

THE PARISHES OF CAMBERWELL, BALWYN DEEPDENE AND SURREY HILLS WATTLE PARK

Proposed amalgamation of the three Parishes of Camberwell, Balwyn Deepdene and Surrey Hills Wattle Park

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is the amalgamation proposed?

The three Parishes of Camberwell, Balwyn Deepdene, and Surrey Hills Wattle Park have been working closely together for the past four years. During this time, increased collaboration has led to a unified Parish Pastoral Council, Finance and Investment Committee, and many shared ministries and activities across the three parishes. This partnership has strengthened the communities, and the leadership believes by forming one parish, we will create a more vibrant and sustainable community.

The amalgamation is part of a broader effort to ensure the long-term viability of the Catholic community by creating a larger, more stable entity. It aims to serve the needs of our parishioners better, optimise resources, and create a unified approach to ministry and worship.

2. What is the proposed name of the new parish?

Fr. Brendan is suggesting that our amalgamated parish be called *Our Lady of Pentecost, Camberwell, Balwyn Deepdene, Surrey Hills Wattle Park*. This proposal is made on the following grounds.

First, three of the five parish churches have their patronage under a Marian title: Our Lady of Victories, Camberwell, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Deepdene and Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Wattle Park. The church at Balwyn is under the patronage of All Hallows (all saints) and Surrey Hills is under the patronage of Our Holy Redeemer. The name alludes to Mary and the apostles (the first group of saints) gathering together in the upper room awaiting the gift of the Spirit, promised by Jesus (Our Holy Redeemer).

Second, Our Lady of Pentecost evokes the notion of something new coming about by the initiative of the Spirit. It evokes the sense of continuity yet a calling to a new mission and a new direction being led by the Spirit. It is also a call to the five worshipping communities who will make up Our Lady of Pentecost Parish to be guided by the Spirit in a prayerful, reflective and synodal way.

Third, Pente comes from the Greek word meaning 'five'. There is synergy with the 'five' worshipping communities coming together into a new Pente-cost.

3. Will the parish boundaries change?

The new parish will officially encompass the existing geographic areas of the amalgamated parishes. Parishioners will not be impacted by this. Masses, sacraments and ministry activities will continue as scheduled across the different church locations.

4. What will happen to the individual churches and their names?

Each of the individual churches will retain its current name and will continue to be open for worship.

5. What will happen to parish records?

Parish registers and records will be kept at the Parish Office as is the current practices. Church registers from all five churches are held in the one administrative centre.

6. What changes can parishioners expect in worship and sacraments?

Worship and sacramental services will continue as scheduled across the different church locations. For the past few years, certain liturgical celebrations have been hosted by one or other of the parishes' churches. Attending services at different churches within the new parish offers a wider variety of worship experiences.

7. How will the amalgamation affect current community life and parish activities?

The amalgamation aims to strengthen community life by bringing together the resources and talents of all parishioners. Community life and parish activities will continue as scheduled across the different church locations. The amalgamation will enhance existing activities and will lead to new opportunities for more parishioner involvement and growth.

8. What opportunities will parishioners have to be involved in the new parish's mission?

The new parish will continue to offer a wide range of programs and ministries across all church locations, including catechesis, adult education, community outreach, and pastoral care. Parishioners are encouraged to participate in and contribute to these initiatives.

9. How will the parish schools be affected?

The parish schools will continue to operate as usual, serving students and families with high-quality Catholic education. The amalgamation of parishes will not directly impact the day-to-day functioning of the schools. There may be opportunities for greater collaboration and resource sharing among the schools within the new parish, which could lead to enhanced educational and extracurricular programs for students.

10. What impact will the amalgamation have on current parish staff and leadership?

The existing parish staff will continue to work collaboratively as a single group across the new parish communities. The leadership structures, including the current unified Parish Pastoral Council, will continue to guide the parish in its mission and initiatives.

11. How will the financial aspects of the new parish be managed?

The amalgamation aims to streamline operations and optimise financial resources across the parishes. A unified Finance and Investment Committee already oversees the financial well-being of the existing three parishes. The Finance and Investment Committee will continue this work for the new parish, ensuring ongoing viability.

12. What are the next steps of this process?

Parishioners will have opportunities to provide input and feedback through the Parish Pastoral Council, "town hall" meetings and Q&A information sessions. All voices and feedback are important and will be considered in the decision-making process.

13. What is the timeline for the amalgamation process?

If the amalgamation goes ahead, it is expected to take place over the coming months, with the aim of finalising it by the end of this year. Updates will be provided regularly to keep parishioners informed.

14. How can parishioners learn more about the proposed amalgamation?

Parishioners can find more information on the parish website and through the weekly newsletter. Parish meetings will also be held to discuss the amalgamation, discuss concerns, and answer questions.

We invite you to be part of this latest initiative in *Building Stronger Parish Partnerships for Mission* and attend a parish briefing, these will take place during the last week of May at the following times and locations:

- Tuesday, 21 May – 7.30 pm at Our Holy Redeemer Church, Surrey Hills in the Gathering Space
- Thursday, 23 May – 7.30 pm at Our Lady of Victories Basilica, Camberwell in the Church
- Sunday, 26 May – 12 noon at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Deepdene in the Gathering Space

Contact the Parish Office if you have any questions or comments and to register your attendance at a meeting:

Tel: 03 9816 9291

Email: cbdparish@cam.org.au

Website: cbdparish.org.au to visit the Building Strong Parish Partnerships for Mission page