



Hurstville 1905
New Church



The New Church Hurstville Society Newsletter December 2025

Celebrate like the Magi from the East!

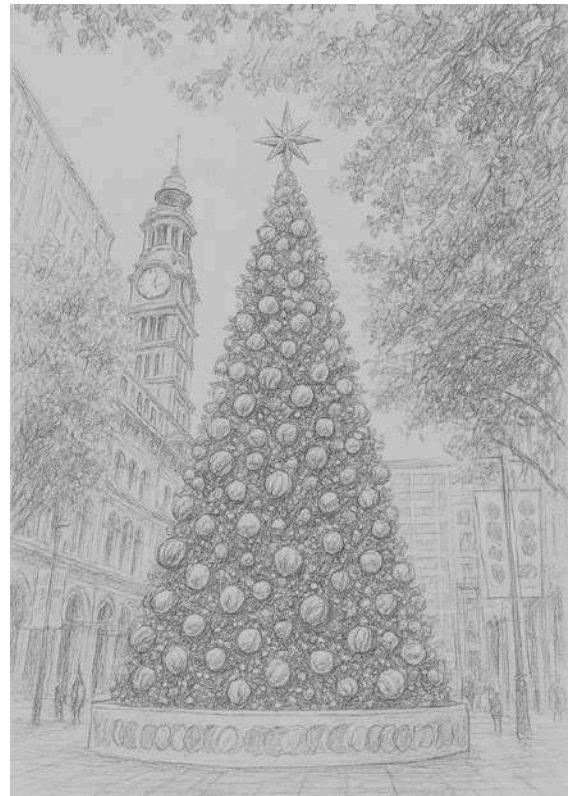
By Rev. HyunJin Yang

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

(Matthew 2:1-2)

Christmas Is Drawing Near

One thing about Christmas is that it has become a big thing to celebrate, whether inside or outside the church, and whether Christians or not. As I am writing it, we are still almost two months away from Christmas, but I see lots of shops are displayed and decorated with Christmas themes already.



A Christmas Tree at the Queen Victoria Building

Recently, I made a stop at the Queen Victoria Building and saw a magnificent Christmas tree. For those who wonder what it is like, I've found this on whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

[The Christmas tree is] a breathtaking 20-meter-tall Wollemi Pine-inspired Christmas tree. As the largest indoor Christmas tree in NSW, the festive display towers majestically over three shopping levels. The tree is also beautifully adorned with 45 hand-painted flannel flowers, visible from the upper levels.

It must be magnificent. Right? I enjoyed taking a good look at it. I reckon that our Christmas celebration will be amazing. Think about the illuminating lights, charming Christmas songs on the streets, as well as the costumes we wear and gifts that we will exchange with each other. It is going to be amazing.

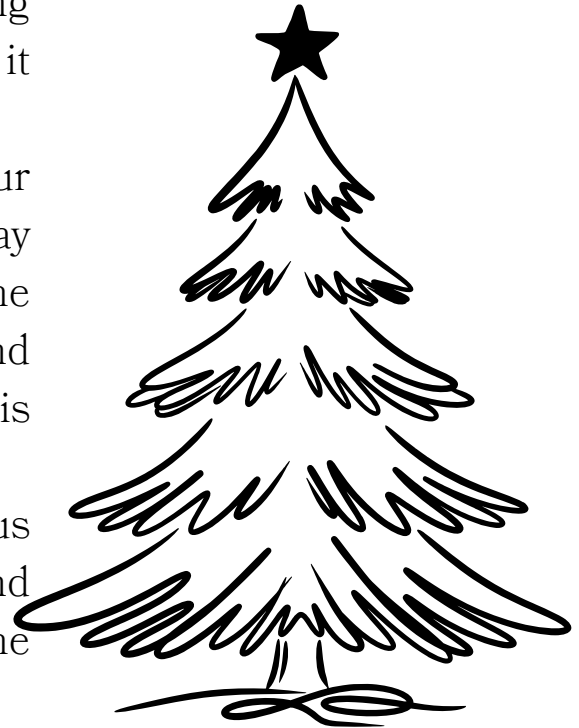


Where Is Our Christian Celebration?

On the other hand, the annual celebration of Christmas can tell us about something else: It has become highly commercialized. Part of me wonders, “where can we find the true meaning of Christmas in all this party-like festivity that it has become’.

Hasn't it come across to us that the bigger our Christmas tree becomes, the less we may celebrate the true meaning of Christmas? The more the festivity itself captures our eyes and hearts, the more our attention goes to what is displayed on the outside.

It strikes me: “Do we picture the birth of Jesus and what it means for our spiritual life behind the big tree and lights, and beyond the secularized celebration of Christmas?”



Celebrate like the Magi from the East

Ironically and interestingly, we are told in the Word that only a few people wanted to and went to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Among the few were the Magi from the East, known as the wise men from the East. Their story presents a striking semblance of what was like back then to what is like today in the celebration of the Lord's birth on earth. It is because they were among the few to be not distracted by the noise of the world, but to be faithful to and keen on what they were meant to remember.



The Christmas story we remember is – when they saw a star in the East, they recognized that it was the star that would lead and show them to the newborn King. They acted promptly, searched, and found the baby Jesus. They were not even Jews but gentiles. That meant a longer travel for them. But they did not mind. Besides, they took with them precious presents such as gold, frankincense, and myrrh. In the end, they met with the One who would change the whole world in a way that no one could see and imagine.

And they are the perfect and biblical example of how to celebrate the Lord’s birth on earth. As Christmas is drawing near, the reminder is that we should celebrate the birth of Jesus like how the Magi did – be keen on what to remember about the Lord and what has been promised about the changes that He will bring about in the world and in our life.

A further reflection may follow regarding what the “star in the East” means and how we are led to the celebration of the birth of Jesus. We read in *Apocalypse Explained* 422.20:

The star was seen in the east by the wise men, because the Lord is the East; and because they knew of the coming of the Lord from those representatives which remained with them, therefore they saw the star and it went before them, first to Jerusalem, which represented the church itself, as to doctrine and the Word, and then to the place where the infant Lord was. A star also signifies the cognitions of good and truth, and in the highest sense, knowledge concerning the Lord.

(A friendly reminder: the Magi story from Matthew 2:1-12 is going to be our Christmas service theme. Join our service at 10:00 a.m. on the 25th)



Message from Bishop Buss

(Taken from the July 2025 Bishop's **Newsletter**)



"The activity of love and faith is what makes heaven." (Heaven and Hell 51)

Dear Friend,

My guess is that most of us don't wake up in the morning saying to ourselves, "I want to live spiritually today." It'd probably sound more like: "I just want to show up well for the people I care about," or "Let me get through today and maybe do some good along the way." It could even be subconscious—a quiet, baseline intention to be kind that seeks greater expression.

The amazing thing, though, is that our ability to follow through on these aspirations is what living spiritually is all about. The Lord is constantly inspiring us to make small daily choices based on spiritual principle, and our responsiveness to His promptings is what allows Him to plant something heavenly within us.

It should be no surprise, then, that the Word frequently urges us in this direction. We hear, for example, Moses saying to the Israelites, "You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live..." (Deuteronomy 5:33). Living here means having eternal life or receiving salvation (Apocalypse Explained 186:2). Jesus Himself used almost identical words in response to a lawyer who asked Him what he could do to inherit eternal life. After exploring the two great commandments He said, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live" (Luke 10:25-28).

This same concept is stated in a different way in a thought-provoking passage from Heaven and Hell: “The activity of love and faith is what makes heaven” (n. 51). Restated, this says that what we choose to do based on our faith and from love is what allows heaven to exist inside of us. It is also what makes heaven the blessed place it is, for all there are living their faith from love in the many acts of kindness and service they do for each other.

The beauty of this principle of living spiritually is that it is not complicated or hard. Each of us can do something today to help those we love. We can respond to the promptings of conscience. We can commit to a small change based on reflection on a shortcoming. We can say a prayer of gratitude. We can respond to difficult situations with wisdom and compassion.

I’d like to offer a resource aimed at helping us live spiritually. It’s [a list of 100 examples of heavenly actions](#) [Find these in the last pages of the Newsletter], or hurtful actions to avoid, that come to us directly in the teachings of the New Church. I invite you to take a look and to see which ones resonate with you, that you could act on today. The wonderful result is that these very activities, small though they may be, will allow the Lord to build heavenly qualities inside you, and at the same time will lead you to make a positive difference in the lives of those you love.

Peter
Rt. Rev. Peter Buss, Jr.



Highlights of the Month Service Led by Rev. Nathan Gladish (9th).

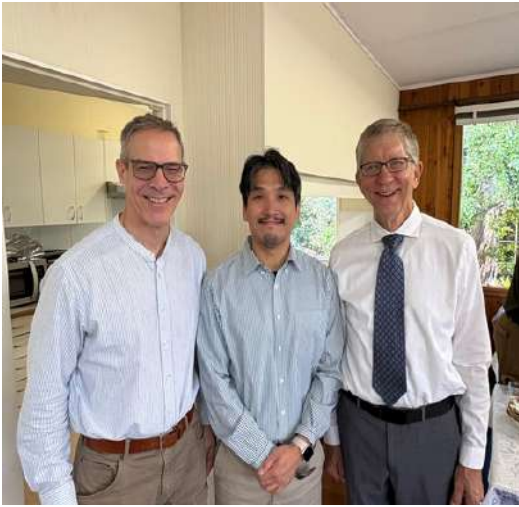
The second week service was led by Rev. Nathan Gladish who was visiting Sydney with his wife, Elise. Our friends from the Roseville New Church, Rev. Howard Thompson and Joe joined the service as well.



Luncheon Afterward

After the lovely service, we gathered at the Richard Morse Room for luncheon. The main menu for the luncheon was Bibimbap, one of the most traditional Korean dish (made of warm rice topped with a variety of seasoned vegetables, meat and red chili paste. All the ingredients are mixed together just before eating, creating a flavorful and colorful meal). The great thing about Bibimbap is that everyone can customize it. You can add meat, red pepper paste, etc., or you don't, if you don't like them. Others helped as well. Some brought a salad, some fruits, some cheese, snacks, and some cakes. Many thanks to Lori, Huiling, Kristen, Monika.





The luncheon was such a blessing. We love it when people gather and share smiles. Don't we?

Thirty-Minute Chase at Baringa (1st)

It was the first day of November that I found a mess at Baringa that I couldn't explain for myself: dirt and stain on a toilet cover, two small plant pots knocked down in the social room, a chair dropped in the Richard Morse Room. "Who can possibly do it?" it first occurred. I thought to myself: "Um... Not that I am aware of; I left my office at 10:00 p.m., and who would visit Baringa late at night after me? All I could tell was it was a break-in. But who was it?"



It was not until I saw small footprints of paws on the kitchen sink and table, I realized that it was an animal – most likely a possum! But how?! If so, did it leave? Or is it still in the building? If so, why is it so quiet?

I asked Ralph in the building to help me understand the situation, and he assumed that it would be a possum as well. Five minutes after our investigation (we called ourselves a special force team for fun), Ralph found out how it broke in. It was through the chimney.

Long story short, we had to find where it hid itself because no way it kindly left Baringa for us because the only way in and out was the chimney, and it would not have crawled back outside through it!

Ralph spotted it in the Archive room next to the Richard Morse Room.

And it didn't want to be cooperative with our order of eviction. We thought we got him in the corner and could herd it towards the back door. I used a long wooden stick like a staff to herd it. I nudged it out of the corner, and the moment I thought it was dashing out through the back door, it ran around and ended up coming back in the same spot three times. Ralph and I eventually chased it out, which needed us to make a temporary highway passage through the Richard Morse Room for the possum to use. We set a barricade on both sides in the middle of the Richard Morse Room, turning into an aisle.



The best photo I took of it is when it crawled behind a closet. It was desperate to remain as an uninvited tenant, and it would hide itself wherever it could fit. As you can see, the possum was not small—maybe forty centimeters long including the tail.

Yes. The operation went well. No one got hurt! In all seriousness, the thirty-minute chase was the most Australian experience for me. My YouTube Algorithm links me with videos of 'this is what you see in Australia' or 'if you were in Australia'. People recorded Kangaroos

roaming around in their neighborhood (I guess that is true of some regions in West Australia). One guy found a possum at his house, and he filmed himself running around in the house either to chase it or to be chased by it.

That something similar—an encounter with a possum in the house—fell in my daily life means significant. It tells me I am indeed in Australia. After one year and a half, I guess I am still realizing that part. To me, it was one of the most exciting days I ever had here. No, part of me says that it was the most Australian one so far.



What's Coming Up?

Doctrinal Class + BYO lunch (11th)

Our monthly doctrinal class is held at 11:00 A.M on the second Thursday of each month at Baringa, unless otherwise notified. At this stage, we can't tell what our topic is going to be. But that's part of the fun. We can treat it like a surprise box!



Christmas Carols and Reading Service (at 7:00 P.M. on the 21st)



This year we will continue our traditional Christmas Carols and Readings on the Sunday prior to Christmas Day. Our Carol service is a vesper service, taking place at 7:00 p.m. Here is how it goes. We begin with a couple of carols to sing together and then a relevant Christmas story is read by the pastor. We may call it the first segment, and probably 5-6 other segments will follow. Each segment is composed with a Christmas song to sing and a Christmas reading to be read. Service lasts about an hour. Allowing the Christmas story to speak to your heart and signing Christmas carols can be a great and a very personal way to celebrate it. Join us! After service, we will have refreshments at Baringa.

Christmas Service (at 10:00 A.M. on the 25th)

Our celebration continues on the Christmas day! The service will follow our usual Sunday format. But we will be singing Christmas Carols and hearing a Christmas message that we only get once a year. I hope you can all join us!

Something for the Wider Community – Donations to the Kogarah Storehouse

We will be collecting donations for our second drive this year for the Kogarah Storehouse until Christmas. Items for collection are 1) canned and boxed food items, 2) non-perishable snacks, cereals, and grains, 3) Toiletries. Small or big, little or large, anything you bring can help someone in the wider community who need those. Thanks in advance for your participation!

No Sunday Service (on the 28th)



Looking Further Ahead...

Bishop Peter Buss and Teresa's Visit (January 2026)

I am excited to announce that Bishop Peter Buss and his wife Teresa will be visiting us here in Sydney. It will be their first visit since June 2019. Their two-week visit in Australia will begin with their first stop in Perth from the 7-10 January 2026. They will then fly to Sydney on the 10th and stay until the morning on the 15th, when they depart for Brisbane to attend the NCIA 2026 Retreat at Alexandra Park, on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland. The final day of the Retreat, the 19th, will coincide with their last day in Australia.

For those making traveling plans, please note in advance that Bishop Buss will be leading our Sunday service on the 11th of January at Hurstville. Reminders will be sent off in upcoming announcements and in our weekly as the date approaches.

If you would like to arrange a visit with him during his visit, LET ME KNOW at pastor@hurstvillenewchurch.com.



Pause – 2026 Journey Program (February 1 to March 16)

7-Week Journey Program—Pause: Make Space for God—will begin 1 February, ending 16 March. Developed by General Church Outreach, the program essentially is a workbook we follow for 7-week period.

The book provides various texts selected from Scripture on the theme, as well as teachings from the New Church that help illuminate them. It also provides daily readings and reflective questions as well.

The program is two-fold. First, our Sunday worship services will base its message off the workbook. Second, those interested in can join an in-person small group on Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. for one hour. In the small group, we will work through the week's material together, sharing and discussing our reflections.

(Important Note about the Workbook: It will be printed out by the pastor's office for free distribution. It will be 'print on demand'. So let the pastor know at pastor@hurstvillenewchurch.com if you want or need a copy of it in advance)

How can you make the most out of the program?

Here is the tricky part. Ideally, we will have already reviewed the week 1 material during the week leading up to our first Sunday for the program. The idea is that we come prepared with the week's material first, so that we know what we expect in the Sunday message. It will also help us be ready for our Monday small group the following day.

The workbook is your only tool. Read some readings and reflective questions before you come. If you would like to be more committed, then, you can work through the daily material each week.

If you can't find your time for any of those, then, think of one question to carry with you for the week. For example, you might simply ask the question "how does God speak to me?" for Week 1. The point is, the more prepared you are, the more the program will speak to you.

At a glance, the 7-week Journey Program is outlined as below.

- 1. WEEK ONE, How Does God Speak to Me?**
- 19. WEEK TWO, Why Did God Create Me?**
- 37. WEEK THREE, Who Is Jesus, and How Does He Relate to My Life?**
- 55. WEEK FOUR, How Does the Lord Work in My Life?**
- 73. WEEK FIVE, What Does the Lord Want from Me?**
- 91. WEEK SIX, How Do I Follow the Lord?**
- 109. WEEK SEVEN, How Does the Lord Want Me to Serve Others?**

Don't just throw out this Newsletter issue! It will be the basic guide for the program. A reminder will be sent out in upcoming announcements such as the Weekly Update.



Our Friends in New Zealand

Denis and Lis Keal' son, Thomas, passed away into the spiritual world on the 23rd. We send our deepest condolences to them and the family.

With love and prayers.



Editor's Note

The January 2026 Newsletter will be our Year in Review. It will be a brief overview of what to expect in January and a short reflection on how the past year went.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas!



Happy Birthday

Happy Birthday to, Gai Kennedy (2nd), Beryl Laidley (14th), Ken Horner (16th), Patricia Walsh (19th), Kristen Johnson (29th)



A heavenly life consists of..

1. Doing what is good (Life 1)
2. Giving to the poor (Life 9)
3. Donating to the needy (Life 9)
4. Contributing to churches and shelters (Life 9)
5. Looking out for the welfare of our church, country and fellow citizens (Life 9)
6. Regularly going to church, devoutly listening to sermons, and praying (Life 9)
7. Reading the Word and books of piety (Life 9)
8. Thinking about salvation (Life 9)
9. Teaching the gospel and making converts (Life 24)
10. Being just in our judgments (Life 24)
11. Being honest in our business dealings (Life 24)
12. Being upright in what we do (Life 24)
13. Taking the sacrament of the Holy Supper (Life 25)
14. Abiding in the Lord (or trusting in His providence) (Life 29)
15. Doing good deeds (Life 31)
16. Loving truths (Life 33)
17. Seeking the means to be useful (Life 39)
18. Obeying the Ten Commandments (Life 53)
19. Resisting enmity, hatred, revenge (Life 67)
20. Not wishing anyone to hell (Life 67)
21. Not hating the Lord (Life 67)
22. Fostering innocence (Life 69)
23. Practicing charity (Life 69)
24. Being a good friend (Life 69)
25. Actively loving the neighbor (Life 72)
26. Being reconciled with our brothers (and sisters) (Life 73)
27. Dealing kindly with our adversaries (Life 73)
28. Doing no evil [to the neighbor] (Life 73)
29. Not engaging in obscene acts (Life 74)
30. Not speaking lasciviously (Life 74)
31. Not entertaining filthy thoughts (Life 74)
32. Not adulterating the Word's goods or falsifying its truths (Life 74)
33. Not denying the Lord's Divinity or profaning the Word (Life 74)
34. Loving marriage (Life 75)
35. Loving the chasteness of marriage (Life 76)
36. Not swindling others or taking their goods by subterfuge (Life 80)
37. Not depriving others of the truths of their faith and the goods of their charity (Life 80)
38. Not taking from the Lord something that is His and attributing it to oneself (Life 80)
39. Loving honesty and dealing honestly (Life 82)
40. Living in integrity (Life 83)
41. Embracing righteousness, fidelity, rectitude (Life 83)
42. Not lying (Life 87)
43. Not slandering (Life 87)
44. Not saying and persuading that falsity is true and evil good (Life 87)
45. Not blaspheming the Lord and the Word (Life 87)
46. Seeking wisdom (Life 89)
47. Loving the truth about our neighbors (Life 89)
48. Resisting inherited tendencies toward revenge, adultery, defrauding, and defaming (Life 92)
49. Regarding evils as harmful to our souls and wishing to banish them (Life 93)
50. Refraining from evils as being sins and fighting against them as though of ourselves (Life 101)
51. Repenting or: examining ourselves, confessing our sins before God, desisting from them, and leading a new life (Life 106)
53. Performing our function faithfully (Life 114)
54. Striving to the Lord Jesus Christ, and loving Him above all else (TCR 291ff)
55. Honoring everything that comes from the Lord (TCR 297ff)
56. Remembering the Lord and the things of spiritual life (TCR 301ff)
57. Resisting disobedience, rebellion, and contempt in favor of honor, love, and gratitude (TCR 305ff)
58. Refraining from turning people away from God, religion and worship (TCR 309ff)
59. Rejecting the urge to love what is false or do what is forbidden (TCR 313ff)
60. Not robbing people of their means of salvation (TCR 317ff)
61. Not wrongfully accusing others (TCR 321ff)
62. Doing our part to purify our intentions and check our cravings, so that the Lord can replace them with "the good desires of the spirit" (TCR 325)
63. Growing in a love of service (TCR 394)
64. Subordinating love of the world and love of wealth to a love of serving the Lord and others (TCR 395)
65. Seek, with the Lord's help, to join goodness and truth in a "heavenly marriage" (TCR 398)

66. Not joining goodness and the falsity of evil, nor evil and truth (TCR 398)
67. Fostering a perception of goodness and truth, from which we know what is evil and false (TCR 398)
68. Paying attention to what is dominant in our lives — loved above all else, constantly present in our thoughts, and kept in view in everything—ensuring that it is dominantly heavenly (TCR 399)
69. Paying attention to the offshoots of love of self: contempt envy, unfriendliness, hostility, hatred, etc. (TCR 400)
70. Watching out for the trappings of love of the world: wanting what belongs to others, placing our hearts on riches, neglecting spiritual pursuits for the sake of worldly advancement, and bending the rules to get more (TCR 400)
71. Watching out for the temptation to judge things purely on the senses, and reason from that perspective, for it tends toward denying things that are genuinely true (TCR 402)
72. Using our wealth and other possessions to perform useful services (TCR 403)
73. Discharge our duties from a love of being useful (TCR 403)
74. Living not for our own sake, but for the sake of others (TCR 406)
75. Procuring for ourselves and those we love the necessities of life, so that we are in a position to exercise charity. (TCR 406)
76. Wishing well and doing good to all people—good or bad (TCR 407)
77. Being discerning in our charity, practicing indirect kindness for wrong-doers, including attempts to reform them (TCR 408)
78. Being strident and zealous if the situation calls for it, but letting go of anger or grudges once the offender "returns to his senses" (TCR 408)
79. Striving to love our enemies and forgive up to seventy times seven. (TCR 409)
80. Loving people according to the goodness in them (as best as we can see it) (TCR 410)
81. Treating people the way we would want to be treated (TCR 411)
82. Loving and serve our community and our country, doing good according to its needs (TCR 414)
83. Loving and supporting the church (TCR 415)
84. Loving everyone in the whole world who loves the Lord and has faith in Him, and charity toward the neighbor (TCR 416)
85. Seeking first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness (TCR 416)
86. Loving others for their righteousness, judgment, learning, integrity of life, zeal, honesty and faithfulness (TCR 417)
87. Striving to come from a spiritual and principled perspective in all our actions and speech (TCR 420)
88. Dealing fairly and faithfully in our work, and with all with whom we come into contact (TCR 422)
89. Doing good to the neighbor daily and constantly (TCR 423)
90. Striving to have the law engraved on our hearts by the consistent practice of charity (TCR 423)
91. Doing our duties as a part of a loving and useful family—as husbands or wives, parents or children (TCR 431)
92. Loving and promoting our children's morals, virtues, and interests in public service (TCR 431)
93. Building relationships and friendships through charitable recreations (TCR 433)
94. Striving to acknowledge that all the good that we do, and our very salvation, is from the Lord alone (TCR 439)
95. Resisting doing things for sake of merit or reward, but seek to find the pleasure inherent in doing good to the neighbor (TCR 440)
96. Dealing well with the neighbor (moral life) even as we prevent our actions from being contaminated by evil (charitable life) (TCR 443)
97. Discerning as best as we can the quality of the people we call friends, aiming to love fairness, good judgment, sincerity, kindness, and love to the Lord (TCR 449)
98. Avoiding acting in hypocritical ways, going through the motions of a good life while caring inwardly about ourselves (TCR 452)
99. Not "tearing up our agreement with the Lord" by worshiping Him but not also striving to perform good deeds out of charity (TCR 457)
100. Seeing it as our responsibility to take in the Lord's love for others and serve them in the best ways we can (TCR 457)