

# MINISTRY AREA TEAM (MAT) REPORTS

Figtree Anglican Church 2025



## SENIOR MINISTER'S REPORT

Every week, your Ministry Team gathers to read God's word and pray together. And every month, your Parish Council has gathered to read God's word and pray together. Today, again, our parish family as God's people in God's place, prayerfully trusting God's precious promises, well what better time than our AGM to renew our commitment with thanksgiving to be growing to be more like Jesus?



In the midst of what is mostly a meeting to ensure governance, our AGM is an opportunity to mine the spiritual minerals of God's good word. This last year, your Parish Council read through the Old Testament Book of wisdom: Ecclesiastes.

### UNDER THE SUN

We saw how life "under the sun" viewed only from the perspective of this world ultimately appears to be "meaningless". Work, pleasure, wealth, youth, even wisdom itself all fade away with time and the inevitability of death.

The author, the Spirit-inspired teacher, Solomon I believe, takes his readers along every path of human aspiration and achievement. He concludes, brutally, that if this life is all there is, striving becomes like "chasing after the wind". That it is, "meaningless".

However, as Solomon reaches his crescendo and conclusion in Ecclesiastes 12, his perspective widens. He shares how human life is short and passes away, like silver cords severed and dust returning to the ground, but it is not purposeless.

#### **ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14**

"Now all has been heard;  
here is the conclusion of the matter:  
Fear God and keep His commandments,  
for this is the duty of all mankind.  
For God will bring every deed into judgment,  
including every hidden thing,  
whether it is good or evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

Wisdom for life is not found in "MineCrafting" all that this creation has to offer... rather, in seeking the Creator of the world and realising all people have a deeper purpose and meaning met in pursuing and praising God as we stand before Him.

### UNDER THE SON

Turning to the latter New Testament scriptures, when life is viewed under the Son, Jesus Messiah, the Son of God, this futility of life is transformed into an even clearer sense of

purpose. Rather like a shift from black and white print to full colour, the One greater than even Solomon the teacher entered our world “under the sun”.

Jesus, the Son of God, experienced the fullness of our frustrations and the extent of our sufferings in this earthly creation, and through His death, His resurrection, and His ascension reveals the eternal perspective to which Ecclesiastes aspires.

Fearing God is shown not as impersonal, reverent distance but rather the fullness of a covenant relationship in which Jesus’ perfect love for us drives out our fear (1 John 4:18). The book closes with these famous words, “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind,” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

## **JESUS FOR EVERYONE... FOREVER!**

Life without God is meaningless, but life lived in thankful, joyful, prayerful faith and obedience to Him, revealed fully as life under the Son, shines light into our fleeting world. Jesus’ light fulfils His promises and forms His rainbows even on darker days... the joy of a deeply purposeful life together with an enduring impact, beyond the brevity of earthly life rather into eternity. Jesus for Everyone. Forever.

## **AGM MINISTRY REPORTS**

In our AGM Ministry Reports for 2026, looking back over the last year, we have so much to give thanks to God for in the past, so much to enjoy with Him at present, and so much to prayerfully look forward to in hope for the future.

For the most part, these reports are aligned with our current Ministry Area Teams, an intentional partnership between the Ministry Team and our Parish Council in resourcing, equipping, and engaging one another for God’s great work of service.

## **OUR THANKFULNESS ABOUNDS**

When my peers ask me how we are going as a church, I often comment how the Lord has blessed me with a “Dream Team”. None of us is perfect... only Jesus. Yet I see God’s faithful work in each Ministry Team member and rejoice in His grace.

Every year we delight to welcome new members to our Ministry Team. This year we welcome Logan Brailey serving our children at church and in our community. Coupled with his energy and steadfastness in service leading, we look forward to the Lord shaping him to be more like Jesus. Thank you, God, for our Ministry Team.

In 2026, we farewell a number of members of our governance team. Peter Jones is making the shift from his elected role as people’s warden, and we thank him and Julie-Anne for his service. We thank Peter Richardson, Brent Barrett, Kalinda Hughes, and Jane Whitelaw for their service as parish councillors. They all move on with all goodwill. We thank Simone

Boswell for her faithful service as Synod Representative over three years and we thank Carrie Ball who has been ready to serve as a Nominator. We thank God, too, for all their respective, supportive spouses and families.

The first person with whom I properly discussed the possibility of being the Senior Minister of the Parish of Figtree, not counting our Archdeacon, was Wayne James. Back in 2021, Wayne gave me a call and told me why we needed to speak. After the long Covid-shaped “to-ing and fro-ing” of the nomination process, he said, “You’re our man!”

Since then, Wayne has been indefatigable in his availability, prayer, presence, counsel, good humour, faithfulness, teaching, wisdom, challenge, rebuke, and brotherly love all rolled into his extraordinary commitment as a sort of spiritual father in the Lord to us all. His “retirement” has been long time coming. Whilst Wayne has served our church in this way for far longer than any of us would have imagined, I would not have asked for a day less. Thank you. May we give acclaim.



Our church family is wonderfully varied in nationality, ethnicity, language, and denominational background, and yet we see how our shared identity is rooted in the **B**ible, and in being **R**eformed, **E**vangelical, **A**nglican, and **K**ingdom directed.

**BIBLICAL** in that we believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God revealing His saving purposes fulfilled in Jesus Messiah, and so we commit ourselves to reading, teaching, studying, and living under the authority of God by His word.

**REFORMED** in that we stand in the Reformation tradition, shaped by leaders such as John Calvin and Thomas Cranmer, affirming that salvation comes by Scripture alone, Christ alone, grace alone, through faith alone, for the glory of God alone.

**EVANGELICAL** in that we proclaim Jesus as Lord, trusting in His atoning death and resurrection for salvation, honouring His ascension to all authority in heaven, and joyfully awaiting His return in glory and the coming of God’s renewed creation.

**ANGLICAN** in that we are part of the worldwide Anglican Church and, more locally, the Wollongong Region of the Diocese of Sydney. As a diocesan fellowship, we have committed to their purposes and priorities, and we gladly enjoy the benefits.

Finally, we are commissioned for Jesus’ **KINGDOM**, in that we seek to constantly calibrate life according to Jesus’ commission to seek first and share His kingdom in prayer, thought,

word, and deed. Our best expression of seeking and sharing His Kingdom is captured in “disciplication”. It is a made-up word... and it simply means we want to see the multiplication of disciples of Jesus, because God wants this for all of us. Jesus’ commission is to make disciples who make disciples.

## **MINISTRY TEAM ADVANCE 2025**

Back in November 2025, your Ministry Team, guided by the Kingdom principle Jesus shares in John 3:16: “Jesus for Everyone. Forever.” prayerfully sought to discern the distinctive values of our church to distil God’s purpose, mission and vision for Figtree Anglican Church, whilst at the same time acknowledging the unique ministry distinctives of our brothers and sisters at Mount Kembla Soldiers and Miners Memorial Church. We worked hard to express these as follows:

### **WHY**

Jesus for Everyone. Forever.

### **PURPOSE**

We exist to glorify God by making and growing disciples of Jesus for Everyone. Forever.

### **MISSION**

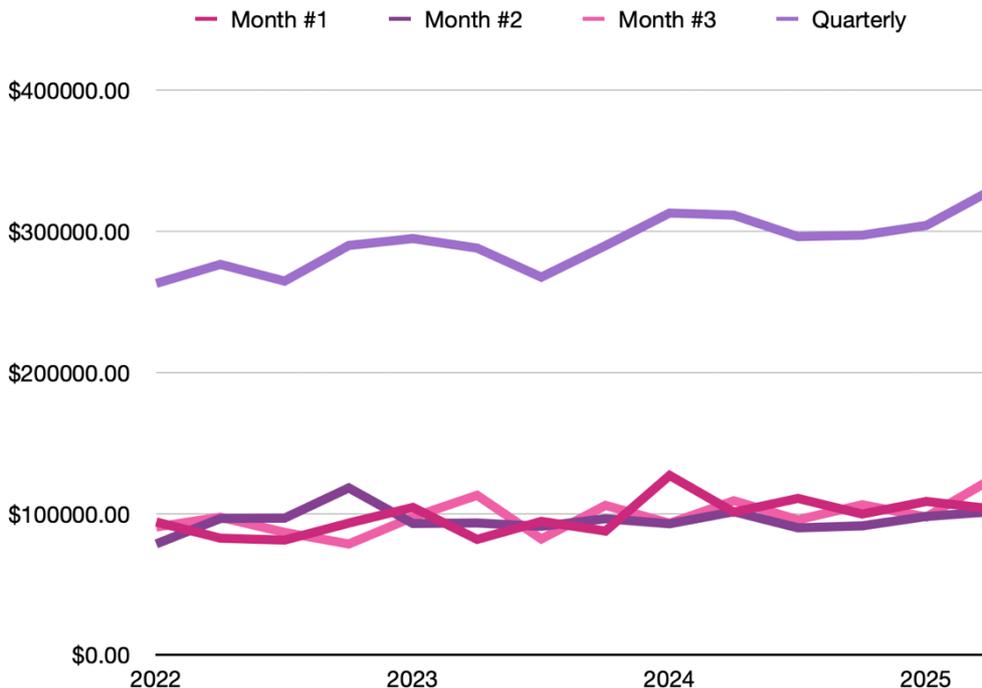
We make and mature faithful and fruitful disciples of Jesus, to the glory of God.

### **VISION**

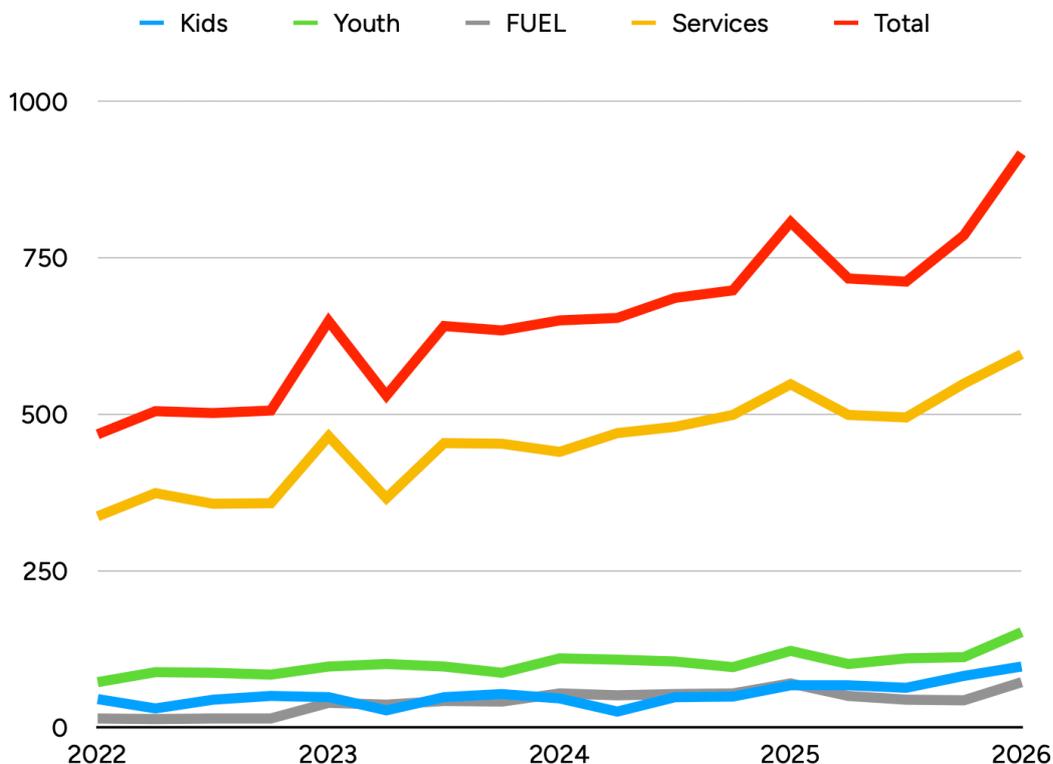
From REVIVE to THRIVE. We have come, by God’s grace, well beyond SURVIVE.

The following diagrams show our progress, by God's grace:

### Giving over time



### FAC Attendance over time



As we look to Thrive... our aspiration could be quantified as something like:

- **Come & See!** Gathering 1,000 people in church weekly on a Sunday.
- **Follow Me!** Maturing in faithfulness and fruitfulness as a church family.
- **Go & Tell!** Reaching 3,000 of 30,000 people living in our parish monthly.
- **Figtree & Further!** Reaching 30,000 of 300,000 in the Illawarra annually.

We are continuing to work on plans to achieve these outcomes, under God. We are already some way to each of these objectives if you factor in our services, LifeGroups, Manna Van, SRE, Creative Connections, and our Figtree Community Carols.

Those are quantities. Another question is, "How can our vision be qualified?"

## OUR VALUES

Our Vision is shaped by our Values, or "How do we wish to be?" as a church. In essence, as a Ministry Team, we concluded:

**We are God's people rooted in Scripture, growing with Jesus, devoted to prayer, gracious in community, and boldly sowing for mission.**

Moving forward, in essence, we concluded:

**We aspire to grow as a pioneering, theologically deep, generous, hospitable, and compassionate church that redeems our inherited strengths into a vibrant, Jesus-centred future.**

How did we get to these summaries? I invite you to join a leg of the journey, which I share only very briefly:

- Firstly, in our thanksgiving for the past: **KNOWING** Jesus and our **inherited values**;
- Secondly, our shared joy at present: our **ongoing values, GROWING** with Jesus;
- Thirdly, our prayer for the future: **SOWING** for Jesus, as our **aspirational values**.

## KNOWING JESUS

### OUR THANKSGIVING FOR INHERITED VALUES

Inherited values describe the blessings inherited from our faithful parish forebears.

These signify expected beliefs and behaviours of everyone who serves or leads in our parish. These values are consistent with the values we expect to see in most other Biblical, Reformed, Evangelical, Anglican, and Kingdom-directed churches.

We give thanks for the past, honouring inherited values, shared in Knowing Jesus.

So, our inheritance is **KNOWING** Jesus:

#### **K: Keeping Jesus Central**

We keep Jesus Messiah at the heart of all ministry and relationships.

#### **N: Nurturing in Prayer**

We depend in devotion on God in prayer for wisdom, enabling, and spiritual renewal.

#### **O: Obedient to Scripture**

We believe, are rooted in, teach, and apply God's word faithfully and clearly.

#### **W: Worshipful Excellence**

We value strong biblical preaching, vibrant music, and heartfelt worship that glorifies God.

#### **I: Integrity in Stewardship**

We honour God with integrity, faithfulness, and accountability in every trust shared with and given to us as a church family.

#### **N: Neighbourly**

We provide a place to belong and outward-facing opportunities to serve our local community in Jesus-centred fellowship.

#### **G: Gracious and Encouraging**

We speak truth in love, extend grace freely, and build others up.

## GROWING WITH JESUS

### OUR SHARED JOY IN ONGOING VALUES

Secondly, our shared joy in the present. We identified these values as our current and ongoing values at Figtree Anglican Church as we enjoy Growing with Jesus. These values express what we believe defines Figtree Anglican Church at its core. God willing, these values are those on which we are unwilling to compromise.

So, our shared joy is **GROWING** with Jesus:

#### **G: Gospel-Centred**

We pursue spiritual maturity and growth in membership through the transforming power of Jesus' Spirit and His word.

#### **R: Relate to God**

We are grounded in evangelical theology, believing and teaching the Bible as God's authority for biblical faithfulness and we are hopeful in prayerful dependence on Him.

#### **O: Offer Ourselves**

We serve boldly and professionally, striving for excellence in ministry, quality, and integrity in every aspect of our shared life together.

#### **W: Worship Jesus**

We focus on Jesus in all we do, preaching powerfully, praying dependently, and gathering to glorify Him.

#### **I: Inviting**

We exist to make Jesus known through evangelical mission locally, regionally and globally, confident in His gospel power to redeem and renew lives.

#### **N: Nurturing**

We belong together as a caring, intergenerational community that welcomes, encourages, and serves one another in grace as a church family.

#### **G: Generational Discipleship**

We invest intentionally in young people and families, growing disciples across every age and stage.

## SOWING FOR JESUS

### OUR PRAYERFUL HOPE FOR ASPIRATIONAL VALUES

Our prayer for the future is to ask God to shape us for our share in Sowing for Jesus. These aspirational values express the future flavour we prayerfully seek to develop and observe by God's grace in our parish. They are what we long to see sown.

So, our prayerful hope is SOWING for Jesus:

#### **S: Spirit of Pioneering Faith**

We shall step forward in faith, taking bold risks to reach Figtree and further with the gospel.

#### **O: Orthodox Depth**

We shall cultivate a church community that thinks with deep theological conviction and lives with notable biblical character.

#### **W: Welcoming**

We shall be hospitable to everyone, celebrating God-given diversity and integrating cultural variety, rejoicing in distinctions pleasing to God.

#### **I: Intentional in Mission and Evangelism**

We shall live "Go & Tell" lives, seeking the lost, proclaiming Jesus' love, longing to see people come to saving faith in Him, and serving the world in compassion.

#### **N: Needs Met**

We shall show Jesus' love through mercy, justice, and care for those in need with relentless compassion in action.

#### **G: Generosity**

We shall give of God's time, treasures, talents, and testimonies with open hands and wholehearted commitment with thanksgiving.

## IN SUMMARY

This year has been a great year. By God's grace. A year of growth in maturity as a church. A year of growth in membership as a church. Another year, another AGM!

We hope you will delight to journey with us in thanksgiving, share in our joy, and join us in prayerful aspiration. Firstly, in our thanksgiving for the past, Knowing Jesus. Secondly, in our shared joy at present, Growing with Jesus. Then, thirdly and finally, as a prayer in future hope, that together we may be Sowing for Jesus.

*Gracious God, we give you our thanksgiving for bringing us to know Jesus in the past. We rejoice together for our shared delight in growing in membership and maturity as Your church family in the present. Our prayer for the future is that You bring glory to the name of Jesus in the power of Your Spirit through Your family in the Parish of Figtree as we make His love known to everyone. Jesus for Everyone. Forever. Amen.*

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# MATURITY MAT

**Report by:** Shane Dirks

**Position:** Maturity Minister

**MAT members in 2025:** Shane Dirks, Jo Brain, Cathy Wade, Rob O'Neill, Fay Brampton

## Overview

The Maturity MAT exists to encourage the maturation of FAC members and beyond to grow mature in Christ Jesus, and that Jesus may indeed be for everyone, forever.

The team seeks to meet once per term. The breadth of the ministry means that numerous sub-meetings are hosted by team members. These involve the preaching team, LifeGroups ministry team, pastoral care, women's ministry, Preliminary Theological Certificate team, along with consultation with further ministry areas including youth and kids, and young adults and evangelism and mission, and creative arts.

## In what ways has this ministry contributed to the mission of FAC during 2025?

Maturity MAT understands its contribution thus:

Training together to be unified in faith and knowledge of God's Son. Mature people measured by Christ's fullness (based on Ephesians 4:11-15).

- Termly prayer events hosted – monthly invitations to men to pray for FAC.
- Continuing LifeGroup ministry and leader training.
- Women's groups, events, and opportunities to bring friends.
- Teaching of PTC courses – Doctrine 1, and New Testament 1.
- Pastoral care and Seniors morning tea.
- A Belong course and connections events to help establish FAC membership.
- Provision of word ministry in Sunday services.

## How has the ministry helped build 'community' or create a greater sense of belonging?

Maturity ministries seek to build a particular type of community; *fellowship (Koinonia)* distinctly sees our relationships as functioning through Jesus, not only with Jesus. The primary and most intimate function in this ministry area is through LifeGroups. As our circles of community and belonging increase in size we have been enjoying blessing the Figtree Anglican Church community through proclaiming Jesus in women's ministry, monthly prayer gatherings, along with showing the love of Christ through pastoral care. Community has been enhanced by the in-depth study of scripture through the running of two Preliminary Theological Certificate modules in 2025. On a broader scope, Maturity Ministry has overseen the content and deployment of teachers into Sunday services. Maturity is never about hiding our light, and so Maturity has also pressed into deploying members into evangelistic spaces such as Christmas street carolling.

## PASTORAL CARE

(report by Fay Brampton)

### *Seniors Morning Tea*

On the first Wednesday of the month, we hold a morning tea for our seniors. We have a special morning tea for Mother's Day, and assist with the Christmas in July and Christmas in December lunches. These has been a wonderful time of fellowship and meeting the needs of many who are lonely and seeking friendship and encouragement. The average attendance is 78-80. The Ministry Team attends each month, which is appreciated by those who come. We have an amazing pastoral team who prepare and serve each month. A special thanks to Darren Brampton for setting up and packing away.

### *Meet and Eat*

We continued to meet on the second Friday of each month at Figtree Bowling Club. It is a great opportunity to get to know one another in a safe environment and meet the needs of many who are seeking fellowship. All are welcome; let Fay know through the church or just turn up.

### *Food Ministry*

This is a wonderful ministry providing meals for many families in their time of need. Thank you to all the faithful people who have cooked meals for the freezer over many years; it is a real blessing to those who receive them. This ministry is a practical way of showing Jesus' love as we help those in their time of need.

### *Nursing Home Ministries*

We continue to have the regular church services once a month at Villa Maria, St Marys (Ron Watts and Fay Brampton), Marco Polo, Estia (Peter/Heather Clark), and Hillside (Ryce Cowan). Joanne Rushworth continues to offer pastoral care at both Hillside and Greenhill Aged Care, visiting the residents twice a week to listen, pray, and encourage them. She has started a Christian ladies fellowship twice a month at Hillside and a men's and women's group at Greenhill.

### *Pastoral Care Team*

The church has been blessed with a faithful praying and caring team for which I am so thankful. Our team of eight consists of Sylvia Vaartjes, Marion Richardson, Sam Stewart, Evelyn James, Wendy Elrington, Iris Costello, Jo Rushworth and myself (Fay Brampton). We continue to look for God's leading as we minister to His people at FAC, always looking to minister to their whole need and pointing them to Jesus. "We love because He first loved us." John 4:19

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# MISSION MAT

**Report by:** Langdon Stewart

**Position:** Mission Minister

**MAT members in 2025:** Kalinda Hughes, Peter Jones, Rosa Piscioneri, Natalie Simmons, Langdon Stewart, and Robin Kinstead.

## Overview

The focus of the Missions MAT (MISMAT) is gospel ministry that happens beyond our city.

The purpose of the MISMAT is to:

- Keep the vision of mission alive to the congregation
- Care and communication with our missionaries
- Strategy and objectives for raising up people from FAC into external mission full-time
- Recommendations to Parish Council on missions/projects to be funded through giving at the annual World Missions Conference
- Organising the annual World Missions Conference
- Mission trip advisory

## Highlights:

- Shane Dirks partnering with African Enterprise to travel to Rwanda and teach PTC from 4-15 May 2025
- Young members of our church involved in EE Changemakers in Africa and India
- Members of our church serving on Mercy Ships

## World Missions Conference

The World Missions Conference (WMC) was held (nine events) from Saturday 16 - Sunday 24 August. The guest speaker was Warwick de Jersey, and the theme was 'Restoration'.

- The purpose of the WMC is:
  - Building a biblical understanding of mission.
  - Challenge us to be on mission.
  - Raise support for our Mission Partners.... so that we may Go, Send, Serve to the ends of the earth.
- The Missions Conference giving raised a total of \$109,512.99 for our seven Tier 1 Mission Partners and distributed:

African Enterprise - Church Engagement Project: \$16,407.57

BCA Jindabyne - Trent and Alice McGrath in Jindabyne: \$16,407.57

Bible Society - Equipping Indigenous Translators: \$21,666.57

EE Africa - Nigerian Youth Project: \$16,407.57

Elizabeth in the Middle East: \$16,407.57

Open Doors India: \$13,526.57

Vietnam Church for the Deaf: \$8,689.57

- In 2026, the World Missions Conference is planned for Sat 15 - Sun 23 August, with speaker Dr Tim Silberman, lecturer in Mission at SMBC and author of *Engaging Neighbours & Nations*.

### Fiji mission trip

Mission trips enable our members to be a part of God's work in another culture and location, and to disciple team members how they may go, send or serve in mission in future years. A team of 23 from FAC went to Fiji from 11-19 July 2025. The team was led by Langdon Stewart and Rod Story. The team partnered with EE Fiji to conduct an EE4G workshop, training locals to share their faith and equip others in evangelism. They equipped 31 island leaders from more than 16 churches. During the EE4G workshop, teams shared the gospel with 168 people and had 65 people make a response to the gospel.

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## EVANGELISM MAT

**Report by:** Langdon Stewart

**Position:** Evangelism Minister

**MAT members in 2025:** Phil Goodhew, Karen Dixon, Anny Cao, Ruby Blacka, Sarah Kinstead, Julie-Anne Jones, Stuart Milling, Langdon Stewart (with Sam Estell 3 and Steve Abbott).

### Overview

The focus of the Evangelism MAT (EVMAT) is gospel ministry that happens within our city. This encompasses all the ways we reach out with the gospel in our city. We encourage our members to always be intentional in building relationships, sharing the gospel and bringing people into the community. Evangelism ministry celebrates all the unreported personal initiatives of prayer and gospel sharing that members of FAC pursue each week in our community and through other ministries.

The purposes for the EVMAT are:

- Build the evangelistic culture and heart of FAC
- Encourage the church in evangelism
- Equip every demographic of our church for evangelism
- Supporting FAC outreach ministries
- Empowering ministry into marginalised communities

### 2025 Agenda

- Focus on high level strategy
- Ministry support group/system
- Strategic focus:
  1. FAC Evangelism Ministry vision document

2. Review of all existing evangelism ministries
3. Strategic review of Figtree Community Carols

### Hope for the Illawarra

- Hope for the Illawarra was a combined churches of the region event in partnership with Michael Youseff and 'Leading the Way' ministries to hold three evangelistic rallies at Wollongong Entertainment Centre on 28 and 29 May 2025. Figtree Anglican Church held training events and meetings, assisted with organisation and follow-up teams, and Figtree Worship led at the Saturday night event.
- Friday night youth event with Dave Jensen – attendance: 2,500. Response: 250 (400 came forward)
- Children's event with Colin Buchanan – attendance: 1,700. Response: 600 children with their parents took the response card
- Saturday with Michael Youseff – attendance: 3,600. Response: 150. From the follow-up forms, 88 per cent of people came with a friend who attends a local church.

### Evangelism Training

- Sharing Hope training in preparation for Hope for the Illawarra was conducted on Sat 15 and 22 Feb with 45 participants.
- Gerringong EE4G training weekend on Sat 17 and Sun 18 May 2025
- Talking Faith session in Term 4 with young adults.

### Evangelistic Gospel Groups

- Christianity Explored: 3 x sessions in Terms 1, 2 and 4.
- Phil Goodhew and Chelsea Peters lead a small discipleship group for new believers or explorers.

### Outreach Ministries

- These are ministries that meet regularly for outreach into a certain community demographic. Ministries include:  
Mandarin Fellowship (Sundays), Creative Connections (Tuesdays), Crossroads MMA (Thursdays), Manna House and Manna Kids (Thursdays), Manna Van (Tuesday evenings), Vox FM (Fridays), nursing homes (various) and SRE, etc.

### Figtree Community Carols

- The carols team, comprised of lay and ministry team, met throughout the year to review Figtree Community Carols. They refined our driving purpose statement to be: *Bringing our community together at Christmas, with Christ at the centre, at scale, proclaiming the hope of Jesus for everyone, and making pathways of connection to FAC community.* They undertook an initiative to pivot the layout and planning to be able to make carols more resilient to weather conditions in the future.

- Figtree Community Carols was held successfully despite the rain on Saturday 13 December with an estimated 3,500 people attending.

### Welcoming at Church Services

- Wendy Elrington serving as 8am service Welcoming team leader with assistance from Sylvia Vaartjes.
- David and Michelle Litchfield serving as 10am Welcoming team leaders.
- Andrew Noakes serving as 6pm Welcoming Coordinator

### Care and Community Ministries

- Foster Circle: This is a new initiative in 2025, recognising the value the church has in supporting families and those in foster care. Chaired by Cathy McLean and supported by Anglicare, this group meets regularly to support, advocate and pray for those who are foster carers.
- Anglicare partnership with Toys 'n' Tucker and hospital chaplaincy.
- Manna and Manna Kids, in partnership with Oz Harvest.
- Manna Van at Unanderra every second Tuesday evening led by Sam Jones.
- Frozen emergency meals provided.

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## COMMUNICATIONS MAT

**Report by:** Stuart Wilkinson

**Position:** Parish Council member

**MAT members in 2024:** Darren Brampton (church member), Darren Smith (church member), Elise Cork (Ministry Team), Scott Simpson (Ministry Team), Stuart Wilkinson (Parish Council member).

### Our Purpose

The Communications Ministry Area Team (CMAT) exists to help Figtree Anglican Church grow as a faithful, adventurous, and compassionate community by ensuring communication is clear, consistent, and meaningful. Everything we do aims to:

- Increase congregation engagement and participation.
- Enhance visibility and outreach within the local community.
- Foster transparent and open communication channels within the church community.

### Highlights from 2025/26

#### 1. Launch of the new FAC website

One of the biggest milestones this year was the launch of the new **figtree.church** website in July 2025. This long-awaited upgrade gives our Ministry Team and volunteers full control over content and provides our church and community with a

cleaner, easier-to-use platform for information, events, and next steps. Special thanks to Elise Cork and Darren Brampton for the design and build of the new site.

## **2. Communications Survey and Community Engagement**

Between August and September 2025, we ran a Communications Survey that gathered responses from both church members and the wider Figtree community. This provided valuable insight into communication habits, needs, and opportunities; especially around social media, website usability, and in-service communication. These insights will be used during 2026-27 to set priority focus areas for the CMAT.

## **3. Strengthening Social Media and Digital Presence**

Significant progress was made in building a more strategic and consistent social media presence, including:

- development of a Social Media Register to improve governance of official FAC social accounts,
- continued work on the FAC Social Media Playbook to be released in 2026,
- the trial of software SermonShots, helping share weekly Bible teaching more widely and meaningfully,
- calendar of key events to photography and an image library created to build current visual content.

## **4. “Community Stories” Video Series**

This storytelling initiative continued to grow, sharing ministry snapshots such as Mums in Prayer, Manna Van, Figtree Worship, and Foster Circle (foster care ministry). These stories encouraged our congregation and also served as gentle outreach to our wider community.

## **5. Figtree Community Carols 2025: A Communications Step Forward**

This year’s carols saw some of our most extensive communication efforts yet, including:

- Channel Ten as official Media Partner,
- a professionally produced TV commercial,
- a digital program with QR access and mobile friendly navigation,
- live social media coverage from 3pm–10pm,
- improved signage and information flow for attendees, and
- expanded post-event data capture.

These innovations significantly improved clarity, reach, and real-time responsiveness during the event, especially helpful during periods of weather uncertainty.

## Focus Areas for 2026-27

Looking ahead, CMAT will continue strengthening our communication foundations, with a focus on:

### 1. Social Media Strengthening and Playbook Implementation

Finalising and rolling out the Social Media Playbook to support all ministry areas with clear expectations, consistent branding, and healthier digital communication rhythms through Ministry and FAC social accounts.

### 2. Sermon Shots and Weekly Content Framework

Expanding our use of Sermon Shots and developing a coordinated content workflow to help our church family, and the broader local/global community, engage with God's word throughout the week.

### 3. Building Volunteer Capability

Developing pathways to equip photographers, videographers, writers, and storytellers through targeted training and simple, accessible tools.

### 4. Strengthening Community Engagement

Using insights from the Communications Survey to better reach residents; especially through social media, local online groups, and storytelling that highlights FAC's ministries and community partnerships.

### 5. Ongoing Improvements to Major Event Communications

Refining our approach to carols and other major events, including clearer messaging, better on-the-day information flow, and stronger pathways into church life after events.

## Growing Our Impact

During 2025, the Communications Ministry Area Team (CMAT) spent intentional time clarifying our purpose and the most effective way to serve the wider church. A key insight was that CMAT is not designed to operate as a stand-alone ministry. Instead, our role is to act as an *enabling function*; providing tools, guidance, shared systems, and strategic support to the ministry teams of Figtree Anglican Church.

Looking ahead to 2026-27, our focus will be on building the resources, training, and support structures that will help ministry teams, Parish Council, and broader church operations communicate more effectively. This includes strengthening processes for content creation, improving pathways for ministry collaboration, and equipping leaders with practical communication capabilities.

To support this work, we are welcoming expressions of interest from:

- **Individuals who would like to serve on the CMAT**, contributing their skills and strategic thinking to help shape communication across FAC. Meetings held face to face monthly.
- **Volunteers who can assist with photography, videography, and social content**, particularly for key ministry activities and major church events.

If you're interested in joining the CMAT or volunteering to support content capture, please email [stuart.wilkinson@figtree.church](mailto:stuart.wilkinson@figtree.church).

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## GENERATIONS MAT

**Report by:** Ruth Smith / Mary Pickford

**Position:** Youth and Young Adults Minister / Children's Minister

**MAT members in 2025:** Ruth Smith, Mary Pickford, and Peter Richardson

### KIDS MINISTRY

**KidsChurch:** This year we saw our numbers swell to a high of around 90-100 children (walking toddlers through to Year 7) at the end of 2025, with a leadership team consisting of teenagers (LITs), two young adults, grandparents and a parent roster. Because it takes the whole church to raise a child of God, we saw children benefit from people of all ages and stages being part of their walk with Jesus. Likewise, we witnessed children playing a huge part in the faith of the adults.

Our prayer is to see more adults join our leadership team; not only to love and lead children, but also to mentor our LITs and connect with our parents.

**PlayHouse:** This year we ministered to over 30 families throughout the year and saw this group as a pathway to our 10am congregation. We were so thankful to our leadership team: Anna Grant, Stephanie Tasker, Janet Boardman, Rachel Hodsdon, Lisa Jones, Lauren Butler and Mary Pickford. We were blessed with our hospitality and pastoral care team: Sam Stewart, Gillian Alm and Maria Orr.

Our connection with Figtree High School saw a group of students each fortnight arrive, with activities relating to our Bible talks; they ran this as part of their early childhood studies course.

**Holiday Club:** With 190 children attending our April School Holiday Club, we had the chance to connect with so many families in our area. Our theme of 'The Golden Ticket' introduced children to the idea that we are all invited by God to be part of His kingdom, that Jesus has paid our debt and had the gospel presented with a M7M talk.

Our FAC children were on mission as they invited friends to join them, and parents were so appreciative of the three days of fun for their children at an affordable cost. Many children came from our SRE classes, and so having many of our SRE teachers involved, we were able

to meet their parents and deepen our relationship with the children outside of the classroom.

Having a leadership team from the age of 12 through to seniors, meant that we were able to experience multigenerational ministry to Jesus and His church and beyond.

**Kids ClubHouse:** The year started with a great team and around 20 children. 2025 ended with 42 children and was such a huge answer to our prayers. We were so encouraged to see many children on mission invite their friends to KCH who are not members of any other church. Each week we had children from 11 different primary schools. Our FAC children were able to form deeper friendships with others outside of KidsChurch too, which made Sunday mornings more enjoyable for them.

**SRE:** We continued to teach SRE in six public schools Monday through to Friday. We saw several children attend Kids ClubHouse, Holiday Club and KidsChurch. Our fabulous SRE teachers served the school in so many ways last year at school fun runs, sports carnivals, fetes and other events.

Thanks to the generosity of our church, we were able to employ Lisa Jones as our first 'SRE Community Chaplain'. Lisa started up a 'Creative Club' at Farmborough Road which saw around 15-20 children attend each week and was able to build up a strong connection between the school and FAC.

**Manna Kids:** Marguerite Zahra headed up this ministry on Thursdays at 5pm again this year. With up to 14 children at Manna House, we enjoyed this ministry to families with the aim to serve the families where parents attended the 'God Spot'. Over the year, we noticed that most of the adults were leaving before the God Spot and so decided to re-evaluate the need for Manna Kids in the new year.

## YOUTH MINISTRY

- **2025 was a year of growth. Our 2025 priorities were:**
  - Priority 1: Christ-Centred Leadership Culture
  - Priority 2: Aim: 10 per cent growth/year at Friday nights (112 on average in 2025, 105 average in 2024), averaged 6 per cent growth. Diocesan goal is 5 per cent.
  - Priority 3: 10 new commitments to Christ: 13 at Ignite 2025, 2 at C4TC, (at least) one extra we know of! That's (at least) 16 young people saying they want to follow Jesus and making faith their own this year
  - Priority 4: Growth in FUEL to match growth in Youth. FUEL growth is outpacing Friday Night Youth. On average we had 63 youth at Fuel up from 53 in 2024.
- **Ignite 2025**
  - 143 campers.
  - 6 new connections and 5 reconnections (youth who had not attended any of our ministries in 12+ months).

- 11 first-time commitments to Jesus.
- Our Ignite supporters sponsored 19 campers and 2 leaders/support team to ensure that those who might not otherwise be able to come to camp were able to attend.
- Established a Youth Reference Group (YRG) to hear ideas and feedback from the youth. In 2026, this group will plan and run a 'big night' for all of Friday Night Youth.
- Recruited nine new leaders.
- Held three Years 11 + 12 Study Days, run by Tom and Annie Oyston. The goal of these days is to have an outreach opportunity in the broader community to support students and meet a practical need, whilst also giving them the opportunity to hear from God's word and be in the physical space of our church.
  - They have had lots of positive feedback and many returning students.
  - They had 61 different students across 2025.
  - We had one youth join our church family from study days.

### Ministry Statistics – Average Weekly Attendance

	2025		2024		2023	
	FUEL	Youth	FUEL	Youth	FUEL	Youth
<b>Term 1</b>	70	122	54	110	39	97
<b>Term 2</b>	53	108	51	108	36	101
<b>Term 3</b>	69	110	53	105	42	97
<b>Term 4</b>	59	106	54	96	41	87
<b>Year</b>	63	112	53	105	40	96

### YOUNG ADULTS MINISTRY

- We had 107 Young Adults (YA) involved with our ministries in 2025.
  - 58 YAs attended our YA Retreat at which we looked at the Holiness of God. This camp was directed by Bronte Peters and Martha Noakes.
  - We held Fam Dinners, Teaching Nights, Talking Faith, and Prayer Nights.
  - YAs served at and attended two regional YA events.
  - Ruth Smith and Pete Lenehan will be overseeing YA Lifegroups from 2026.
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# CREATIVE ARTS MAT

**Report by:** Greg Bell

**Position:** Creative Arts and Music Minister

**MAT members in 2025:** Brent Barrett, Rob Dixon, Al McEwan, Adrian Deck, Cait Simpson, CJ Smith, Katie Polyblank

## Overview

Throughout 2025, Brent Barrett and I met most weeks to discuss many of the aspects of Creative Arts and the direction and needs of the ministry. He has been a helpful representative for the ministry on Parish Council. The larger MAT team didn't meet in 2025 but will look to revitalise the MAT initiative and review the needs of the ministry as we progress through 2026.

## In what ways has this ministry contributed to the mission of FAC during 2025?

- Our Sunday gatherings continue to be a time that exists to honour and glorify Jesus with creativity expressed through the variety of areas within the arts. Across the day we have our different expressions of worship through music and the teams are healthy and work well together. We continue to have a significant increase in youth serving on 6pm bands. Their musicianship and heart for serving has grown exponentially throughout 2025.
- We've continued to live-stream the 8am and 10am services throughout 2025 and in March we began live-streaming 6pm. This now better represents online the different style and expressions of worship we have in our services. Darren Brampton continues to assist in ensuring the live-stream is available not just for services but special events like funerals.
- We upgraded our sound desk thanks to a Gift Day project and our live-streaming hardware thanks to a successful grant application. These two upgrades ensure greater reliability and functionality in these areas.
- The Figtree Worship team was featured at the Hope for the Illawarra event in March.
- In October, the Figtree Worship team released *The Throne is Not Empty*, a 12-track album of original worship songs. The songs continue to feature in our services and bless our community.
- A revised approach to Figtree Community Carols was undertaken with a different placement of the stage, rides and vendors. The program featured some new artists including our own 'Figgles' kids entertainment and the gospel was faithfully declared throughout the night in song and through Robin Kinstead's talk.

## How has the ministry helped build 'community' or create a greater sense of belonging?

- As we gather and sing, our hearts are orientated to Jesus, we're encouraged in our faith, and we value our fellowship together.

- It has been encouraging to integrate new people into the worship and tech teams. These are wonderful spaces of encouragement, using our God-given talent as humble offerings and being around people that show love and care for people amongst them with the common goal of giving glory to Jesus.

### Key goals or plans for 2026

- Figtree Worship team will lead worship at the Alive young adult outreach event in March.
- Continue to write, record and release new music.
- Revitalise non-music creative arts expression in services and harness the creative talent among us.
- Continue to develop young musicians, singers and leaders in the youth and young adult spaces.

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## SAFE MINISTRY AND RISK MANAGEMENT MAT

**Report by:** Steve Dinning and Rachel Deck

**MAT Team members in 2025:** Peter Lenehan, Andrew Noakes, Jane Whitelaw, Steve Dinning, Rachel Deck

### Purpose

The purpose of the Safe Ministry and Risk Management MAT is to provide an advisory role to Wardens, Parish Council, Senior Minister, and Ministry Team regarding matters of Safe Ministry and Risk Management. It was established at the request of the Senior Minister in August 2023. Since then, we have met approximately every two months. The Risk Management MAT currently comprises Peter Lenehan (Chair), Andrew Noakes, Jane Whitelaw, and Steve Dinning. This committee is distinct from the Safe Ministry Rep roles currently held by Steve Dinning and Rachel Deck and considers risk management within FAC more broadly.

Rachel Deck and Steve Dinning served in the role of Safe Ministry Representatives at Figtree Anglican Church during 2025. Rachel and Steve were also members of the Safe Ministry and Risk Management Team (SMRMT). Rachel has stepped down from the SMRMT for 2026. Steve will remain on the SMRMT to provide input from a Safe Ministry perspective.

### 1. Assist the Senior Minister and 2. Keep Relevant Compliance records

We did not meet with FAC's Compliance Officer Carolyn Bengé in 2025 to check-in with her on how the compliance systems for safe ministry records was going.

- **One of us will meet with her in 2026.**

### 3. Monitor and Report

1. As part of the SMRMT Rachel and Steve provided input from a safe ministry perspective where needed.
  2. In July 2025, Steve met with Peter Lenehan to review FAC processes for recruitment and training of leaders in youth ministry, to ensure these processes are in line with the core principles of safe ministry, which they are.
- **In 2026, we want to meet with senior leaders from both the Children's and Youth Ministries, to check-in with how recruitment and training reflect safe ministry principles. An annual check-in is part of the Safe Ministry Reps role.**

### 4. Report abuse

There were no matters that required reporting to the Office Of Director of Safe Ministry (ODSM) or a notification to the Department of Communities and Justice (i.e. child protection).

### Provide safe ministry consultation for staff and lay leaders

During 2025, there were two instances of consultation:

- Langdon Stewart sought some guidance regarding an historical matter that had been raised with him by a former parishioner. The parishioner had also contacted Robin Kinstead and he gave the appropriate information for the parishioner to contact the Office Director of Safe Ministry.
- Steve met with a couple who wanted some guidance on a possible safe ministry matter. It turned out not to be a safe ministry matter, and they explored other options for dealing with the situation.

### Specific task for Safe Ministry Reps in 2026

#### Embedding of Child-Safe Standards (CSS) into FAC ministry life

##### *Background*

*The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommended 10 Child Safe Standards based on its findings, extensive research, and consultation about what makes organisations child safe. The Standards provide a principle-based framework to help organisations working with children develop strategies and to create a culture that keeps children safe and protects them from harm. On 1 February 2022, the NSW Child Safe Scheme commenced. Religious organisations providing services to children are required under the Children's Guardian Act 2019 to demonstrate how they are implementing the Child Safe Standards.*

The ODSM has a template to show where current Diocesan Safe Ministry policy and practice already has CSS embedded. Plus suggestions for how churches can think about implementing/embedding the CSS in their own contexts.

Steve and Pete went through this template in July and made a start in identifying where CSS were already embedded or reflected in FAC youth ministry policy and practice.

In 2026, the task to achieve is:

- **have a summary document that demonstrates how CSS principles are embedded in FAC youth ministry, and**
- **to undertake a similar process with children's ministry**

### **We met five times in 2025. Key outcomes in 2025:**

- A report reviewing risk management within Figtree Anglican Church based upon the diocesan Risk Management Framework. Currently with the wardens. We reviewed the five areas recommended by the diocese: Framework, Building, Working Environment, Food Safety, and Safe Ministry. This report compiled recommendations for consideration by Parish Council and Ministry Team for Risk Management and Safe Ministry in Figtree Anglican Church.
- Continued quality improvement of Ignite risk management
- Review of Fiji Mission Trip risk management
- Presentation to PC about the work of the MAT and recommendations for improving ministry area risk assessments and controls
- Online Incident, near-miss, hazard reporting system established

### **Future work:**

- Ongoing discussion about implementation of recommendations from the report with PC and Ministry Team
- We plan to meet approximately every two months in 2026

**Questions?** If members have any questions for the SMRMT, or about our work, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

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## **MANDARIN FELLOWSHIP**

**Report by:** Anny Cao

**Position:** Mandarin Ministry Coordinator

**Key leadership in 2025:** Bible studies: Anny Cao, Vera Tian, Ping Wang, Richard Li, Li He. Kids Ministry (last Sunday each month for Sunday Funday program 1-3pm): Anny Cao

### **Overview**

Our Bible study leaders kept online meetings every three months to review the effectiveness of the leading styles, discuss the study plans, gather information about each attendee and pray for them. During meetings, leaders get to know each other better and pray for each other. Our Mandarin Bible study meets at FAC every Sunday afternoon between 1-3pm from February to December. The Mandarin Ministry is mainly focusing on Mandarin speakers who live locally and have families here. We are open to visitors from

China, care for international students, and also have been building partner relationships with Wollongong Congregational Church), Wollongong Baptist Church, and Keiraville International Church to support Mandarin speakers. In order to gather Mandarin speakers in our local community, we have two big cultural events mixed with gospel talks each year:

1. **Chinese New Year Gospel event** (usually held between the end of January to the middle of February).
2. **Mooncake Festival Gospel event** (usually held between the middle of September to the beginning of October).

### **In what ways has this ministry contributed to the mission of the Parish of Figtree in 2025?**

As FAC's mission is to make Jesus known to everyone and make disciples of Jesus in our local community and beyond, the Mandarin ministry's aim is to gather as many Mandarin speakers as possible, to teach them salvation through Jesus during Bible studies and gospel events, to help Mandarin-speaking Christians grow in faith and serve in our church. We express our love and care through gracious cultural-related gospel events to mainly Mandarin speakers, including those who are interested in Chinese culture but speak in another language, which is very much aligned with the mission of FAC.

### **How has the ministry helped build 'community' or create a greater sense of belonging?**

The Mandarin Fellowship has not only been having weekly Bible studies, but also termly picnic gatherings and cultural events, which makes the Chinese people feel very welcomed and connected. Some have started regular church service attendance at FAC and feel a part of our church community.

### **Key goals or plans for 2026**

- Keep building up two new Christians who need extra Bible knowledge through daily and weekly devotional messages and Bible studies.
- Keep encouraging new members to come to the Bible studies to know Jesus and get saved. Two mums need extra visiting and support.
- Keep praying for the Christian and non-Christian husbands of our members to step out and support the ministry.
- Keep a half-year prayer meeting gathering for Mandarin ministry and members.
- Keep supporting Chinese mums and dance group members with the love of Christ and prayers, sometimes through visiting and practical helping in their needs.

### **Events in 2026:**

- Australia Day Botanic Garden picnic (26 Jan)
- Chinese New Year gospel event (21 Feb)
- Sunday afternoon Mandarin Bible study every week from February to December
- Easter special gathering (5 April)
- Autumn school holiday family walking event

- Mother's Day high tea (10 May)
- Families BBQ and run event during winter holidays
- Mooncake Festival gospel event (26 Sep)
- Tempo Dance thanksgiving fundraiser event in November
- Christmas Potluck Lunch in December

All events are to reach out to gather more families in our local community, strengthening existing connections and making Jesus known to everyone (mainly Mandarin speakers).

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## MOUNT KEMBLA SOLDIERS AND MINERS MEMORIAL CHURCH

**Report by:** Ron Watts

**Position:** Honorary Assistant Minister

**Key leadership in 2025:** Very much a team effort

**Where ministry meets:** Mount Kempl Church

**When:** Sunday 9.30am

**Catering for those aged:** All ages

**Average attendance:** 25

### Mission

The Soldiers and Miners Memorial Church (SAMMC) is an integral component of FAC's mission of outreach in the Illawarra in the following ways:

- Providing an alternative, more traditional style of church gathering in a more intimate setting.
- SAMMC effectively links Figtree Parish to the history of the Illawarra – particularly its long and important connection with the mining industry and stands as a Christian memorial to all who have served in that industry, along with the armed services.
- The SAMMC property is full of history in its own right and draws a continual stream of visitors to the surrounding graveyard; the church itself stands as perpetual witness to the existence of Christian community in this part of the Illawarra as services are held every Sunday morning. People know they are welcome to turn up any Sunday at 9:30 am.

### Community

- The SAMMC congregation is drawn from across the southern Illawarra, not just the immediate area.
- A strong sense of belonging and community has been built over the years through nearly every member having a role to play in the provision of Sunday services, including but not limited to Bible readers, service leaders/preachers, musicians, welcomers, morning tea helpers.

- SAMMC has appreciated the preaching ministry of several FAC Ministry Team members, along with the regular preaching/leading of Peter Smart, Steve Dinning and Peter Clark.
- Several key events take place throughout the year, including the annual commemoration of the Mount Kembla Mine Disaster and an annual Carols Service. Regular appeals are also held in support of Missions to Seafarers, Anglicare and Mission Aviation Fellowship.
- In 2025, SAMMC returned to its practice of supporting a particular Link Missionary, and welcomed aboard Melissa Higgins, who serves as a pilot with MAF in Arnhem Land. In early 2026, a special morning tea was held, enabling the congregation and others to meet Mel and hear first-hand of her work.

### Plans

- Looking ahead, a long-cherished plan to do a letterbox drop of the entire Mount Kembla area plus parts of Cordeaux Heights should soon come to fruition. An evangelistic fridge magnet has already been produced that will invite people to visit, and in the meantime to ponder the gospel invitation of John 3:16.
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