

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

3rd Sunday of Advent

Year B

17th December 2023

Dear Parishioners,

Are you aware of God being near to you? So far, the readings for Sundays in Advent have shown God leading the people into a new way of life - a way of righteousness and loyalty, of honesty and responsibility. Today the readings show the people beginning to see that the accomplishment of this transformation would come through the leadership of one individual. Who might that person be?

The passage from Isaiah describes a prophet, one anointed by God and bringing good news to the poor. When the Baptist appears on the scene in John's Gospel, people wonder if it might be him. He insists he is not the one, nor is he a prophet. Then, as we read in John 1:19, "Who are you?" Recalling the passage from Isaiah read on the First Sunday of Advent, John tells them he is the one repairing the road, getting it ready for the long-awaited one to arrive. He adds that his baptism is a baptism of repentance. He is readying them to be what Paul describes as "perfectly holy...blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

We now see that these readings are preparing us for salvation. We are now told that such divine graciousness will be inaugurated by an individual, one who has not yet been identified. Will it be a powerful king? A mighty warrior? A spectacular prophet? Those in the time before Christ didn't know. We now know that it will be someone powerful enough to initiate a revolutionary change in the lives of the entire people. Now waiting gets exciting!

The Lord Jesus is near! Maybe his 'nearness' to us will keep us cool and calm this week!



Stephen ofm

CHRISTMAS GIFT – INVITE SOMEONE TO MASS

HAVE YOU INVITED SOMEONE TO MASS THIS CHRISTMAS?

Every Christmas, a lot of family members, friends, and visitors come to one (or several) of our Masses. Our community welcomes everyone, no matter who they are, where they are from, or where they are with respect to faith.

ALL ARE WELCOME HERE

Please consider giving someone a simple but meaningful gift this Christmas – Invite someone to Mass!



PARISH CALENDAR

THIS WEEKEND		NEXT WEEK	
Fri 15	9:00am Mass, Miraculous Medal, Eastern Heights 12:30pm Wedding St Mary's Church, Woodend 4:30pm Mass, Immaculate Heart Church, Leichhardt	Mon 18	7:00am Mass, St. Joseph's Church, North Ipswich 7:00PM 2nd RITE OF RECONCILIATION, St Mary's Church
Sat 16	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 19	9:00am Mass, Immaculate Heart Church, Leichhardt 3:30pm Nativity Rehearsal, St. Mary's Church, Woodend
Sun 17	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 11.30am Baptisms at St Mary's Church, Woodend 5:30pm Mass at St. Mary's Church, Woodend	Wed 20	8:30am Rosary, 9:00am Mass, 9:30am Adoration, St Mary's NO MASS, St Brigid's, Rosewood 5:00pm Prayer Group at Parish Office, Woodend 6:00pm RCIA Session 10, Parish Office, Woodend
		Thur 21	9:00am Mass at St Mary's Church, Woodend
		Fri 22	9:00am Mass at Miraculous Medal Church, Eastern Heights



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PARISH PRAYERS



Recently Deceased: Sheelagh Castley, Margaret Morgan.

Anniversaries: Margaret Ryan, Karl Donnelly, Elizabeth & Peter Grainger, Brian Casey, James & Michael Mulkerin and family members, Shirley Brown, Gerty Mason, John & Jane Keenan, John & Alma Ryan and family members, Peter Hogan, Petra Caramba, and those in our Book of Life.

OPERATIONS UPDATE

PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES - Our 2024 Planned Giving envelopes have arrived and are ready for collection from this weekend. If you are an envelope giver, please remember to collect your envelopes. The new set commence the first Sunday of January through December 2024. If you expect to see your envelopes and they are not there, please contact the Parish Office so we can assist!



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.



This Year's Giving Tree – Choose between:

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

Envelopes are available in churches from this 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!



MEMORIAL GARDENS - \$4,143 RAISED SO FAR

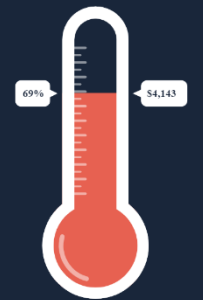


WE HAVE HIT 69% OF OUR GOAL

Thank you to all those that contributed this week!



GOAL: \$6,000



Two more planters arrived this week and Dan will be planting them next week in time for Christmas!

When plaques arrive, Fr. Stephen will bless them.
-Date to be announced-

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.

www.bit.ly/ipswichfundraise

SACRAMENTS | FORMATION | LITURGY

"I see clearly that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and warm the hearts of the faithful - it needs God's nearness" - Pope Francis

In this Advent season, we celebrate GOD IS NEAR to us in becoming incarnate. Recently, Pope Francis reminded us that 'nearness' to the most vulnerable is 'God's style'.

The core of our Parish Life is to be near to those in need.



MASS READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY

Fourth Sunday of Advent – Yr B

1st Reading	2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14-16
Psalm	Ps 88:2-5. 27. 29. R. see v.2
2nd Reading	Romans 16:25-27
Gospel	Luke 1:26-38

ADVENT – GOD IS NEAR



The third candle reminds us that the Shepherds were the first to receive the glorious news of the birth of Christ. Just as they received this news, when they had witnessed it for themselves, they too became messengers for Christ.

ADVENT CHURCH ENVIRONMENT

3 rd Sunday	Christmas Tree
4 th Sunday	Blessing of Crib & Tree



“We have passed the halfway mark of Advent!”

CONNECT YOUTH

Friday Night Youth Returns Next Year Friday 16th February (Term 1, Week 4)

Primary School Youth | High School Youth

Reflection (Joy) – Joy is a profound emotion intertwined with faith, arising from a deep connection with God. It surpasses fleeting happiness, rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Joy is not solely dependent on external circumstances but springs from an internal well of spiritual fulfillment. Guided by the Holy Spirit, joy is a beacon of hope and gratitude, providing enduring strength amid life's challenges. It's a dynamic force, an ever-present companion in our journey of faith.

Joy instils purpose and a profound sense of God's love and salvation. I find joy present in my life through laughter, acts of kindness, love, meaningful connections, spending time with my family and friends, accomplishments, and shared celebrations. As a community we can show joy throughout our lives through prayer, acts of kindness, and embracing the season's spiritual significance with peace, hope, and love. **Brydie Stephenson**

Youth Leaders for 2024

Are you young, over 18 and passionate about having a positive impact in the life of young people? Then Youth Ministry Leadership might be for you! If you want to be a youth leader in the Ipswich Catholic Community and make Jesus more alive in our community during 2024, please email ipswich@bne.catholic.net.au and I will be in more contact with you!



Stewart England

Christmas Nativity Rehearsals – URGENT: MORE CHILDREN NEEDED

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. We are in need of people to be shepherds and wisemen/wise people. If you haven't been to a practice yet, you are still more than welcome to join us.



As our Nativity scenes are appearing in each of our Churches, I share some words of Pope Francis.

“Stopping to gaze at and perhaps pray before a Nativity scene is one of the best ways to remember the real meaning of Christmas, Pope Francis said.

“In its genuine poverty,” the Pope said, “the creche helps us to rediscover the true richness of Christmas and to purify ourselves of so many aspects that pollute the Christmas landscape.”

“Simple and familiar, the Nativity scene recalls a Christmas that is different from the consumerist and commercial Christmas. It is something else. It reminds us how good it is for us to cherish moments of silence and prayer in our days, often overwhelmed by frenzy,” He encouraged everyone to find some quiet time to spend before a creche at Christmas.

“Silence encourages contemplation of the child Jesus,” the Pope said, and “helps us to become intimate with God, with the fragile simplicity of a tiny newborn baby, with the meekness of his being laid down, with the tender affection of the swaddling clothes that envelop him.” “If we really want to celebrate Christmas,” he said, “let us rediscover through the crib the surprise and amazement of littleness, the littleness of God, who makes himself small, who is not born in the splendour of appearances, but in the poverty of a stable.”

Let's prepare ourselves to recognise that God is Near this Christmas!

Stephen ofm

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

Jesus has come to bring joy to all people for all time. It is not just a hopeful joy or a joy postponed until paradise: as if here on earth we are sad but in paradise we will be filled with joy. No! It is not that, but a joy already real and tangible now, because Jesus himself is our joy. ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 14, 2014

NEWS & UPDATES

Midnight Mass - Choir rehearsal on 19th Dec at 6pm – 7.30pm in St. Mary's Church. We need more singers! All singers are welcome.

Children's Liturgy – Our last Sunday for this year will be the 18th December. We will recommence on Sunday 21st January. To all the families who have attended this year thank you for supporting your children's faith journey. We wish you all a very merry Christmas and look forward to welcoming you in 2024. If you are interested in assisting with Children's Liturgy of the Word at our 9am Sunday Masses, please contact the Parish Office for more information.

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!

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



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2024 Franciscan Calendars - RRP \$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. We have another 100 on the way in case they have sold out at churches.

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!

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>

2ND RITE OF RECONCILIATION Monday, 18th December, 7pm, St Mary's Church.

You are all invited to come along to celebrate this special Sacrament while preparing for the coming of our Lord.



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

