

REGULAR WEEKEND MASS LOCATIONS

St. Mary's Church, Woodend
1B Elizabeth Street, Woodend 4305.
Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Leichhardt
22 Old Toowoomba Road, Leichhardt 4305.
St. Joseph's Church, North Ipswich
42 Pine Mountain Road, North Ipswich 4305.
St. Brigid's Church Hall, Rosewood
Railway Street, Rosewood 4340.
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, E/Heights
33A Robertson Road, Eastern Heights 4305.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Parish Office Hours
Monday to Friday 9:00am - 1:00pm
1C Elizabeth Street, Woodend 4305 | 07 3362 8765
ipswich@bne.catholic.net.au | ipswichcatholic.au
Parish Priest: Fr. Stephen Bliss OFM
Assistant Priest: Fr. Minje Kim
Operations Manager: Benjamin Leschke

1st Sunday of Advent

Year B

3rd December 2023

Dear Parishioners,

Welcome to Advent and I hope and pray we all use these weeks of preparation well. We've all had this experience, we rush to get ready, and then we wait, at the doctor's office, for a train, at a restaurant, at the checkout. For what do we hurry up and wait for this Sunday? Some might say we are waiting for the birth of Jesus. But today's readings don't say this.

The first reading describes people waiting for relief from the guilt of their sinfulness. St Paul talks about waiting for "the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" at the end time (1 Corinthians 1:7). The people in the Gospel are waiting for the return of the householder to settle accounts. There's no waiting for Christmas—yet.

What should we wait for if not for Christmas? Isaiah tells us to hurry up and change our lives of pettiness, selfishness, and arrogance, and then to wait for the graciousness of God to "rend the heavens and come down" (Isaiah 63:19). Paul tells us to hurry up and embrace "the grace of God bestowed on [us] in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:4), and then to wait for the final revelation of his glory. The Gospel tells us to hurry up, be alert and ready for Christ's return, and then to wait for it to happen. If we don't prepare ourselves for the coming of God in the reality of our own lives, we might not recognise this salvation when it comes. We're not waiting for an event that happened in the past; we are waiting for the grace of God that is calling us into the future. So, hurry up and wait!

Our theme for Advent 2023 is 'God is near' – when we are aware of this reality, grace overflows! On this first Sunday of Advent, we attune ourselves to the nearness of God in our lives Enjoy this grace!



Stephen ofm

MEMORIAL GARDENS - \$1,598 RAISED SO FAR



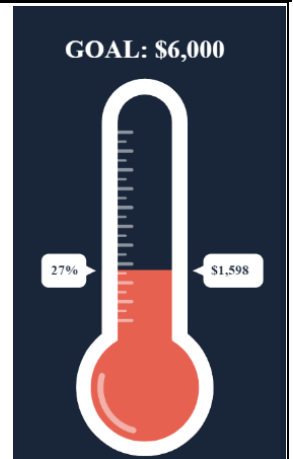
WE ARE APPROACHING 30% OF OUR GOAL, WILL YOU ASSIST US?

Two new gardens have been dedicated to 'Deceased Parishioners', and 'Sick Parishioners'. We have ordered the plaques. When they arrive, Fr. Stephen will bless them – date to be announced. Several other gardens planned; 'Stillborn Children', 'Miscarriages', 'Nursing Homes', 'Parish Pets'.

Each garden costs approx. \$1,750 to cover the cost of the timber frame, soil, plants, and flowers.

If you would like to donate toward this project, please place an envelope labelled 'gardens' on the collection plate or online using the link below. Thank you to those who have given generously already!

www.bit.ly/ipswichfundraise



PARISH CALENDAR

THIS WEEKEND		NEXT WEEK	
Fri 01	9:00am Liturgy with Communion, Miraculous Medal, Eastern Heights 10:30am Funeral Valmai McDonald, St. Mary's Church, Woodend	Mon 04	7:00am Mass, St. Joseph's Church, North Ipswich
Sat 02	4:30pm Mass, Immaculate Heart Church, Leichhardt 4:30pm Reconciliation at St. Mary's Church, Woodend 5:30pm Mass, St. Mary's Church, Woodend 6:00pm Mass, Miraculous Medal Church, Eastern Heights	Tues 05	9:00am Mass, Immaculate Heart Church, Leichhardt 3:30pm Nativity Rehearsal, St. Mary's Church, Woodend
Sun 03	7:30am Mass, St. Joseph's Church, North Ipswich 8:00am Mass, St. Brigid's Parish Hall, Rosewood 9:00am Mass (Children's Liturgy), St. Mary's Church, Woodend 10:30am Baptisms at St Mary's Church, Woodend 5:30pm Mass at St. Mary's Church, Woodend	Wed 06	8:30am Rosary, 9:00am Mass, 9:30am Adoration, St Mary's 9:00am Rosary, 9:30am Mass, St Brigid's, Rosewood 5:00pm Prayer Group at Parish Office, Woodend 6:00pm RCIA – Sacraments of Healing, Parish Office, Woodend
		Thur 07	9:00am Mass at St Mary's Church, Woodend
		Fri 08	9:00am Mass at Miraculous Medal Church, Eastern Heights 7:00pm Evening Prayer, St. Mary's Church, Woodend



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Help Guide - <https://bit.ly/3N6QtGp>

PARISH PRAYERS

Recently Deceased: Michael Stack, Valmai McDonald, Delphine Duggan, Teila Rose Ardill, Kenneth James Diets.
Anniversaries: Andrew Underwood, Fr John Dobson, Faye Ryan, Tina Tiberi, Joan Lindh, John Maguire, Remedios & Cresenciano Parica, and those in our Book of Life.

OPERATIONS UPDATE

CHRISTMAS PLANNING - The Parish Office will be closed, and our phones will be off from 10am, following Mass on Thursday 14th December, until the rest of the day. Our priests and staff will be taking time for planning and formation in the leadup to a busy Christmas. Please plan accordingly.

CHRISTMAS BREAK - The Parish Office will close Friday 22nd December at 12pm and re-open on Monday 15th January at 9am. Like previous years, Mass boxes will contain all materials for churches for each weekend until Sunday 14th January.

WE'RE GOING ON
A CHRISTMAS
BREAK!



This Year's Giving Tree – Choose between:

1. Parish Youth & Family Ministry
2. St. Vincent de Paul
3. Ipswich Hospice

Envelopes will be available in churches from next weekend.



We also have a QR Code for those who want to give electronically.

When the link is clicked, it will open to a donation form. Please write who you are donating to in the "Reason for your Donation" field.

Each year we raise around \$6,000 and the money is always put to good use. Thank you for your gifts this Christmas!

SACRAMENTS | FORMATION | LITURGY

2nd RITE OF RECONCILIATION

During Advent our Parish will celebrate the 2nd Rite of Reconciliation **at 7pm on Monday 18th December in St. Mary's Church.** This is a great opportunity to come together as a parish community and experience the mercy of Jesus as we wait in anticipation.

"The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel."
 (EVANGELII GAUDIUM, 114)



MASS READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY

Second Sunday of Advent – Yr B

1st Reading	Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11
Psalm	85:9-14
2nd Reading	2 Peter 3:8-14
Gospel	Mark 1:1-8

ADVENT – GOD IS NEAR



The first candle reminds us of the promise given through the Prophets that a Messiah would come. Just as the Prophets and people waited for the fulfillment of the promise, we also wait the celebration of Christ's birth, and His Glorious Return.

ADVENT CHURCH ENVIRONMENT

1st Sunday	Placement of Advent Wreath & Candles
2nd Sunday	Placement of Crib & Giving Tree
3rd Sunday	Christmas Tree Assembled
4th Sunday	Blessing of Crib & Christmas Tree

FRIDAY 8th DECEMBER - EVENING PRAYER WITH FR. STEPHEN & FR. MINJE

Evening Prayer (also called Vespers) is part of the Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office. Through this action, the Church fulfills Jesus' command to "pray always". Through this prayer, the people of God sanctify the day by continual praise of God and prayers of intercession for the needs of the world. Priests, religious, and many lay women and men pray the Liturgy of the Hours each day



As we begin Advent, parishioners and visitors are invited to come join with Fr. Stephen and Fr. Minje, as they lead our community in 'evening prayer'.

When: 7pm, Friday 8th December

Where: St. Mary's Church

On this day we celebrate the **Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.**

Happy Parish Birthday



CONNECT YOUTH

Friday Night Youth Returns Next Year Friday 2nd February

Primary School Youth | High School Youth

Young Adults - YA Festival is back! Gather yourself amongst many amazing young adults from our archdiocese. We as young people are dedicated to gathering, raising up and sending out a new generation of Catholics who are on fire for Jesus and filled with the Holy Spirit. Come along for some awesome preaching and worship, faith formation, social activities and so much more! This is an 18+ Event, organised by the Ignite Youth. 15th – 18th December; camping, worship, and peace!

Tickets are \$85 each (optional extra of \$65 for meals) – Bookings: <https://app.tickets.org.au/iy/yafestival23>

Advent Begins - As we enter our new Liturgical Year and begin the Season of Advent, we rejoice in hope, peace, joy, and love. As Catholics, we celebrate the lead up to the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ and wait in anticipation for our Lord to come. Throughout our faith, Advent is celebrated through deep prayer, reconciliation, attendance at mass and more. During the 2023 Advent Season, members of our youth will share reflections on the weekly themes of advent and identify how these themes are present in the lives of young people today. **Stewart England**

Youth Advent Reflection – Hope



Hope is like a light in the dark, helping us stay positive when things are tough. It's a belief that things can get better, motivating us to face challenges with optimism. Having hope means looking forward to a brighter future and not giving up when times are hard. It's a powerful force that helps us set goals, overcome problems, and believe in our own abilities.

By holding onto hope, we find joy in small victories and keep a positive attitude. This positive outlook not only helps us grow but also spreads good vibes to those around us, making everyone feel more optimistic and stronger, even when life is uncertain. I know I call upon hope to help me through day-to-day tasks and to overall succeed. Through Advent we are provided with Hope in knowing that God is near, that the birth of Jesus is about to come.

Ryder Stephenson

Christmas Nativity Rehearsals – Prep to Grade 6 students invited to participate!

This year the children of our parish community will be telling the Nativity Story at two Christmas Eve Masses; 4:30pm St. Joseph's and 6:00pm St. Mary's.

The rehearsal for St. Joseph's is at 8:30am, Sunday 17th December. Rehearsals for St. Mary's continue every Tuesday through to 19th December from 3:30pm in St Mary's Church. If you missed our first practice last Tuesday, you are still more than welcome to join us.



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

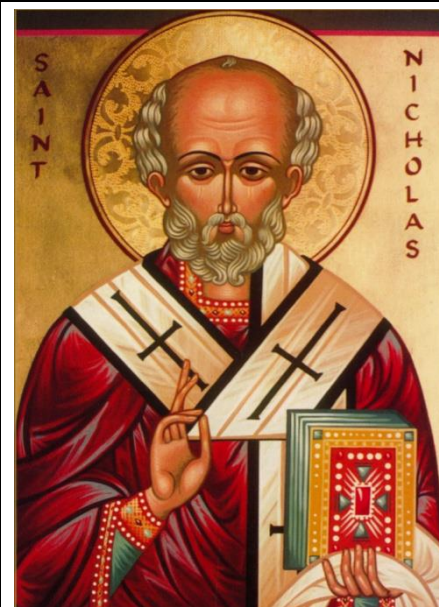
The Lord comes every day to visit his people, to visit every man and woman who receives him in the Word, in the Sacraments, in their brothers and sisters....He is at the door to our heart. He knocks. Do you know how to listen to the Lord who knocks, who has come today to visit you...? ANGELUS, ROME, NOVEMBER 29, 2020

FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS – DECEMBER 6TH

December 6th is the feast day of Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of children, which appropriately falls during the Advent season. This feast day is an especially exciting one for children as they count down the days on their Advent calendars in anticipation of Christmas day.

St. Nicholas of Myra is a major saint in many European and Eastern countries, and one of the old Christian traditions surrounding his feast day is for kids to leave their shoes out overnight in front of the fireplace, on the windowsill, or outside their bedroom door so that St. Nicholas can fill them with special fruits, candies, and other small gifts and treats. (sound familiar?)

This tradition grew from the story of when St. Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra, threw bags of dowry money, either through a window or down a chimney, into the home of an impoverished family to rescue their daughters from being sold into slavery. This was just one of his many acts of good will and charity towards the poor, especially poor children.



NEWS & UPDATES

Communion from the Chalice - This weekend we reinstate 'communion from the cup' at all our Masses.

Midnight Mass - Choir rehearsal on Tuesday 12th and 19th Dec at 6pm – 7.30pm in St. Mary's Church. All singers welcome.

Christmas Decorations – Can you assist in helping decorate our churches for Christmas? Each year a lot of work goes into making our churches beautiful for Christmas. We have several volunteers already; however, we need more people to help lighten the load! Please chat to your weekend Mass coordinators if you can assist in any way!

2024 Franciscan Calendars - The recommended sale price is \$6.00 each or you can buy 2 for \$10. All funds raised through the sale of these calendars supports the work of the Franciscans.

Your Catholic news free until this Christmas when you subscribe for 2024



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www.catholicleader.com.au/subscribe

Advent Reflections \$6 each - This year's Advent resource invites us to explore more deeply what it means to allow God to come to birth in us. Pick up your copy from the Welcome Desk!

Weekend Retreat - Reflect upon the God who constantly chooses to come to us in loving relationship. Hosted by Grace Harwood. Fri 15 Dec 2023 at 6pm – Sun 17 Dec at 3pm OR Fri 12 Jan at 6pm – Sun 14 Jan at 3pm. Santa Teresa Spirituality Centre, Ormiston. Cost: \$400. grace@dragonflyministries.net.au or 0409 524 283

Free Advent & Christmas Resources for Kids - Evangelisation Brisbane has created a fun and engaging Christmas Activity Book for 2023, which would make a wonderful gift for kids and parents! *Christmas Isn't Just One Day* is filled with stories, puzzles, crafts, colouring-in, recipes and prayers to help families celebrate the scripture stories and feasts of the whole Christmas season - because Christmas isn't just one day for Catholics! The Christmas Activity Book is available to purchase for just \$2.50 per copy at

<https://tinyurl.com/ebchristmasbooklet2023>

CHRIST TAKES FRAGILE FLESH

We have entered that darkening time of watchfulness, a season of ripening contradictions. Festooned with jingle-jangle, temples of commerce lure us with sweet indulgences so very good for the economy. All the while, in hallowed spaces, choirs croon over starlit, snow-globe nativities. So familiar are those alluring songs and fuzzy festive feelings, it is difficult to stay awake. For unto us and into the fabric of this deep-divided world, Christ takes fragile flesh; God-within, all around, among us everyone. Blinded by brutality, carved up by inequity, our fractured family huddles into separateness.

While some bow to the East and others incline to the West, we also hark from Global North or South. And many undertake that desperate exodus, crossing desert, sea, or mountain in search of peace: possibility and the promise of a new beginning. Under the rain of mercy all are re-consecrated, as separations are washed away. In that blessed-broken body of Christ there is no room for "they," no place for "them," and justice means "just us"—all and every one of us. May you find your way today to honor the Holy One already abiding-with-us.

—from the book *Wandering and Welcome: Meditations for Finding Peace* by Joseph Grant



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

23RD & 24TH DECEMBER WEEKEND MASSES

4th Sunday of Advent

Saturday Vigil Mass

4:30pm - Immaculate Heart Church, Leichhardt
4:30pm Reconciliation - St. Mary's Church, Woodend
5:30pm - St. Mary's Church, Woodend
6:00pm - Miraculous Medal Church, Eastern Heights

Sunday Mass

7:30am - St. Joseph's Church, North Ipswich
8:00am - St. Brigid's Parish Hall, Rosewood
9:00am - St. Mary's Church, Woodend

**THE ADVENT THEME FOR THIS YEAR
GOD IS NEAR**

CHRISTMAS MASSES & LITURGIES

SAVE THE DATE

Advent Liturgies (all of Parish)

Friday 8th December 7pm – Parish Evening Prayer
Monday 18th December 7pm – Second Rite of Reconciliation

Christmas Vigil (Eve) – Sunday 24th December

4:30pm – Immaculate Heart, Leichhardt
4:30pm – St. Joseph's, North Ipswich
6:00pm – St. Mary's, Woodend
6:00pm – St. Brigid's, Rosewood
Midnight Mass – St. Mary's, Woodend

Christmas Day – Monday 25th December

7:30am – Miraculous Medal, Eastern Heights
9:00am – St. Mary's, Woodend
No evening Mass Christmas Day

