

# SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH

## SHEPPARTON RURAL CLUSTER



The building is open!

### NEWS DECEMBER 20 2020

#### MINISTERS

Rev Loni Vaitohi 5822 4602 0449 504 228

Rev Joan Fisher, Minister in Assoc

Rev Glenys Gill, Supply Minister

Pastoral Care Convenor Shirley Marven

Church 4805 1120

Website [sheppartonuc.org.au](http://sheppartonuc.org.au)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/shepparton.unitingchurch>

#### SUNDAY DECEMBER 13 Advent 4

*Praying Together* Shepparton Rural Cluster Dookie, Pine Lodge

*Readings* 2 Sam 7.1-11, 16 Lk 1.46b-55 Rom 16.25-27 Luke 26-38

**SHEPPARTON 9.30am** in the church or on Zoom - see next page

**Worship** Revd Glenys Gill **Duty Elder** Jeni Fitzgerald

**DOOKIE 9.00am** Revd Loni Vaitohi

#### READINGS - DECEMBER

Dec 25 Is 62.6-12 Ps 97 Titus 3.4-7 Luke 2. (1-7), 8-20

Dec 27 Is 61.10- 62.3 Ps 148 Gal 4.4-7 Luke 2.22-40

*We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters of the region, the Peoples of the Yorta Yorta Nations, and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.*

#### SHEPPARTON WORSHIP ONLINE

Joining in to Zoom via the phone

*Step 1:* Dial 03 7018 2005 or 02 8015 6011 *Step 2:* when prompted enter the meeting code for December 20, 998 8361 8226#

*Step 3:* Press # *Step 4:* enter the passcode for December 20, 516 513#

#### RURAL CLUSTER December 20

Worship at Dookie Church 9.00am

NB Loni suggests that Pine Lodge and Katandra West join worship at Dookie on Sunday 20.

Carols and Christmas service times to be decided on December 20.

#### ADVENT STUDIES *Hammer on Anvil* Week 4 *Journeying*

There is still time to join an Advent Studies group. Use the same link each week

Tuesday 22, 3.00pm at the church, in a group facilitated by Loni. or online

Wednesday 23. 7.00pm, online

#### CHRISTMAS SERVICES SHEPPARTON

Thursday 24 Christmas Eve Children's and Family Service 7.00pm

Friday 25 Christmas Day Traditional Service 9.30am

#### CHRISTMAS BOWL

**Fourth Sunday of Advent** **Finding strength in love after fleeing Syria**

Life was already tough for Syrian refugees living in Jordan. And now, the economic crisis unfolding as a result of the coronavirus has made the situation even worse. This Christmas your gifts will help refugees in Jordan to stay safe through the pandemic. Your kindness will translate into lifesaving food rations, hygiene kits and medical care. What a wonderful way to share God's love. **Please give today.**

**CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: [actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl](http://actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl)**

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

Christmas Bowl envelopes are available on the narthex table.

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2021 are available.

## PASTORAL PRAYERS

Your prayers are invited for all who are not well, and especially for those in hospital, including Thelma. We rejoice with those who have returned home and with all who have had good health reports. The WCC Ecumenical Prayer Cycle this week invites prayers for Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan. In the Presbytery, this week we pray for Shepparton Rural Cluster. The Uniting Church Assembly invites our prayers for the ever-growing number of sick and dying in the world COVID-19 pandemic, for all church members and leaders seeking to bear witness to the light of Christ in a darkened world, and for a world free from gender-based violence. And don't forget all travelling home or away for Christmas.



Coptic Icon, *Flight to Egypt*, World Council of Churches greeting

## CHRISTMAS LETTER FROM UNITING CHURCH PRESIDENT

**Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,**

*“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus,” (1 Corinthians 1: 3-4)*

This is a greeting that I have heard echoed by Uniting Church members and I have prayed myself, as we have longed to be together again in face-to-face worship and community gatherings. I join with other

members, expressing our gratitude for sisters and brothers in Christ who have been companions on the difficult journey through 2020. We also give thanks to God for the abundant grace of God that continues to shape our lives and who we are as the Church.

In this season of Advent, we reflect on the coming of Christ into our world with anticipation and hope. We also look to the end of 2020, which has been a year like no other – “unprecedented”, challenging, marked by grief and multiple losses. One that has called for our endurance, our creativity and adaptability, and has caused us to draw deeply from the love and comfort of God that sustains us.

In this time of great disruption and significant change, we have talked about our priorities and what really matters, writer and artist, Jan Richardson expresses this beautifully in her reflection on Christ the Light:

“It matters that we hold the light for one another. It matters that we bear witness to the Light who holds us all, that we testify to this light that shines its infinite love and mercy on US, across oceans, across borders, across time.” ***Advent 3, Testify to the Light, The Advent Door, 2014.***

I write this letter of thanks to you for all you have done in this year to continue our life of worship, witness and service to Christ, as the Uniting Church in Australia.

You have borne witness to the light of Christ, in your worship, your pastoral connection, your advocacy for justice, your creativity, your humour, your kindness, your persistent hope and love. You have ‘held the light for one another’ and I am deeply grateful to be part of this communion of Christ, this movement of the Holy Spirit, we call the Uniting Church.

As we give thanks to God for the coming of Christ, who brings liberation and God’s saving grace to our world, may you know God’s peace and love calling us into a new year and a future with hope.

At Christmas and in the New Year, may the light of Christ shine in your life, and be reflected in the communities in which you serve.

Grace and peace be with you,  
**Dr Deidre Palmer**, President Uniting Church Assembly