



Oatley Uniting Church

PO Box 73, Oatley

<https://oatley.uca.org.au/>

Mission Statement: Loving, Caring, Transforming
our community through Jesus Christ.



15 December and 22 December, 2024

Advent 3 and Advent 4

The church recalls its hope and expectation in the coming of Christ, past, present and future. These next two weeks we reflect on God's Joy and Love.

Recapturing the Glory of Christmas

The prophet Isaiah wrote, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. A light has dawned on those living in the land of darkness." Isaiah 9:2.

Christmas reminds us that light has come and the darkness has been overcome. Those words from Isaiah declared the coming Prince of Peace and the light and life he would bring. Indeed, the Saviour has come. Christmas marks the advent of God's only Son, who would come to dispel the darkness, put death to death, and secure everlasting life for the people of God. Christmas, then, marks not only the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem as a fulfilment of biblical prophecy, but the dawn of a new age.

Christmas is far more than a season of carols, presents and smiling children. It is the crux of all history. It is the breaking of the light into Darkness. It is the birth of the Lord and Saviour of the world. History is cut in two, and sinners are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Light has always been central to the Christmas season. Families string lights around trees and fathers bravely ascend ladders to string lights around the perimeter of the house, illuminating their homes with displays of brilliance and colour. The warm glow of lighted candles dispels darkness. Christmas bears a sense of radiance as a season of light. While the lights of modern Christmas season might serve as mere decoration, the prophet Isaiah understood light as a mark of divine revelation. The light of Christmas represents God's glorious revelation, when a young woman named Mary gave birth to the light of the world.

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LECTIONARY READINGS FOR 15 December

Advent 3

Zephaniah 3:14-20 : Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7 : Luke 3:7-18

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR 22 December

Advent 4

Micah 5:2-5a : Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 80:1-7

Hebrews 10:5-10 : Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)



Indeed, in John's Gospel, the apostle spoke of Jesus Christ as the true light from God which would enlighten every man. John declared "In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it" (John 14:25). The birth of Jesus Christ brought the unconquerable light of divine majesty. When the central when the eternal Son of God humbled himself by taking the form of a servant, He came with a salvific light that lifted the veil of the Kingdom of darkness.

This is what happened at Jesus's birth. The birth of Jesus Christ marked the culmination of all God's promises. God Incarnate has come "as the true light that gives light to everyone" (John 1:9). This marks the glory of Christmas. Christmas means worship and adoration. And with the Advent season we prepare, we are devoted, and we respond to this call to worship and adoration. And in each of these things, Jesus Christ is glorified as the light that has come. Darkness has been dispelled, joy has come, and redemption for mankind is here in this baby born in Bethlehem. Christmas beckons the world to come and adore the Saviour King, the King exalted by the angels, the King who took on flesh, the King who deserves *all* glory, *all* honour and *all* praise.

Oh come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Rev Alex Thomas

CONTINUE IN YOUR ADVENT BIBLE READING CHALLENGE

24 DAYS OF LUKE'S GOSPEL— Find a quiet place and make time to read a chapter of Luke's Gospel each day leading up to Christmas Day. You will have read not only the entire book of Luke, but also the life of Jesus.

OUR EVENING SERVICE 'CAROLS IN THE CARPARK' is to be held next Sunday 22 December @ 6pm for 6.30pm start. Bring your voices as we bring the story of Christmas in word and song.

OUR CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE—is held 25 December 2024 @ 8.30am

NO EVENING SERVICES on 29 December, 2024 and through January 2025.
Restart 2 February 2025



**SUNDAY
WORSHIP
SERVICES**

9.30AM

AND

6.00PM

The Kogarah Storehouse operates out of Kogarah Uniting Church. They provide food hampers and fresh vegetables each week to people struggling to put food on the table. Please continue to give things that are necessary pantry items—long-life milk and non-perishable food items i.e. canned items, rice, pasta, tea, coffee, cereals, biscuits and even personal items—soap, toothpaste, shampoo.



MEN'S BIBLE STUDY— For further information see David Holden.

A FEW GOOD MEN donated an amount of \$350 to The Kogarah Storehouse to assist with their food program and the increasing numbers of needy people each week. A Few Good Men will finish the year with a Christmas Lunch together on Tuesday 17 December and then recommence in February 2025. Thank you to all who have supported this group throughout the year. Geoff Pritchard M: 0428 250 546.

THIS IS THE LAST NEWSLETTER FOR 2024—I would like to wish everyone a blessed Christmas. Pip Watts

THANK YOU to everyone who has faithfully committed to their rostered tasks that make each week a blessing to all who attend our services.

THANK YOU to Linda and Geoff for their Pastoral Care visitations to our members in Nursing Home care and at home. In Christ, we are all able to look out for each and pastorally care. If you are prompted to seek out someone, reach out.

LOVE

I am enjoying reading Luke and in Luke 12 I read that Jesus' love protects us from evil. That truth will stand. That to love him is to fear him, to hold him in awe and to esteem him for we have a place in heaven. We are worth so much to him – more than the sparrows, more than the beauty of the flowers in the field, more than anything we have. His love holds our soul and our spirit.

Our life depends on the love of Jesus.
Reach out to him.

Pip Watts



P—pause : R—rejoice : A—ask : Y—yield

Centre a time to pray and rejoice ...

◆ ... Your God is faithful and holy and loves you with all his power and might. Rejoice in his Son, God's expression of love given to us as a baby and who is Emmanuel, God with us, and Messiah, God's anointed one.

Joy to the World, the Lord is Come!

... Ask

- ◆ ... for God's intervention in countries where there is political unrest, natural disasters and wars. Open a way for the work of doctors, nurses, aid agencies.
- ◆ ... for peace to come to the Middle East. Change the hearts of our Arab and Jewish brothers to the Gospel.
- ◆ ... that our Minister Alex and his wife Elizabeth continue to faithfully lead, teach and support our church at Oatley.
- ◆ ... that all our friends and loved ones in Nursing Homes—Grace & Ian McKay, Noelene Baker, Judy Walsh, Rhonda and Vic Stewart, Jean Watts and Norma Manwaring—know God's peace, love and protection. We thank you that you are also caring for Rex and Coral Roberts .
- ◆ ... that you give wisdom to the Church Council.
- ◆ ... that we love and serve each other as a community in Christ and seek the will of God and grow in ministry in this place.

... and continue to ask that

- ◆our farming communities be supported. Help them to remain resilient and encourage them to continue on the land.
- ◆ ... those doing it tough because they have no home, no regular meals, no job receive help, care and aid.
- ◆ ... aid is given to who support people in distress. Bless the work of The Way-side Chapel, The Bill Crews Foundation, the Kogarah Storehouse, Mission Australia and others.
- ◆ ... our Government and Governments across our world provide good leadership, wisdom, discernment, co-operation and collaboration. To stand for the truth and care for the disadvantaged.
- ◆ ... the Uniting Church in Australia does not compromise the Word of God.

Let us allow the Holy Spirit to show each of us how best to pray—and to pray for all these things in the mighty name of Jesus—**Amen**



For all pastoral matters contact Rev Alex Thomas

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Hall Bookings: Please contact Rosemary Cooper

– on 0402 428 560 – for all Hall Bookings.

Please also let her know if you would like to borrow any equipment.

Your prompt return of any borrowed items is appreciated.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEWSLETTER

Pip Watts—0403 758 487—Please leave a message.

OR Email: pippa0183@gmail.com

Email heading subject: **NEWSLETTER**