

SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH

SHEPPARTON RURAL CLUSTER



NEWS JANUARY 2, 2022

Christmas 2

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

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SUNDAY JANUARY 2 Rev Loni Vaitohi HC. 9.30am

Readings Jer 31.7-14 Ps 147.12-20 Ephes 1.3-14 John 1.10-18

Praying Together Mathoura, Thyra

SUNDAY JANUARY 9 Rev Glenys Gill 9.30am

READINGS JANUARY 2022

Jan 9 Is 43.1-7 Ps 29 Acts 8.4-17 Luke 3.15-17, 21-22

Jan 16 Is 62.1-5 Ps 36.5-10 1Cor 12.1-11 John 2.1-11

Jan 23 Neh 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10 Ps 19 1Cor 12.12-31a. Lk 4.4-21

Jan 30 Jer 1.4-10 Ps 71.1-6 1Cor 13.1-13 Luke 4.12-30

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

SHEPPARTON WORSHIP

There are two options for worship every Sunday:

Worship in the church at the given time

or Worship online, using Youtube.

Go to www.youtube.com/user/SheppartonUniting

When the appropriate service link comes with the video link: click the link and you will be taken to the service. This may take a short while.

SUNDAY MORNING CONVERSATION AFTER WORSHIP

has been discontinued.

CHANGES FOR WORSHIP, ALL SERVICES

COVID Marshalls will ensure that you are correctly checked in – QR code

Proof of double vaccination is no longer required for worship as of Thursday December 16. Masks are mandatory for worship in Victoria.

RURAL CONGREGATIONS SUNDAY JANUARY 2

Dookie. 9.00am. Rev Joan Fisher. HC

CHRISTMAS BOWL ENVELOPES are available on the narthex table; online gifts are also most welcome.

THURSDAY JANUARY 6 Epiphany

This important festival of the Christian Church may slip by because it is on a weekday, but it is observed by services in some other traditions. For the Eastern, or Orthodox, traditions, January 6 is the feast of the Incarnation – so you will still find some of our Greek (St George's Church), Macedonian and Jacobite friends (both worshipping at St Augustine's) celebrating Christmas next Thursday – though some living here have gravitated to December 25. The Epiphany celebrates the manifestation, the showing forth, the revelation of God to the world in Jesus Christ.

January 6 was the original date of the winter solstice (now December 21-22), so an existing celebration was 'Christianised'. Epiphany originally celebrated the birth of Jesus (Lk 2), the visit of the Magi (Mt 2) and the baptism of Jesus. This triple celebration continued until the fourth century. By 380, Christmas was being celebrated on December 25 in the Eastern Church as well as in the West, where the change of date occurred earlier. When the Western Church began to celebrate the Epiphany on January 6, the Baptism of Jesus was not included. So we have three celebrations – the Incarnation on December 25, Epiphany, January 6 and the Baptism of

Jesus the following Sunday – January 9 this year. So next Thursday, Twelfth Night, you may put away your

Christmas cards, because the season of Christmas has become Epiphany, which continues until Ash Wednesday (March 2). And you have a few days to mark the end of Christmas in the old way, as you sing about gifts and a partridge in a pear tree (*The Twelve Days of Christmas*)!

PASTORAL PRAYERS

We remember Emily, Tracy Ford, Eve, Bron, Lea, Lisa and her family, Emma Fethney, Jan Le Quesne, whose brother's funeral will be in Jersey, January 4. We join with local Catholics to pray for Mons Peter Jeffery after an accident. *The Presbytery prays* for Mathoura and Thyra.

The WCC invites prayers for the lands and peoples of the nations of the Middle East – including Palestine and Israel and the Middle East Council of Churches *We pray for*

*The Devonport community. We pray for the families and friends of the children who died, their classmates, emergency workers who responded and all those providing care for the community.

*The people of the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Rai which killed more than 300 people. We pray for those mourning lives lost,

* All suffering from the Omicron variant of COVID, all health workers now under even greater pressure to deal with patients and epidemiologists still working!

ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

The world has been mourning the death of Archbishop Tutu, December 26, in Cape Town. He was 'a great leader, a man who used his position within the church and his towering moral authority to help end South Africa's racial segregation. Archbishop Tutu led with clarity of purpose, never swaying from the pursuit of justice and equality for all. And, as South Africa sought to heal in the aftermath of apartheid, he urged forgiveness, truth-telling, compassion and reconciliation.

Using his influence as a regional bishop, archbishop of the nation's Anglican Church, the head of the South African Council of Churches for six years and an international professor of theological studies, he denounced segregation..." He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984,' *The Age*, December 27

Many of Archbishop Tutu's sayings are circulating. One of my favourites is 'Goodness is stronger than evil.' We give thanks to God for this faithful servant.

SOME REFLECTIONS FOR EPIPHANY

Here are a couple of questions from US Lutheran priest, Revd Dr Janet Hunt, in her post *Dancing with the Word*, December 29. *What was it that those magi saw in the night sky that compelled them to journey so far? What nudges us?

*How do you hear the story of these travellers to Bethlehem this year?

*Is the threatening presence of evil sounding more loudly this year?

*How does the Epiphany form and inform, shape and direct our faith in this rare season in the world we inhabit? Is it somehow different from ever before?

Used with permission

PRAYERS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Lord as this new year dawns,
welcome.
Welcome into our world
and into our lives.
Sow light in our hearts.
Let it germinate and grow
and bring forth fruit.
Birth in us something new.
Let your peace take root.
Nurture it,
encourage it to flourish.
Let your love blossom
with the fragrance
of patience and compassion.
Let it strengthen
forgiveness and understanding.
Let your life emerge
in us, through us, around us,
bringing newness to all it touches.

Christine Sine <http://godspace-msa.com>



A BLESSING

May God be a smooth path ahead of you,

And a bright star to guide you.

May his loving eyes be upon you
tonight, tomorrow and always.

May the God of love strengthen us
in our love for others.

May Christ Jesus be our living hope

And the Holy Spirit surprise us on the way.

Rev Helen Richmond, UCA