



## Welcome to our Multicultural Church

### December 2023/January 2024

#### What is Christmas all about?

I read in a newspaper article some years ago that the claims we Christians make around Christmas are the most stupendous ever made. Why? Because we claim that:

1. Jesus is God
2. God, for a time was a child
3. God alone (Jesus) is the principle of goodness
4. Jesus can work miracles

Jesus himself and the Gospel writers in the Bible claim that Jesus is: not a messenger of God, not a teacher inspired by God, not an angel, not the leader of a social movement but God itself.

So, either Jesus was:  
a deluded fantasist,  
or brilliant charlatan,  
or he was and is God.

And we believe that Jesus' claims are true. Therefore during the coming Christmas season, let us celebrate the coming of the baby Jesus, God made man to live among us in our world with joy and laughter, with togetherness,

with family and friends. Let us celebrate with love.

Lesley Warner, Chair of Council

#### From With Love to the Word

In the time of Pope Sixtus III, between 423 and 440 AD, a small service, known as the Angel's Mass began to be celebrated as an evening service at St Mary's Major in ancient Rome telling the story of the shepherds who were in the fields when they heard of Jesus's birth (Luke 2 1-14). Later and to this day The Shepherd's Mass, telling of the shepherds going to visit the new born child is presided over by the Pope in the church of St Peter on Christmas morning (Luke 2 8-20). A third service, the Mass of the Divine Word was added in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century and its focus has become the celebration of the incarnation (God becoming man) (John 1 1-14).

So we too continue, to celebrate Christ's birth with advent candles, nativity scenes and Christmas carols in 2023.

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## Organ Concert

Last Saturday, our church was alive with the enchanting melodies of the organ and other musical instruments played on the day. It was great to see pews filled with a diverse audience enjoying the amazing talent showcased in various genres of music.

A special thanks goes out to our brilliant organ scholar, Casey, amazing guest performers, and to everyone who contributed to the success of the day. Casey will continue as our organ scholar next year.



## Christmas 2023

*They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people.'*  
(Luke 2:10)



The Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of South Australia

## Everything in Common Christmas Gift Catalogue

UnitingWorld's *Everything in Common Christmas gift catalogue* is now available! It's filled with gifts that fight poverty through health, education, leadership and income opportunities. There are gifts like goats, pigs, clean water, schoolbooks, kitchen gardens, small business training and disability support and lots more! And a new set of Christmas cards. You can browse the full range of life-changing gifts for all budgets here:

[www.everythingincommon.com.au](http://www.everythingincommon.com.au)

## St Peter's Cathedral Choir at Newland

Newland Uniting Church is hosting the St Peter's Cathedral Choir for an inspiring night of candles, carols and readings celebrating the Story of Christmas. Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00 pm, free admission.



## Cherry Gardens Community Carols

Cherry Gardens Uniting Church will again present a Community Carols event to be held at The Cherry Gardens Memorial Hall, Cherry Gardens Road on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00 pm with supper to follow. This is a free event and features the Country Gospel Group The Sherrahs, singing to be led by Merran and Hadyn Jones and music by Tim Due.

## Christmas Bowl

The message of the Parable of the Sheep and Goats echoes Jesus' words as he concludes the Sermon on the Mount: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven" (7:21). Saying or singing "Lord, Lord" means nothing if it does not change me, just as a wedding has little meaning if it is not followed by an

ongoing healthy marriage. The parable does not mean we need to justify ourselves by good works. It is rather that there needs to be an ongoing healthy relationship which includes sharing God's agenda and living accordingly. To acclaim Christ the King is not to turn away from human need to satiate a divine need for adulation. That would be projecting our inadequacies onto Christ. Jesus needed no such reassurance and calls us to join him as if to say: "Don't do it for me! Do it for them and then: surprise, you'll have done it for me, too, because I identify with people in need". Matthew tweaks the parable to have it address Christians of his day. We can do the same, indeed, broaden it to include not only care for fellow believers but for all peoples and the world of creation as well. The Christmas Bowl is one effective way of doing so.

In the words of Rev. Byatt, we can "get a bowl to put on [our] Christmas dinner table as a Bowl of Remembrance" so that "the love of Christ can be made more vivid through Australian Christian concern, on Christmas Day, the one great day of sharing".



## Reflection

### “Waiting in Community”

Christian community is the place where we keep the flame of hope alive among us and take it seriously so that it can grow and become stronger in us. In this way we can live with courage, trusting that there is a spiritual power in us when we are together that allows us to live in this world without surrendering to the powerful forces constantly seducing us toward despair.

That is how we dare to say that God is a God of love even when we see hatred all around us. That is why we can claim that God is a God of life even when we see death and destruction and agony all around us. We say it together. We affirm it in each other.

Waiting together, nurturing what has already begun, expecting its fulfillment—that is the meaning of marriage, friendship, community, and the Christian life.

Henry Nouwen

**Special Congratulations to Jackie  
who is turning 90 in January!**



## December / January Celebrations

### December Birthdays

1st - Sebastian  
11th - Arjun  
15th - Sadra  
16th - Beverly  
28th - Bill F  
30th - Jan C

### January Birthdays

1st - Jackie  
10th - Sue Y  
17th - Meng  
21st - Margaret M  
22nd - Kelly  
23rd - Heather  
24th - Ann M<sup>c</sup>  
25th - Woody

### January Anniversaries

4th - Sharon & Craig (38 years)  
13th - Heather & John (45 years)

Please send any photos or stories/events that you would like to share with the congregation. Looking forward to hearing from many of you!