

News from the Abbey



2025

May there be an outpouring of
Prayer and Peace
over our world at this time

Welcome to News from The Abbey

Dear Friends of Jamberoo Abbey,

It is with delight that we launch the first edition of our newsletter, 'News from The Abbey'. We hope the newsletter will help us keep in closer touch with our friends from near and far. The newsletter is simple in style, offering brief snippets of some of the comings and goings of life at The Abbey, as well as letting you know of upcoming retreats and other opportunities. We will also keep you updated on the progress of our maintenance works program and fundraising appeal, which so many of our friends have supported so generously. So, grab a cuppa, take a breather, and dip into 'News from The Abbey'. We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter as much as we've enjoyed sharing it with you.

The Sisters of Jamberoo Abbey.

Shared Benedictine tradition underpins support for Jamberoo Abbey

Jamberoo Abbey is to receive a range of support from within the Benedictine family and beyond as it moves through a time of transition towards a thriving and sustainable future. Abbess Hilda Scott OSB announced in December that, as she was approaching her 75th birthday, she had resigned as Abbess, effective from December 31, recognising that "the time has come to hand the reins on to others". Through its membership of the English Benedictine Congregation (EBC), the Jamberoo Abbey community voted to enter into a 'Structures of Congregational Support' to support the Sisters as they undertake a period of reflection and work towards the election of a new Abbess. During this period, Sister Catherine McCahill SGS, the Congregational Leader of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict, has been appointed by the Abbot President of the EBC, with the agreement of the Jamberoo Sisters, to be Administrator of Jamberoo Abbey from January 1, 2025.

While not residing at The Abbey, Sr Catherine will be a regular visitor and said she is looking forward to being able to accompany the Sisters during this time. The links between the two Congregations go back to the mid-1800s when the first Archbishop of Sydney, the Benedictine monk Archbishop John Bede Polding, established the monastic community of Benedictine Nuns in Sydney and later co-founded the Sisters of the Good Samaritan to care for the needs of women, children and others on the margins in the fledgling colony. They continue to have close ties, including through membership of the Australian Benedictine Union. Sr Catherine said she was delighted to be able to continue their longstanding relationship of mutual support.

"I see my role as walking beside the Sisters so that they come to a point where they can elect an Abbess and have the right structures in place to underpin their future flourishing," she said. "The Abbey is home to 20 wonderful and gifted monastic women living a rich tradition of Benedictine life and I am looking forward to being a companion to them during this time of transition."

Sr Catherine will be assisted in her role at The Abbey by Good Samaritan Sisters Clare Condon, Patty Fawcner and Kerin Caldwell, along with people from varying fields of expertise.

Read more of [Sr Catherine's statement](#) on our website.

Welcome to Our New Members

We are delighted to welcome Kathleen and Aimee to our community. Kathleen entered on October 31st last year on the eve of All Saints feast, while Aimee entered on January 27th this year for our Titular feast which is the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple. We pray that God who has begun the good work in them will bring it to completion. Amen.

A Word from Kathleen

I had worked in the fitness industry for over 13 years and had taught various fitness classes both in Singapore and Sydney, and am also a certified Reformer Pilates instructor. I was born and grew up in



Kathleen's Entrance Ceremony

Singapore, and lived and worked in Sydney since 2009. I came from a Taoist and Buddhist background. Before I was baptised in 2000, I had a deep longing for God at a very young age which I find impossible to explain. Then I was led to the Discalced Carmelite monastery by the grace of God through the people placed on my journey. I spent three years with the Carmelites in Goonellabah, a suburb of Lismore in northeastern New South Wales, followed by a careful re-discernment in 2024. I have now happily settled in with the Benedictine community at Jamberoo and have found great peace since.

A Word from Aimee

The call to religious life came to me when I was working with a community of displaced persons in South America. In fact, my conversion came through my work with that community, sharing in their love, joy, struggle and compassion. It has taken me quite a few years to get to be here at Jamberoo. I explored other avenues and other orders but what drew me to the Benedictine community at Jamberoo was the hospitality I experienced here. This hospitality mirrored that which I had encountered with the poor and displaced in South America. I have only just begun my monastic journey but I am very grateful to the community here for the opportunity to share in the life of the Abbey.



Aimee's Entrance Ceremony

Workshop and community retreat with Srs Judith and Elizabeth

Sisters Judith Sutura OSB and Elizabeth Carrillo OSB from Mount St. Scholastica Monastery in Atchison, Kansas, USA arrived at the Abbey on February 14 to begin their extended retreat and workshop offerings in Australia.

On Saturday February 15 we, and other guests, were treated to a day's workshop on Benedictine values and ecological conversion. The opportunity to hear the deep wisdom of the desert tradition and St Benedict shared by Sr Judith and to be invited into the experience of a deeply connected creation spirituality offered by Sr Elizabeth made for a rich and nutritious Benedictine feast! Thank you to both of them.

On Monday, February 17, our community settled into our annual silent retreat, led by Sisters Judith and Elizabeth. The focus was to revisit the fundamentals of our Benedictine vocation and living—something so essential to do. Sr Judith's input was solidly based and gently offered from her long experience of Benedictine life, and she met us in the place of mutual Benedictine *cenobitic* living. We were challenged, encouraged, inspired, affirmed and called forth to walk into our future with 'hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love'.

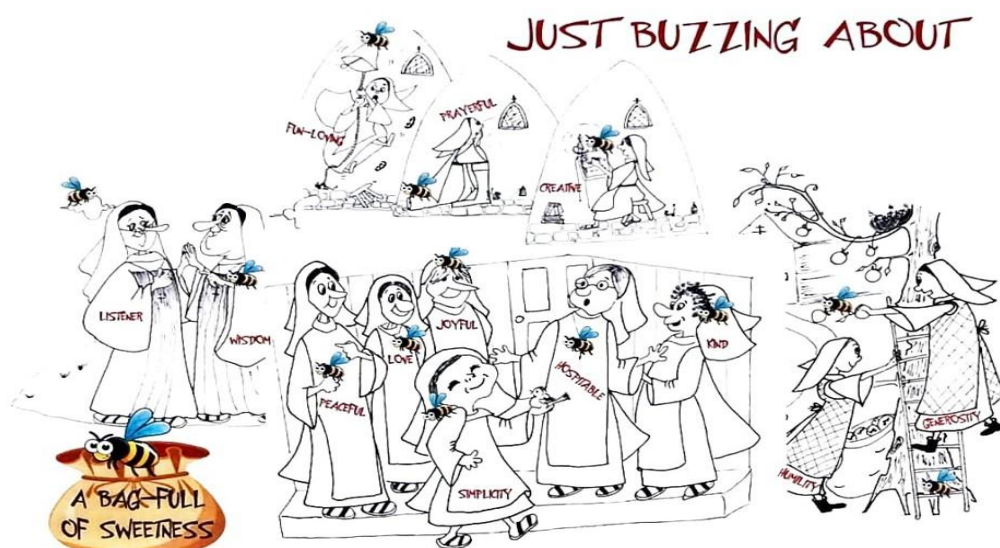
Sr Elizabeth's invitation to come apart, to notice, to pay attention and to respect what is literally before us gave us pause and permission to rest, to breathe and to know ourselves connected and belonging to the created world around us. We are deeply grateful for this opportunity to share in their wisdom and experience.

Sr Magdalen.



Sr Judith told us about St Antony of Egypt, who was like a wise bee seeking for models. He would go to one person because of his/her gift of generosity, then to another because of his/her gift of prayer,

and to another person because he/she lived a simple life, etc. With each person he went to, he would get a particular sweetness from that person, and he left the rest behind.



Artwork Phyllis Nicoll and additions by Sr Mary



Upcoming retreats

8 March Metanoia: A change of heart

Join us this Lent for a day of reflection as we explore what it means to experience a genuine change of heart. “Metanoia” invites us to more than simple repentance – it calls us to transformation, to seeing our lives and our world with new eyes.

Together, we’ll discover how this ancient wisdom opens unexpected paths of hope and growth, even in challenging times. Whether you’re seeking a fresh perspective, deeper spiritual connection, or simply a quiet space to reflect, this retreat offers a gentle but profound opportunity to reorient your journey this Lenten season. All are welcome.

Presenters: Sr Veronica Chandler osb and Sr Magdalen Mather osb

Register online at: <https://www.jamberooabbey.org.au/events/2025-03-08>

or call 02 4236 0011 ext 114

14-16 March Benedictine Hospitality – a versatile charism

There is an invitation in these uncertain times to a deeper contemplative living which is rooted in the unconditionally hospitable embrace of God. From this place we are more able to embrace ourselves with unconditional hospitality from which a natural flow extends to the embrace of the other – as our very self. In this weekend we are invited creatively to explore some ways in which this versatile charism can nourish, sustain and stabilise us in a deeper security that is rooted in faith, in hope and in love.

Presenter: Sr Magdalen Mather osb

Book and pay for this retreat by ringing 02 4236 0011 Extension 114 or email cottageretreats@jamberooabbey.org.au

March 21-23 A weekend retreat for Oblates of Jamberoo Abbey

Presenter: Sr Hildegard Ryan osb

Book and pay for this retreat by ringing 02 4236 0011 Extension 114 or email cottageretreats@jamberooabbey.org.au

May 23-25 Deep Calls to Deep: take a deep dive into the contemplative practice of Centering Prayer

If you have a desire to go deeper in your prayer and relationship with God, this weekend retreat may be of help. It explores the foundation, method and practice of this simple, yet profound and transformative way of prayer. The invitation to practice and the offering of practical tips help us to

navigate the seas of spiritual practice, and ultimately enable a wholehearted response when 'deep calls to deep'.

Presenter: Sr Magdalen Mather osb

Book and pay for this retreat by ringing 02 4236 0011 Extension 114 or email cottage retreats@jambero abbey.org.au

Retreat Cottage News

We are facing challenges in the beautiful setting of our retreat cottages. On the 22 January in the face of gale force winds and a week of rain, one of the huge gums trees became uprooted and fell on the dining and sitting area of St Scholastica's cottage. It has rendered the cottage unusable and although insurance will cover its replacement, we are grieving the loss of this lovely area which has been a favourite choice for small groups over many years. Under the advice of an arborist we will be having some of our gums lopped in order to ensure the safety of our buildings and guests.

A week later our casual and much appreciated cleaner, Nellie needed to resign. We wish her well in her new endeavours and miss her sparkling touch. This has left our retreat manager Debbie Watsford shorthanded in the cleaning of our cottages. We are currently advertising for a replacement and are very grateful to Debbie who so often goes the extra mile or two in her loving care of our cottages and guests.

Chinese New Year and a Visit to the Nan Tien Institute

Chinese New Year (CNY) 2025 began on the 29th of January and ended on the 12th of February. Yes, it lasts for 15 days. It is a time to feast and visit family and friends. Taking the opportunity, we visited Venerable Juewei at the Nan Tien Institute and gifted their community with some homemade traditional CNY Cookies. We were warmly received and treated with delicate handcrafted Greek Yoghurt ice cream at their cafe. We also briefly visited their impressive Art Gallery. Possibilities for a religious exchange experience were discussed.

Sr Marie Grace



PHOTO: (from left) Sr Petra, Sr Maureen Therese, Venerable Juewei, & Sr Marie Grace at the *Nan Tien Institute* during the CNY visit.

Sister Julian departs for pilgrimage to Stanbrook Abbey

Life is indeed an adventure, often leading us into the unknown. Similar to Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, I find myself stepping out of my comfort zone and venturing into uncharted territories.

As I follow my metaphorical yellow brick road, the destination remains a mystery known only to God. Spending six months in a different monastery with its unique culture, traditions, and teachings promises to be a captivating experience. Delving into the rich history of Stanbrook Abbey, which recently marked its 400th anniversary, and witnessing how they embody the monastic life in the present day, presents a time of profound enrichment. This pilgrimage serves as a symbolic bridge between continents, a moment of connection and exchange between two spiritually connected but geographically distant places. For me, it signifies a period of discernment, preparation for Solemn Profession and the chance to meet and know other members of the English Benedictine Congregation.

I am aware that I carry not only my physical presence but also the collective prayers and intentions of everyone at Jamberoo with me. This journey offers a unique opportunity for cultural exchange, spiritual enrichment, and mutual understanding, emphasising the universality of faith and the interconnectedness of all people seeking a deeper connection with the divine. *Sr Julian*

Update on roof replacement and maintenance work

Thanks to the generous donors who have supported our fundraising campaign, we were very grateful when sometime mid-August last year we were able to have work done on the first section of the building to replace the leaking tile roof with Colorbond steel roofing. This roof replacement work took 2.5 months to finish. With the usual Benedictine hospitality, we welcomed a lot of tradespersons who were on our property to do the work. Within the community, we had to make adjustments to our horarium (timetable) and do a bit of internal traffic management. There were some areas of the building including the cloister (corridor) that were temporarily out of bounds when the old roof was removed and we were waiting for the new roof to be installed. Even for those of us who have been here for a long while, during these days we asked, “Now which way do I go to get from here to there today?” It’s one way to begin anew each morning. Sometimes one needs to think outside the box, or take a route outside the building.



There was a great sigh of relief when the last scaffolding was removed from the property and we could start parking our cars in the garage again. But most of all, we were very grateful that this section of the building is no longer leaking. There was a sense of joy when the first rain came after the roof was replaced and we could see the usual leaking spots were dry.

Now we look forward with hope to the other two sections of the building receiving a new roof. One section

done. Two more to go. A Project Manager has been appointed and will do a full assessment of all the drainage and rising damp issues in the coming weeks.

We would like to take this opportunity to once again say 'Thank you!' to those who have supported us by donating to the fundraising effort for our building fund. We pray that the Lord may continue to bless you for your kindness. We would be very grateful if you could continue to walk alongside us as we look forward to the next phase of the roof replacement work.

Thank you.

Sr Petra - Property Coordinator

Make a donation to our building fund



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