

PARISH NEWSLETTER & HOME WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT
First Sunday of Advent, 29th November 2020

Dear Parishioners,

This Sunday we begin anew the journey of the liturgical year. The first part of our journey, Advent, is a time of anticipation – of watching and waiting. We await the coming of Christ: we look forward to celebrating his first coming, the incarnate Christ that we celebrate at Christmas; but, more specifically we look forward to his second coming, the point of vv. 24-27 of today's gospel passage.



Today, I thank Lesle for providing us with the homily on this passage.

Advent Study. I encourage you to join with us over the next four Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. in Holy Trinity, for Morning Prayer and an Advent Study selected by our LLMs. Its theme is '*An Attitude of Discipleship – Hopeful, Prepared, Expectant and Trusting.*'

Christmas Services. Liturgy for Christmas Services this year has been produced by our LLMs so will be different to previous years. I'm looking forward to them! 😊 They are listed at the end of this Supplement.

Rector's Leave. I will be taking leave from 26th December 2020 to 8th January 2021. During my absence, services will be lead by our LLMs. However, please note that there will not be a service on Sun 27th or Wed 30th December.

Parish Restructure

The Interim Parish Council for the new Parish of Nambucca Valley met last Friday for the second last time for 2020. We are almost

ready for the transition to the new parish that takes place on 31 December 2020 / 1st January 2021.

I anticipate that the Parish Administration Hub will be located in Nambucca Heads. New ABN, ACNC registration, MYOB accounts, Website, Facebook page, etc, etc have been set up. Work is also underway to consolidate the files (paper and electronic), contracts, authorities and sources of supply for both parishes. Many documents are being sent to Grafton for archiving.

A Draft Budget has been drawn up ready for review in January 2021 and then presentation to the AGM. It includes our desires for the staffing for the team ministry required by Model 1. This is likely to be a deficit budget; therefore, much prayer is required that parish income will grow, and savings will be realised so that we can, in due course, fully implement the Model as intended.

It is encouraging that the income from our Op Shop has increased significantly since we reopened. Much of this increase has been attributed to the installation of the EFTPOS system.

Initially, the new parish will be staffed by myself as Rector, existing Office Staff and LLMs, and a locum Priest who has been appointed to commence on 1st January 2021 (more detail on the locum priest will be provided when permitted). Meanwhile we will be pursuing a paid part time Op Shop Manager as soon as possible and will continue to seek a new Ministry Area Leader (Rector).

After the AGM, the new Parish Council will seek to employ a second stipended clergy person to be a Community Minister, a part time Parish Administrator and an Op Shop Manager.

A date for the AGM for the new Parish has been set – Sunday 21st February. This AGM will be held in St John the Baptist church in Nambucca Heads. It will be chaired by Archdeacon Webb.

Reports for 2020 need to be submitted by the end of Jan so they can be compiled, printed and distributed on 7th Feb. If you are responsible for a report, please get it in to the Parish Office by 1st February 2021.

I was very encouraged that already we have had a serious enquiry regarding the position of Ministry Area Leader (Rector) from a Priest who had been attracted by our Parish Profile on the Diocesan website. However, this couple were originally pursuing a parish further north in the Diocese and decided to continue with their first intent for family reasons. (Our Bishop has given me permission to share this with you.)

Please continue to pray that others will likewise be attracted and that we will have a new Ministry Area Leader incumbent before I complete my ministry with you in mid-June 2021. A prayer for this purpose is included in this Supplement on the second last page.

Be encouraged, be blessed – God is at work in our Parish!
Rev Clyde

Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,
 you that led Joseph like a flock:

you that are
 enthroned upon the
 cherubim,

shine out in
 glory;

² Before Ephraim,
 Benjamin and
 Manasseh:



stir up your power, and come to save us.

³ Restore us again, O Lord of hosts:

show us the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.

⁴ O Lord God of hosts:

how long will you be angry at your people's prayer?

⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears:

and given them tears to drink in good measure.

⁶ You have made us the victim of our neighbours:

and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

⁷ Restore us again, O Lord of hosts:

show us the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.

¹⁷ Let your power rest on the man at your right hand:

on that son of man

whom you made so strong for yourself.

¹⁸ And so we shall not turn back from you:

give us life, and we will call upon your name.

¹⁹ Restore us again, O Lord of hosts:

show us the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.

Bible Reading

*Please take your
bible and read:*

Mark 13: 24-37



Reflection Mark 13: 24-37, by Lesle Cropp

Key Verse:

“Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.” Mark 13.33 (NRSV)

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. The word “Advent” derives from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “coming”. Advent inspires a sense of expectation and readiness. Although it has come to be closely linked with Christmas, Advent was originally about the second coming of Christ – ‘the day of the Lord’.

The first Sunday of Advent also marks a new liturgical year in the church – so, **HAPPY NEW YEAR! :-)** Year B focuses on the Gospel accounts of Mark and John in the Sunday Readings.

The liturgical colour for Advent is violet – the colour of royalty because the ancient purple dye was so costly and rare. Purple can also be a sombre colour representing repentance, preparation and sacrifice. Interestingly, ***both*** seasons of penance - Advent and Lent - are highlighted by the colour purple.

If God's salvation plan had ended with the Christmas story – that is, the first Advent – it might have had limited power to instil us with eternal hope and expectation. By God's grace however, the story *doesn't* end in Bethlehem. In fact, it hasn't ended yet! The Bible tells us that just as surely as Jesus came to live on earth (a past perspective), he is going to come again to establish his kingdom (the future view) .

Focussing on the Nativity alone deprives believers of the power and portent of the Second Coming.

With Christ's birth, we have God's promise fulfilled:

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the

young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Isaiah 7.14

With Christ's return, we have God's promise yet-to-be-fulfilled:

At that time, we will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. Mark 13.26

The first Advent – Jesus' birth – is inextricably linked to the second Advent – Jesus' return, just as the dawn is inseparably linked to dusk – as night follows day.

Our eucharistic liturgy makes mention of the Second Advent in the memorial acclamation;

Christ has died

Christ is risen

Christ will come again.

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Let us always declare this mystery of faith with bold assurance because herein lies the source and the strength of our expectancy. Bedded deeply within this divine rhythm is our hope – a hope built on the truth of God's promise to return and gather us unto himself. (v27) The next time Jesus comes, he will take us to heaven to live with him in eternity. Hope is the light that shines into our dark places; the confidence that God is a promise-keeper, urging us to remain steadfast as we await his coming in glory.

Yet, how much do we consider Christ's coming again? I must admit in my faith journey, I have given Jesus' second Advent only fleeting attention. I find myself so taken up with living the here and now – trying to live *this* day according to God's will – that over the years, God's promise of Jesus' return has raised minimal contemplation within me. I need to give his coming again much greater reality. Thankfully, the season of Advent causes us to do

this:

“Be on guard! Be alert...Watch!” (v34, 37)

Advent is not about looking back to the birth of Christ alone...it is also the looking forward to his return. While we await Christmas 2020, we are also waiting for Jesus to come again. When will that be? We don't know – yet we faithfully rest on Jesus' promise that he will return. Jesus said,

“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, not the Son, but only the Father.” (v32)

The return of Christ may occur at any moment and Christians are to be ever ready.

Waiting is never easy. Dr Seuss in his book *“Oh, the Places You'll Go”*, depicts the futility and pervasiveness of waiting. He describes it as a useless place where people are idly waiting.

...waiting for their hair to grow.

Everyone is just waiting.

We know also that waiting can bring with it a level of torment. There is a strong sense of anticipation, but there can equally be a sense of anguish – awaiting a medical diagnosis; awaiting the birth of twins after a difficult pregnancy; awaiting the results of the HSC exams; awaiting the outcome of a contested election. As he journeyed towards his death, Jesus himself lived with tormented waiting. The first Advent in Bethlehem culminated in Jesus' atoning death in Jerusalem -

the one true sacrifice for sin, obtaining an eternal deliverance for his people. APBA p128

thus restoring humankind to a right relationship with God.

We live in a suffering world and long for relief and rescue. Christ's return is the penultimate reprieve we hunger for. Well may we cry out - “Come Lord Jesus, come!”

What is to be our response to waiting and watching for Jesus' return? The Bible tells us, "Be prepared!" - the motto of the Scouting Movement. Sir Baden-Powell wrote that to "Be prepared" means 'you are always in a state of readiness in mind and body, to do your duty' - words that aptly describe the stance of every believer.

Jesus' issues his warning: "Be on guard! Be alert... Watch!" As we keep vigil, we are to remain diligently and faithfully attentive to Jesus, by worshipping and praising him, loving and serving him, and sharing his love with others. When we do these things we will be ready, no matter when Jesus comes, and we will bring hope-filled joy into that waiting space. God has promised that Jesus will return – we live in the hope-filled certainty of that promise being fulfilled.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we consider Jesus' coming again, we watch with great joy the celebration of Jesus' birth and we wait with hope-filled anticipation for the day when Jesus returns.

Please give us strength and endurance as we watch and wait.

Our hope is in you, Lord.

Amen

Collect

Faithful God,
whose promises stand unshaken through all generations:
renew us in hope,
that we may be awake and alert
watching for the glorious return of Jesus Christ,
our Judge and Saviour,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayers for 29th November 2020 – Thanks Judith Thomson

Ever loving God, we give thanks that you sent your Son to be our way, our truth and our life. In confidence we bring to you our prayers for all your people.

Advent is the Holy season in which the Church tells us to prepare ourselves worthily to commemorate the anniversary of the coming of Christ among us. His coming as a baby at Bethlehem represents God's great act of loving reconciliation towards mankind, in taking on a human form, God humbled himself in Christ that we might live in the light of his love. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the whole created world and its people; that no evil may oppose your will but that your Kingdom may be established and you will fulfilled. We pray for all who suffer mentally, physically and spiritually, thinking especially of those on our prayer list and those known to us personally, those who have lost loved ones, those who see no further than immediate, material comforts and do not realise their spiritual poverty, bring them your peace that passes all understanding. We pray for our community of

faith that we may strive each day to follow Christ who saves us from our sin. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world which struggles to live justly and in peace, especially pray for those who have to search for daily food or walk long distances for clean water. We pray for the Church of Christ and its mission to the world; that it may alert all sinners to repentance and bring many to the joy of living in your love. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the church, that it will always celebrate the sacraments of Christ with true faith and devotion. Look with mercy and favour on all who are called to serve you in the sacred ministry, remembering especially Bishop Murray, Reverend Clyde, Lesle, Sue, Sheralee and David. We thank you that you have made us as we are. We thank you for hands to work and feet to walk; for eyes to see and ears to hear, for minds to think and plan, for memories to remember and for hearts to love. We ask this in this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Jesus friend and intercessor, in Your mercy – **Hear our prayers. Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ who taught us to pray.**

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36 At the time of choosing an incumbent

Bountiful God,

give to this parish a faithful pastor

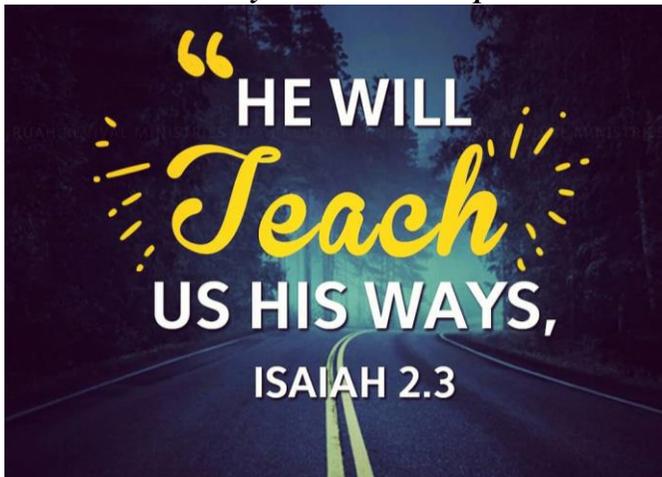
who will faithfully speak your word
and minister your sacraments;

an encourager who will equip your people for ministry
and enable us to fulfil our calling.

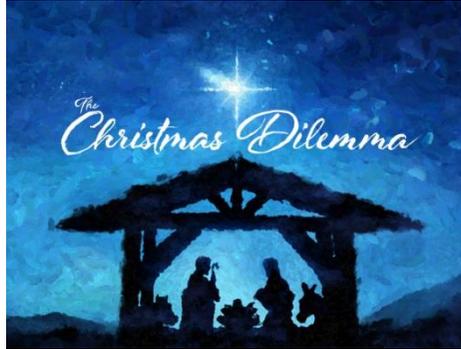
Give to those who will choose, wisdom,
discernment and patience,

and to us give warm and generous hearts,
for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. Isaiah 2.3a



Christmas Services



Theme: Out of Darkness into the light

Christmas Eve:

All Saints, Stuarts Point, 5pm, Holy Communion

Holy Trinity, Macksville, 11.30pm, Holy Communion

Christmas Day:

Holy Trinity, Macksville, 9.30am (non-eucharistic)