

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 8:30am - 3:30pm
1C Elizabeth Street, Woodend 4305 | 07 3281 2133
ipswich@bne.catholic.net.au | ipswichcatholic.com
Parish Priest: Fr. Stephen Bliss OFM
Assistant Priests: Fr. Johny Edapulavan CMI
Fr. Jose Panampuzha CMI
Seminarian: Michael Tran

1st Sunday of Advent

Year A

27th November 2022

Dear Parishioners,

Welcome to Advent 2022 - Be prepared! But for what? Since we're entering the season of Advent, we might think that we're called to prepare for the birth of Jesus. Advent is certainly the time to prepare for Christmas, but it's much more than that, for God comes into our lives in many different ways, even today. We see evidence of this when, working together, we rebuild not only cities, as Isaiah describes in the first reading, but relationships in families, parishes, and countries.

Remarkable changes take place in our lives when, as Paul bids us, we "throw off the works of darkness" (Romans 13:12). God comes to us every day with the power we need to improve ourselves and our world. God often comes quietly in ways so ordinary we might miss them. That is the point of Jesus' insistence to "stay awake" and "be prepared" (Matthew 24:42, 44).

God certainly came long ago as a human being. That was a one-time only event. We believe that God will come again at the end. That, too, will happen only once. But God comes every day to help us be our better selves. This is what the Advent readings tell us.

What can we do? How are we to prepare for God's coming? Today's readings tell us. We must work for the peace that Isaiah describes; we must throw off the works of darkness as Paul instructs; and we must do as Jesus tells us: stay awake and be prepared. Let's pray we open ourselves to the 'Great Joy' of Christmas!



Stephen ofm

Advent Reflections – For the Season of Advent we will have reflection videos after communion to help lead us through this important season. If you do have difficulty reading the screens, I invite you to find a seat close to the TVs to assist. These reflections are professionally produced so we can't adjust the font size.

PARISH BIRTHDAY BBQ (We are 3 years old)

Friday 16th Dec 6pm-8pm - St. Mary's Church



As this coincides with the Christmas season, we will also celebrate the end of the year. Parishioners, school families, friends, and visitors are invited to come along for a sausage sizzle and for a bit of fun. What a great way to wind down and the sausages are on us! For catering purposes, please register via bit.ly/2022parishbirthday **ALL ARE WELCOME**



PARISH OFFICE

The Parish Office will be closed over lunch on Thursday 1st Dec (next week). From 11am – 2pm the office will be closed so priests and staff can take some time for some planning and formation in the leadup to Christmas.



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

Keeping watch does not mean to have one's eyes physically open but to have one's heart free and facing the right direction, ready to give and to serve...in a concrete sense, being attentive to our neighbours in difficulty, allowing oneself to be called upon by their needs, without waiting for them to ask us for help. ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 1, 2019.

PARISH CALENDAR

THIS WEEKEND

Fri 25	6:00pm Youth Christmas BBQ – St. Mary's Church Carpark 9:00am Mass/Bless Graves, St. Michael's Pine Mountain 4:30pm Mass at Immaculate Heart Church
Sat 26	4:30pm Reconciliation at St. Mary's Church 5:30pm Mass at St. Mary's Church 6:00pm Mass at Miraculous Medal Church
Sun 27	7.30am Mass at St. Joseph's, Church (breaky after) 8:00am Mass at St. Brigid's Church Hall 9.00am Mass at St. Mary's Church Incl Children's Liturgy of the Word (during Mass) 10.30am Baptism Preparation, Parish Office 5:30pm Mass at St. Mary's Church

NEXT WEEK

Mon 28	7:00am Mass at St. Joseph's Church 3:30pm Atrium, (Primary School age)
Tues 29	9:00am Immaculate Heart Church
Wed 30	8:30am Rosary, 9am Mass, 9:30am Adoration St Mary's 9:30am Mass, St. Brigid's Church Hall 9:00am Mass at St Mary's Church
Thur 01	11.00am – 2:00pm Parish Office Closed 6:30pm Finance Council Meeting, Parish Office
Fri 02	9:00am Mass at Miraculous Medal Church

This weekend we look at our Advent Candles and Advent Wreath, as we anticipate and grow with excitement, for who is to come.



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Parish Priest Update



It's Advent again, and we are blessed with these weeks to refresh ourselves spiritually to welcome the birth of the Lord into our lives. When I think of birth of the Lord, I am very conscious that many of you give 'birth to the Lord' in the many roles you have in your families. As we come to the year's end, I thank-you for the way you have done this, and know that over time, your children, and friends will come to appreciate this more and more. St. Francis often said to see the goodness around us, and see and experience God – so I invite you to reflect on your year and see. Name as much 'goodness' as you can, and you'll be surprised at the wonders of God in your work!

I was talking to a pregnant woman only the other day and she was sharing how she could feel her baby 'leaping' within her. She shared that no matter how frequently it happened, she was always thrilled when she felt the baby move with her womb. I love the idea of John the Baptist "leaping" in the womb at the sound of Mary's greeting. The simple truth here for me is John was stirred by the presence of Jesus, and that is part of the incredible story of Christmas we often forget.

What has made you 'leap for joy' this year? How do we respond to the Christmas story? Has it become so quaint and so routine that we simply accept it like some sweet religious fairy-tale, or are we just too tired to even bother reflecting?

In truth, the mystery of God becoming human needs to move us so that we leap within our hearts, knowing that in the various roles we have in our Communities and of course in our families, we too have the possibility of bringing this child to birth Or in other words, we can make him real for our communities!

2022 has given us many possibilities which we have responded too, and further possibilities will arise, which we hope to explore in 2023. Last weekend, Benjamin announced the new Parish project called "Engage 2023". This project will help the Parish to respond to this opportunity - so please start to pray and discern what this might mean for you and your family.

I am sure many wonderful things have happened in your families this year – let's celebrate them as you decorate your Christmas tree. May the decorations you quietly place on your family Christmas tree be acknowledgements of the goodness within your family-life and professional-life. I think when we live with the goodness/successes/joys of our lives, rather than hold on to the negative things that didn't go to plan, such as conflicts etc., we are not living as 'Incarnate people'.

This is what St. Francis did at Greccio... he reminded the people to see the face of Jesus in the life of their community. Francis wanted the people of the Greccio to see the blessings of their lives.

May the One whose birth we celebrate over these weeks, walk straight into our hearts and lead us to greater blessings as we live out 'the Joy of the Gospel'. May we become all that the Saviour has called us to be ... Happy Advent, and may you be 'refreshed' over the summer break!

Stephen ofm



Many of our buildings are old, and part of them are failing! We have a planned maintenance schedule, but due to the number of properties, it can get a little hectic at times. If you would like to contribute to the cost of any of these projects, please place an envelope on the collection plate marked 'Repairs'. Thank you to those who have already given!

Operations Manager Update

Our Parish has been awarded a grant for Pastoral Formation. We applied to Catholic Foundation so we could spend 2023 engaging with our parishioners and families through ministry and hospitality. We have won the grant and I am excited to announce, 'Engage 2023'! For those who missed the news last week, some points below.



What is Engage 2023 – Simply put, it is a program we are running next year to help form and develop our Parish Life Teams, and to also engage more with parishioners, families, schools, primary & high school youth, and young adults.

- This year, Fr. Stephen announced that our Parish Life Teams would help build up lay leaders and is the next iteration of our animation group / parish advisory council.
- Each year we engage with around 200 sacramental program families, so there will be a focus on creating formation opportunities that go well beyond celebrating the sacraments of initiation.
- Youth in 2022 has grown significantly, so in 2023, we will be focusing more on how our primary and high school youth can engage in parish life, beyond Friday night youth.

Much more detail to come! The program will officially launch the weekend of 28th & 29th January 2023.

Benjamin Leschke



“Do not forget that love sets no conditions, it does not calculate or complain, but simply loves.”

St. John Paul II



SOME IMPORTANT NEWS

MASS READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY



2nd Sunday of Advent

1st Reading	Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm	Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17
2nd Reading	Romans 15:4-9
Gospel	Matthew 3:1-12

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

Please pray for those in our parish who are unwell or in need. We also pray for the following ...



Recently Deceased: Clare Wilde, Bob McDowell, Maureen Sheedy (nee Gee), John Denman, and Chris Thomas.

Anniversaries: Dorothy Stevenson, Eileen Volkman, Orsenc Iano, Remedios Parica, and those in our Book of Life.

Talkabout 'Christmas Edition' - is being prepared in time for Christmas. To keep people informed of parish activities we need your contributions. The Talkabout team are seeking some assistance with articles for the following items: Our Remembrance Mass and November Cemetery Liturgies, the St Mary's College Gala Dinner, Mater Dei Memories, and the St. Brigid's Primary School Centenary. If you can assist, please reach out to Robyn at robyn@mansol.net.au. Articles are due no later than 2nd December to allow time for publication in time for Christmas! Thank You

Christmas Shopping at Vinnies - Please consider coming to your local Vinnies store (West Ipswich and Rosewood) for all your Christmas trees, decorations, cards, tableware, etc. The variety, the quality and the low, low prices will astound you.

COMMUNION TO THE SICK

We are in the process of contacting each of the Nursing Homes within our Parish to arrange regular visits. We hope to have this 'formalised' in the next couple of weeks. If you are sick or housebound, we can arrange to have communion brought to you – we can only do this if we know of your need and desire! Please let one of the priests know of this or phone the Parish Office. We are in the process of setting up 'formalised' Communion Rounds.

From the First Sunday of Advent, we will recommence 'commissioning' those who take Communion to the Sick. You are welcome to still place a pyx on the Altar (WITH A HOST IN IT), and you will be called forward by the Presider after the final Prayer. You might recall we used to do this prior to COVID.

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 call the Parish Office if you can assist in any way!



Parish Birthday BBQ – On Friday 16th December from 6pm to 8pm we will have a BBQ to celebrate 2022, and the 3rd birthday of our Parish. Please come along and bring your family, and a friend, to grab a sausage and catch-up with others.

The church will be open for prayer and adoration if you would like to pop in, and there will be plenty of activity outside in the carpark where we will gather for a sausage sizzle!

We may even have a cake! But you will need to come along and see for yourself. A special thank you to Tone Clark and the Samoan community who have been kind enough to host the BBQ, so come along and have some fun!



Hear the words of the prophet Isaiah: "In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it... neither shall they learn war anymore."

Our hope is in the God who will bring all nations together.

The Franciscan Calendar - It is said that there are 10,000 Saints on the Catholic calendar, give or take a few, and most of us know the main ones and a few others, but the Franciscan calendar has introduced me to quite a few I had never known.

This week we had St Leonard of Port Maurice and St James of the March, worth doing a Google search to check them out. In January, most of us would know Sts Timothy and Titus and St Anthony, Abbott, but what do we know of St Hyacinth of Mariscotti or St Berard and Companions?

Some of these lesser-known Saints had remarkable lives, and it is a good idea to do a Google search about them, even allowing that Wikipedia is not always accurate. Have fun with new friends.

Judith Holznagel



2023 Franciscan Calendars are now available from the welcome desk. The recommended sale price is \$6.00 each or you can buy 2 for \$10.

All funds raised through the sale of these calendars support the work of the Franciscans – so if you wish to make a donation when purchasing your calendar/s, be assured it will assist someone, somewhere in the world.

NOVEMBER MASSES 2022

November Mass Offering Envelopes are still available at the Welcome Desk now. The **BOOK OF LIFE** in each church will also be on display for those wishing to enter the names of your deceased loved ones. Our final November Liturgy is as follows:



CEMETERY LITURGIES

26th Nov Saturday – Mass & Blessing of Graves - 9:00am at St. Michael's Cemetery, Pine Mountain

UNDERSTANDING ADVENT



The first candle reminds us of the promise given through the Prophets that a Messiah would come, a promise given many years before that blessed event. 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.

“Jesus said, ‘I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness but will have the Light of life.’”

John 8:12

Liturgical Year A: The Gospel according to Matthew - The new Liturgical Year begins this Sunday with Advent; this year is Year A and the focus throughout the year is on Matthew's Gospel. There are many themes in Matthew's Gospel which can be distilled to the following;

- Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament
- God is the Father/King of both Grace and Judgement
- God's Kingdom is for everyone

As we listen to this Gospel proclaimed throughout our liturgies this year, let's reflect a little on some of the key understandings about Matthew's Gospel.



PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS

Christmas Nativity – The Christmas Nativity Play will commence at 5:00pm at St. Joseph's before the 5:30pm Christmas Vigil. The Nativity will be during the Gospel at the 5:30pm at St. Mary's Christmas Vigil Mass. Families are invited to attend, children are invited to dress up as an angel, shepherd, Mary, Joseph, or even an ox!

Advent - This year's theme - “Opening to Great Joy”

Each Christmas we celebrate the coming of the Infant Saviour, but are we moving in that direction? Are we opening to great joy? What is that joy and how do we celebrate with others? All very good questions!

We have 100 copies of 'Heart of the Disciple' produced by the Archdiocese. A 28-day reflection resource for Advent to help you as you discern these questions.



Pick up your copy today for \$5 (covers the materials and postage to parish) You may even want to form an Advent Group to meet and discuss this each week. In Advent we will be reflecting on how we can “open to Great Joy” in welcoming the Lord Jesus.

Christmas Masses & Liturgies

Advent Liturgies (all of Parish)

Thursday 8th December 7pm – Evening Prayer & Rosary
Monday 19th December 7pm – Second Rite of Reconciliation

Christmas Vigil (Eve) – Saturday 24th December (Carols begin 30 minutes before all Vigil Masses)

4:30pm – Immaculate Heart, Leichhardt
5:30pm – St. Joseph's, North Ipswich (with Nativity)
5:30pm – St. Mary's, Woodend (with Nativity)
6:30pm – St. Brigid's, Rosewood
8:00pm – Miraculous Medal, Eastern Heights
Midnight Mass – St. Mary's, Woodend

Christmas Day – Sunday 25th December

7:30am – St. Joseph's, North Ipswich
9:00am – St. Mary's, Woodend
No evening Mass Christmas Day



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

Banners - This year we are using banners again to remind each other that we are preparing as a community of believers. Take a few moments to look up and reflect on this important season.

2nd RITE OF RECONCILIATION



During Advent our Parish will celebrate the 2nd Rite of Reconciliation **at 7pm on Monday 19th 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.” (EG, 114)

This Year's Giving Tree – Parishioners have 4 selections for this year's Giving Tree:

1. Parish Formation (to help with Engage 2023)
2. St. Vincent de Paul
3. Hospice
4. Rosies

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 note where you would like the money to go to in the “Reason for your Donation” field. For example, Parish Formation.

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

Thank you for your gifts this Christmas!

