

**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](mailto:ipswich@bne.catholic.net.au) | [ipswichcatholic.au](http://ipswichcatholic.au)

**Parish Priest:** Fr. Stephen Bliss ofm  
**Assistant Priest:** Fr. Minje Kim  
**Operations Manager:** Benjamin Leschke

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent****Year C****1 December 2024****Dear Parishioners,**

For Luke, it all begins with the manger. The birth stories in Matthew and Luke differ in many details—historical, literary, and theological. Luke 2:7 brings us to this postnatal scene, highlighting how Mary takes care of her newborn, a detail largely missing from Matthew (where Jesus is already born when the Magi arrive). Here, we encounter the manger: Mary “wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room”: - a manger was certainly not an ideal place for a newborn baby (it’s not like a bassinet!). Yet Mary has no other choice. She lays her newborn there and cares for him.



This unexpectedness of the manger shapes a Christology meriting our attention this Advent season. The manger is where Jesus descends to the lowest place in the world, while at the same time, bonds with his mother on a night of joy and relief, exhaustion and uncertainty. The manger represents the convergence of two directions— “down to” and “with”— illustrating who Jesus is and what he does. He comes to us as God’s begotten (vertically) but does not rule over us. Instead, he connects and works with us for the kingdom of God (horizontally).

From the manger, Jesus is known to people, first to the shepherds according to 2:8. Also, for Luke, who, through Mary, magnifies God’s work of filling “the hungry with good things” (1:53a), this humble feeding box symbolises the purpose of his advent and upcoming ministry. From the manger, it is clear Jesus is the child of God who not only descends to be in our midst, but also cares for and nurtures us. The intersection of divine power, humility, love, and care is manifested in the manger.

On this First Sunday of Advent, the day we are reminded of hope, let us remember our hope is harboured in the warmth of the manger. And as Maya Angelou once said, “Hope and fear cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Invite one to stay.” May Advent 2024 be a real blessing for you and our Parish. From the manger may you be blessed with hope!

**Stephen ofm**

**Friday was Bernadette Lenihan’s last day in the office. On behalf of the Ipswich Catholic Community, I wish her the best on her well-deserved retirement.**

**Stephen ofm****PARISH CALENDAR****NEXT WEEK**

Mon 2	9:00am Mass, St. Mary’s Church, Woodend
<b>Tues 3</b>	9:00am Immaculate Heart Church, Leichhardt 3:30pm Nativity Practice, Parish Centre
<b>Wed 4</b>	8:30am Rosary, 9:00am Mass, 10:00am Adoration, St. Mary’s 8:30am Rosary, 9:00am Mass, St. Brigid’s, Rosewood 10:00am Prayer Group, St. Clare Room, Parish Office 6:00pm RCIA, Parish Office, Woodend
<b>PARISH OFFICE CLOSED</b>	
<b>Thurs 5</b>	9:00am Mass, St. Mary’s Church, Woodend 5:00pm Samoan Choir Practice, Parish Centre
<b>Fri 6</b>	9:00am Mass, Miraculous Medal Church, Eastern Heights 6:00pm Connect Youth Leader Dinner

**NEXT WEEKEND**

<b>Sat 7</b>	4:30pm Mass, Immaculate Heart Church, Leichhardt 4:30pm Reconciliation, St. Mary’s Church, Woodend 5:30pm Mass, St. Mary’s Church, Woodend 6:00pm Mass Miraculous Medal Church, Eastern Heights
	<b>Sun 8</b>
	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, Woodend 10:30am Baptisms, St Mary’s Church, Woodend 5:30pm Mass, St. Mary’s Church, Woodend 6:00pm Archdiocese Youth Leader Awards Night

**PARISH PLANNED GIVING**

Envelope Planned Givers – Please collect your 2025 envelope pack from the table in your church. If you are not currently part of our planned giving program, please participate. A few dollars a week by many, will make a big difference to the Parish, and help us offer liturgies and pastoral services to the community. Electronic giving is preferred as there are very few administration costs for the Parish. Links below or pick up a form from the welcome desk today. Thanks for supporting us!

**Credit Card Form - [bit.ly/ipswichcc](http://bit.ly/ipswichcc)****Direct Debit Form - [bit.ly/ipswichdirect](http://bit.ly/ipswichdirect)**

## PARISH PRAYERS

**Recently Deceased:** Riemke Kelly, Elizabeth Bryant, Sylvia Sweeris Sigrist, Peter Baker, Terence Bennett, Janet Davis, Sr Mary Broadley FMM, Conrad Fernandes.

**Anniversaries:** John Patrick Maguire, Carolyn Burt, Jack Coogan, Dorothy Stevenson, Aleeta Wozencroft, and those in our Book of Life.

## SACRAMENTS | FORMATION | LITURGY



### RITE OF WELCOMING AND ACCEPTANCE

Our community has welcomed our RCIA participants through their Rite of Acceptance. We pray for them as they continue their journey of faith.

### MASS READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY

#### 2nd Sunday of Advent – Yr C

<b>1st Reading</b>	Baruch 5:1-9
<b>Psalm</b>	Psalm 126
<b>2nd Reading</b>	Philippians 1:3-6, 8-11
<b>Gospel</b>	Luke 3:1-6

## PARISH NEWS

**ST. MARY'S CHURCH** - Masses resume in St. Mary's Church from this weekend. We celebrated weekday Masses in the new Parish Centre this week, and it was great to see the centre full of parishioners.

**MIDNIGHT MASS** - Choir Practice, Tues 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Dec, 5pm - 6.30pm in St. Mary's Church. All singers welcome.

**THANK YOU** - I would like to say thanks to all who cared for me when I tripped in the carpark. Many blessings to you all and your families. I am doing well. Let's all be careful, St. Mary's! **Vivian Mackwell**

**JUNIOR CHOIR** - The members of the Junior Choir held a little break-up party on Tuesday to celebrate a year of music ministry, filled with joy and pride in our achievements! It has been so wonderful to watch this group grow in numbers and confidence, and we are looking forward to 2025 after a good rest during the summer. We will resume Tuesday afternoon rehearsals on the 25th Feb 2025 and welcome children who love to sing to join us!

**PARISH HOSPITALITY – DATE CORRECTION** - Following the 5:30pm Saturday evening Mass on the 7<sup>th</sup> December, there will be a tea/coffee/hospitality in the Parish Centre. Please come along, especially if you haven't seen inside the new Parish Centre.

**ST. JOSEPH'S ORGAN APPEAL** - We are seeking a replacement organ and would greatly appreciate donations and fundraising ideas. Please contact Roly and Tarana Cruice at 3281 4783 or 0400 149 063.

**CHILDREN'S LITURGY** - Will be taking a little break during the month of January. Our last Sunday for 2024 will be 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec (4th Sunday of Advent). We will resume on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2025.

## ADVENT & CHRISTMAS



### THIS YEAR'S GIVING TREE

- Parish Ministry
- St. Vincent de Paul
- Ipswich Hospice

Envelopes will be available in churches from 30<sup>th</sup> November. We also have a QR Code for those who want to give electronically. Don't forget to list/mark your selection.



Each year we raise around \$6,000 and the money is always put to good use. Thank you in advance!

You may also want to use the Vinnies baskets at church a little differently this year: a toy for a child, some Christmas themed gifts (fruit cake, bon bons, etc). Use your imagination!



### ADVENT CHURCH ENVIRONMENT

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

### 2nd RITE OF RECONCILIATION - Mon 16th Dec 7pm

### CHRISTMAS MASSES & LITURGIES

#### Christmas Vigil (Eve) – Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December

4:30pm – Immaculate Heart, Leichhardt

4:30pm – St. Brigid's, Rosewood

6:00pm – St. Mary's, Woodend

6:00pm – St. Joseph's, North Ipswich

Midnight Mass – St. Mary's, Woodend

#### Christmas Day – Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December

7:30am – Miraculous Medal, Eastern Heights

9:00am – St. Mary's, Woodend

No evening Mass Christmas Day





Several years ago, I came into St. Mary's Church one Saturday morning after taking my children to McMahon's Swim Factory. I had to reset the computer, and the trip was to be a quick five-minute reset, while my wife and children waited patiently in the car. I had no reason to go to the priest's sacristy at the front of the church, however had an urge to head that way; perhaps it was a nudge....

As I entered the entry foyer (the internal doors were closed) I encountered the smell of burning plastic, and upon opening the priest sacristy door, was met with smoke, sparks, and flames coming from the switch panel. I ran down to isolate the circuit and came back to the sacristy and put the fire out. Thus began the project to replace the seriously out of date wiring in the church.

Over the last 2 years, the project hit small issues, however we pressed on. I applied for a grant from the Department of Environmental Science: Community Climate Action. Not only was this grant suited to fix our wiring problem, but also to fix the 'always failing' lighting problem.



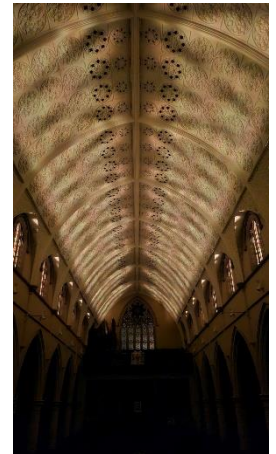
I am excited to announce that a large part of this work is now complete. We have external buttress lighting, and roof lighting. We also have internal lighting to the nave (up lighting to the beautiful ceiling we have), and subtle downlighting for our community. In our side aisles, we now have accent lighting on the stations of the cross, and we have better lighting for our sanctuary.

We also have more lighting which will be installed in the next few weeks; the front façade to the church, the choir loft & rose window, the steps and ramp lighting at the front of the church. Reinstallation of the light above Fr. Horan's grave (this will be a working light!), and finally a few small additions in the entry foyer, the rear sacristies and the church towers.

Work is still underway in the rear sacristy, to clean up the audio & video equipment, and the power board. Part of this work will see the following improvements:

- Exterior buttress lighting (and external sacristy entry doors) is now automated. External lighting will come on at dusk and stay on until around 10:30pm each night.
- Roof clerestory lighting is also automated and will come on at dusk and turn off at 10:30pm each night.
- 3 porch lights (front of church, and both side doors) are being reinstalled in the next couple of weeks and will come on at dusk and stay on all night. These lights are for security, and to ensure there is some basic lighting around the church.

Once we have the front gardens, steps, and ramps lit, these too will be on timers, ensuring the façade of the church is both functional and to help showcase the church to the wider Ipswich community.



**There are two grant requirements which we are proud to promote:**

1. **Reduced energy consumption – although we will now have selected lights on well into the evening, and through the night, the lighting upgrade sees a 75% energy reduction.**
2. **Showcasing our beautiful church, and we certainly will be doing that!**

Although we haven't yet finished all the work, we are around the 80% completion mark. Please look up this weekend, take a walk around outside and take in the beautiful building our forebears built for us to worship and gather. St. Mary's, like many of our churches continues to be a city built on a hill, which cannot be hidden. Let the light shine!

### PASSING THE TORCH

Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 9:1). I have been blessed to be part of the St. Mary's Parish then the Ipswich Catholic Community for the past 18 years, particularly the past two years as Youth Coordinator.



Reflecting on these past two years, there has been a lot of growth and accomplishment in Ipswich's Youth Ministry. Although now I feel it is time to pass on the torch and allow the next generation of young people to come and create more change in our community.

Recently I've had to challenge myself to reflect on all my commitments and follow the path I feel called to, and from that I will no longer serve in the Parish Office nor in Youth Ministry. I will continue to be active in parish life, but I officially finish in the parish office just before Christmas. I am so grateful for the support I have received from all parishioners over these past two years.

Youth Ministry has its highs and lows, but I am so thankful to God that when He made His plan, that having me serve in Youth Ministry was part of it. I pray that youth will continue to thrive in Ipswich, and I ask for the same love and support to be given to the next Ipswich Youth Ministry Team. **Stewart England, Youth Coordinator**

### CONNECT YOUTH 2024 REFLECTION

This year theme for Connect Youth was 'Together we will Soar in 2024!' a call for us to unite our efforts, passions and faith to serve our community and to serve Jesus. This year we explored this theme through the aspects of community, relationships, reputation and inspiration. Our youth were constantly reminded that through being together as one, with God, that we will be provided with the strength and love to overcome any challenge.

We had a great year for Connect Youth! A few highlights have to be the Reco Rally hosted by the Archdiocese back in Term 1, Ignite Launch at Dreamworld in Term 2, and recently Ignite Conference at the end of term 3. We saw at least 18 young people from Ipswich at each of these events which is so incredible! It is really inspiring to see young people taking on opportunities to deepen their faith and build closer relationships with Jesus.

Thank you to Fr Stephen and Fr Minje for their devoted leadership, support and involvement to our young people and this ministry. Thank you to all the youth leaders who have served in our youth ministry throughout 2024. A massive thank you to Chloe, Erin, Miguel, Siluna and Sineli, who will be finishing up as youth leaders this year.

I am so grateful for their dedication, support and leadership to our youth and our parish community. I ask that you continue to pray for these leaders as they journey into their next chapter. I hope that throughout 2025 the young people continue to experience more joy, more enthusiasm and more opportunities for faith.

### PRIMARY SCHOOL YOUTH

Wow, what a year it has been. Playing games laughing and sharing the gospel message. We hope all the children had a great time and learned some more about God along the way. A special thank you to all the leaders who have helped out over the last year, without whom the nights would not be possible. Especially Karen and Mark McKew, who came along every Friday to cook the dinner and help out.

A special thanks to the parents for taking the time to bring their kids along each Friday and picking them up. Words cannot express how much joy it brings us to see the kids having a great time, laughing and making new friends.

**Isaac McKew, Primary Youth Leader**

### ST. MARY'S NATIVITY

This year the children of our parish community will be telling the Nativity Story at the St Mary's Church Christmas Eve Vigil Mass. Practices will be on every Tuesday afternoon from the 3rd Dec to 17th of Dec commencing at 3:30pm and will last an hour. All primary school aged children are welcome to and encouraged to be part of this beautiful story. We are also seeking a few volunteers, if you are wishing to assist in the preparation and practice for the Nativity Story, please email [englands@bne.catholic.net.au](mailto:englands@bne.catholic.net.au) to express your willingness.

## MUSICIAN'S GATHERING



Last Friday saw a gathering of musicians to celebrate St. Cecilia's Day, patron saint of church music. We shared afternoon tea in the spirit of gratitude for the gifts we have been given. Father Stephen and Father Minje expressed their thanks for the wonderful ministry that is carried out each week in our parish. We are indeed blessed to have such dedicated and generous people to grace our liturgies. We also shared a beautiful hymn called "From The Manger" - a beautiful reflection on the coming season of Advent. This will be used in some parishes during the next few weeks, so you might like to get a 'sneak preview' by clicking <https://bit.ly/4fNEcSO>. Thank you to all our hard-working musicians who strive to enhance the mass each week! You are all champions!