautiful, gracious little lady, she lived to the age of 100 with all her faculties intact. Gina had been an Associate of CHN for 37 years, and was a regular worshipper at St Peter's, Eastern Hill, to which she drove her own car until well into her 90's. Her constant companion was a little black poodle which accompanied her to church every Sunday. Gina is survived by her daughter Sally, who lives in the U.S.A.

May Gina rest in peace.



## From the Archives...The history of the Associates

Our Associates have been essential for our Community since its earliest days. The first people



were admitted when there were only the original three pioneers in the Mission - Sisters Esther, Ellen and Christina. Their first nine members were admitted at a service in St Peter's Church on Ascension Day, 1891. Within six years, there were 46, including Mrs Moorhouse who became a member in Bishops Court Chapel in Manchester, the Associate's badge and form of admission sent over from Melbourne.



The first Associates were women who had pledged to support the ministry by prayer, publicity and material assistance.

In 1894, ministry was greatly expanded through the use of St. George's Mission Hall, once a factory and 'and a dance hall of the worst kind'. The rental was paid for many years by an Associate.

From 1896, they published a monthly newsletter for the Sisters, In Our Midst, to publicize the ministry and seek support from the wider Melbourne community. They would stay with the Sisters, living and working with them, enabling them to take some much-needed rest. Their practical help included raising funds



Some of the Associates in Adelaide, with Sr Valmai

to support the Free Dispensary, assisting the Sisters in sewing classes and making clothes for the residents of the House of Mercy and the Children's Home.

When Mother Esther managed to persuade the Inspector General to include a chapel in the new buildings at Pentridge Prison, Associates would accompany her visits, to help with the lantern



Some of the Associates in WA

and the organ, over time becoming regular visitors to the female prisoners. Throughout our history, the Associates have faithfully supported our ministry. In 1947, when the House of Mercy was transformed into the Retreat House, the first group to have a

Retreat were the Associates of the Community with the Bishop of the Riverina being the conductor.



Our latest Associate, Casila Gilchrist

Over time, men joined the ranks also and a group of Associates formed in Adelaide in support of CHN's ministry in South Australia. Following Sister Josephine Margaret's attendance at a course in Spiritual Direction that was based in Perth, another group formed in

Western Australia. Nowadays, there are 88 Associates of CHN, including Priests Associate.



Associate Faye Murphy, volunteer driver for CHN

Associates keep a simple Rule of Life, pray for the Community and, where possible, assist in practical ways. The Community supports

Associates through prayer and fellowship and a regular program of speakers, Quiet Days and an annual retreat.

Much of the work of CHN over the years could not have been done without our faithful Associates.

## New in the Library by our Librarian, Philip Harvey

Readers of the Spring issue received the news that a garden labyrinth has been installed in the Community grounds. It is solidly constructed and sure to get a lot of use. This traditional aid to contemplation and life-learning is a welcome addition for both visitors and those engaged in the daily life at Cheltenham. At the same time, the Revd Colleen O'Reilly has donated a collection of books about the labyrinth to the Library. They are now all catalogued, ready for consultation and loan.

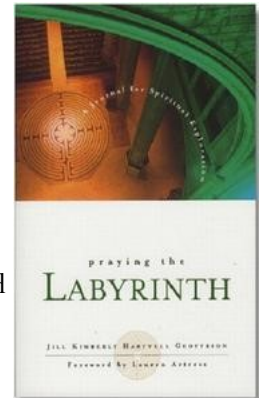
Prolific on this subject is the author Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion. Her work 'Praying the labyrinth : a journal for spiritual exploration' (Pilgrim Press, 1999) is a good introduction to the practice. What is a labyrinth? As the blurb explains, "It is a path of prayer, a walking meditation that can become a mirror of the soul. A labyrinth is not a maze. A maze is designed for you to lose your way; a labyrinth is designed for you to find your way."

Another of her books is called a pilgrim's guidebook to the Chartres Labyrinth, one of the most famous in the world. Pilgrimage means time to stop and pray on the way, so this book turns the different stages of the walk into meditations on the process. Labyrinth books often contain scripture, prayer and reflection together with explanations of preparation,

departure, experience, destination, and return.

As Paula D'Arcy writes in the foreword to Gernot Candolini's book 'Labyrinths' (Crossroad, 2003), "Labyrinths can be walked not only with feet, but with hands and hearts and minds. Fall into the experience. These pages are a rich, wondrous blend of history, faith's deep call, and the wisdom gleaned from the journey. As you walk, listen to your own journey."

When the books arrived library volunteer Amanda Witt and I shared labyrinth stories. I recalled visiting Chartres Cathedral with my wife Carol to find that the staff had set out rows of chairs on the labyrinth for some event. We decided just to sit down amidst the curves and joins to consider the rose window above our heads. Amanda has walked the labyrinth at McClelland Sculpture Park and Gallery in Langwarrin and follows on Facebook The Labyrinth Society Global Group, which regularly loads images and words of every kind of labyrinth, from ancient ones built in stone right through to those drawn in sand on the beach during a camping trip.



## Days of Prayer and Reflection 2020

The Sisters of the Community of the Holy Name Invite you to Days of Prayer and Reflection at the Spirituality Centre, Cheltenham, from 10am—3 pm.

The Eucharist is celebrated at mid-day and there are opportunities to sit quietly, to use our library and to wander in the gardens.

Some input is given, and suggestions for using the silence.

BYO lunch. (Tea and coffee are provided.) There is no charge for these days but a donation towards costs is appreciated.



**Be still and know that I am God.**

### DATES FOR 2020

5 March  
2 April  
7 May  
4 June  
2 July  
6 August  
3 September  
1 October  
5 November

For further information, contact Sister Josephine Margaret, CHN, on 03 9583 2087, or by email [jmwarne@bigpond.com](mailto:jmwarne@bigpond.com)