

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

4th Sunday of Advent

Year B

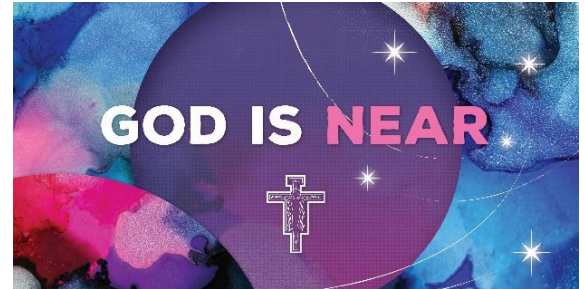
24th December 2023

Dear Parishioners,

The reading from Samuel assures us that the leader we are awaiting will be of the royal house of David. We presume this means personal power and political leadership, and recognition of this from others. The Gospel turns us in a different direction. In Luke 1:34, Mary asks, "How can this be?" This question can be understood in two different ways. One means: How is it going to happen? The other suggests: You've got to be kidding! When told she will bear a child, this virgin asks: How is this going to happen? Her visitor explains the unfolding of an unbelievable event. While stories in pagan religions described how gods took on human form, such wondrous events supposedly happened in royal families - not in the life of an unassuming girl promised to a modest carpenter. In the Incarnation, a singular historic event, Mary did not say: "You've got to be kidding!" She replied: "If that's what you want, I'm willing."

Advent readings have traced God leading the people to salvation and a new way of living, to an outline of an individual chosen by God to lead them, to the realization that this leader will be a descendant of David. However, none of this happens as we might expect. Rather, it unfolds in such an unpretentious way that many people did not even realise it was happening. Who could blame anyone for saying: You've got to be kidding! But God was not kidding. Now we are ready for Christmas. We are ready! Let the celebration begin!
The gift is God IS NEAR TO YOU!

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

Fri 22 9:00am Mass, Miraculous Medal, Eastern Heights
4:30pm Mass, Immaculate Heart Church, Leichhardt

Sat 23 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

Sun 24 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
4:30pm Mass, St Joseph's Church, North Ipswich
4:30pm Mass, Immaculate Heart Church, Leichhardt
6:00pm Mass, St Brigid's Church, Rosewood
6:00pm Mass, St. Mary's Church, Woodend
Midnight Mass, St Mary's Church, Woodend

NEXT WEEK

Mon 25 7:30am Mass, Miraculous Medal Church, Eastern Heights
9:00am Mass, St Mary's Church, Woodend

Tues 26 **NO Mass**, Immaculate Heart Church, Leichhardt

Wed 27 **No Rosary, No Mass, No Adoration**, St Mary's
No Mass, St Brigid's, Rosewood

Thur 28 **No Mass** at St Mary's Church, Woodend

Fri 29 9:00am Mass at Miraculous Medal Church, Eastern Heights



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

PARISH PRAYERS



Recently Deceased: Mary Ringelstein, Sheelagh Castley.

Anniversaries: Darren Roach, Leonardo Romeo & Venera Romeo, Margaret Ryan, Karl Donnelly, Elizabeth & Peter Grainger, and those in our Book of Life.

OPERATIONS UPDATE

PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES - If those who make use of planned giving envelopes haven't yet collected their envelopes, please check your regular church this weekend. The 2024 Planned Giving envelopes have arrived. If you can't find your envelopes, please contact the Parish Office so we can assist!



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

ST. BRIGID'S CHURCH - Over the last year (or so) pigeons have taken up residence in the church roof, gaining entry via the driveway side where the eave has fallen away. This past week we 'vacated' the pigeons and sealed the side of the roof up with some wire, preventing further access. Pigeons are difficult to get rid of, and we hope this will assist in keeping the area free of nest and pigeon waste.



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 - \$4,488 RAISED SO FAR

WE HAVE HIT 75% OF OUR GOAL

Thank you to all those that contributed this week!

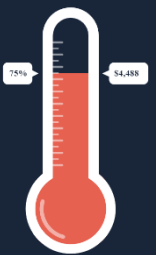
Two more planters arrived this week and Dan has planted them.

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

GOAL: \$6,000



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

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus - Yr B

1st Reading Sir 3:2-6, 12-14

Psalm Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

2nd Reading Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17

Gospel LK 2:22-40

ADVENT – GOD IS NEAR



During this final week of Advent lets rejoice in the endless love that God has for us, which is made apparent in the birth of his Son. We reflect on the good news of God's love brought to us from the angel Gabriel.

ADVENT CHURCH ENVIRONMENT

4th Sunday | Blessing of Crib & Tree



CONNECT YOUTH

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

Primary School Youth | High School Youth

Youth Advent Reflection - Love is like gentle wind breezing across our face, delicate yet resilient, unfolding with great beauty and possibilities. Love is a selfless commitment to emulate Christ's love. It is found in the tenderness of familial ties, the harmony of friendship and the chaste pursuit of romantic connection. Love manifests in acts of kindness, support, compassion, loyalty, selflessness and forgiveness. Love guides our moral choices, fostering compassion and motivating us to serve others. Through prayer and reflection our love deepens, intertwining personal devotion with a broader mission to spread God's love in the world. The foundation of love in our faith comes from the love of God and Jesus. As a result of Their unconditional love, we are gifted with freedom and rest, we are strengthened to live lives empowering others in all that we do. Through God's vision and our love, we can shine mercy to all whom we meet. This advent season, we are reminded that God is near and to spread our love for the birth of Jesus, so we can embody his innocence and love and share it with the world. **Stewart England**

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



Congratulations Stewart!



Two weeks ago, some of Connect Youth's youth leaders attended the Archdiocese's Youth Leaders End of Year Celebration. At the night Stewart England was awarded with the Archdiocese's 2023 Youth Leaders Award for Outstanding Leadership. This is awarded for the exceptional qualities and accomplishments of a Youth Coordinator in the Archdiocese who has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, inspires their peers, leads with faith and makes a powerful impact in their communities. Our parish community is very excited for all the things for our youth in 2024!

Today's *Gospel* recounts the promise to Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth, that their barrenness would finally end and she would bear a son. Zechariah is told that their son would be "great in the sight of God." The fact that Elizabeth had been barren for so long was seen—incorrectly of course—as a punishment from God. It was doubly troubling for them since Zechariah himself was a priest of the temple.....

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/sharing-the-word/sharing-the-word-for-december-19-2022/>



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

A Word from Pope Francis How often our life is made up of postponements....Today, on the threshold of Christmas, Mary invites us not to postpone, to say "yes"....Every "yes" costs something...but it still costs less than what that courageous "yes" cost her, that prompt "yes", that "let it be to me according to your word," which brought us salvation. ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 20, 2020

NEWS & UPDATES

Children's Liturgy – 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.

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.

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! It's not too late!

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>

Music News - Change of Mass Setting

The Ipswich Catholic Community collectively uses three different Mass Settings during our Liturgies, rotating through to coincide with the changing liturgical calendar. These mass parts include the Gloria, Holy Holy and the Lamb of God, as well as our Gospel Acclamation and Great Amen. Utilising a variety of music throughout the year highlights the cyclical nature of our liturgies and provides meaning and feeling that mere words cannot. We have been using the Mass of St. Francis in recent months, and for the Christmas season we will be changing to Mass of Glory and Praise. Parishioners may feel a little insecure at first, but once we have been reminded of the different melodies, let us sing our musical treasures with joy and thanksgiving!

Reflection - Nothing is impossible for God.

In the first Reading, King David had a good plan - to build a temple to honour God. But God had other plans and the prophet Nathan was sent to tell him that his heirs would do this.

In the Gospel, Joseph also had a good plan - to put aside privately Mary, who had become pregnant before their marriage, and so spare her pain and shame. But, again, God had another plan and the angel Gabriel was sent to tell this to Joseph. How would this seem to Joseph, an ordinary carpenter, that the Saviour would be acknowledged as his son? Both he and Mary, as children of Israel, would have known of the Promised Saviour, but when they were told that their son would be the One, how would they feel? God confirmed Mary's (and Joseph's) acceptance of His plan, but using an angel to tell Mary of Elizabeth's miraculous pregnancy, something which was impossible to anyone except God.

How have we received God's Promise of His coming this year? Are we having some doubts, given the state of the world, and do we need an angel to remind us that God is faithful to His Word? How are the people of Israel, Gaza and Ukraine thinking of the Promise this year and will they need an angel to confirm God is with them still?

Thanks and Merry and blessed (and, hopefully, cooler) Christmas

Judith Holznagel

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

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

