



ST JAMES' PARISH

St James Muswellbrook
St Thomas Aberdeen



We acknowledge the traditional owners who cared for this land for thousands of years and their descendants who have maintained these spiritual connections and traditions

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – YEAR A

18 December 2022

Fourth Candle

Priest: The fourth week of Advent we remember the gift of Love we have in Christ. The light of the candles is meant to remind us of the love that God has for us. Jesus shows us God's perfect love. He is God's love in human form. The Bible says that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Priest: Love is patient, love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful or conceited, rude or selfish.

Love is not quick to take offense, it keeps no records of wrongs, it does not gloat over other people's troubles, but rejoices in the right, the good, and the true. There is nothing that love cannot face, there is no limit to its faith, to its hope, to its endurance. Love never ends. As we light this candle, we remember that we are called to love like Christ loves us. As we light this candle, we are reminded that we are called to show that love in the way we treat others.

(Someone lights all the candles on the Advent Wreath.)

All: Let us pray - Loving God, we thank you for your gift of love - shown to us perfectly in Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming by loving others as Christ loves us. We ask this in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.



First Reading **Is 7:10-14**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The virgin will conceive.

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No', Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.'

Then Isaiah said:

'Listen now, House of David:
are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men
without trying the patience of my God, too?

The Lord himself, therefore,
will give you a sign.

It is this: the maiden is with child
and will soon give birth to a son
whom she will call Immanuel,
a name which means "God-is-with-us".'

Responsorial Psalm **Ps 23:1-6. R. see vv 7. 10**

(R.) Let the Lord enter;
he is king of glory.

1. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,
the world and all its peoples.
It is he who set it on the seas;
on the waters he made it firm. **(R.)**

2. Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?

The man with clean hands and pure heart,
who desires not worthless things. **(R.)**

3. He shall receive blessings from the Lord
and reward from the God who saves him.
Such are the men who seek him,
seek the face of the God of Jacob. **(R.)**

Second Reading **Rom 1:1-7**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans
Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, is the Son of God.

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures.

This news is about the Son of God, who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all,

then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

Gospel Acclamation Mt 1:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

A virgin will give birth to a son;

his name will be Emmanuel: God is with us.

Alleluia!

Gospel Mt 1:18-24

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew *Jesus was born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, a son of David.*

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,

a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

REFLECTION by Fr Victor

Two aspects of Joseph's character are revealed to us on this fourth Sunday of Advent. Firstly, Joseph was a man of deep faith. He trusted God and, discerning God's will, took the great leap of faith into the unknown, in a difficult and confusing situation. God moved him in strange ways, and he was responsive to this. Secondly, Joseph was selfless. He did not alienate Mary but, instead, accepted her and remained loyal. His selflessness enabled him to act without fear of ridicule and scorn. Doing God's will was all-important for Joseph.

We can learn some lessons from these two aspects of Joseph's character. For example, how do we respond to God who often communicates with us in strange ways? Are we able to make the leap of faith when we are unsure about the future? Can we acknowledge and embrace those people and life situations which least suit us? Advent is about cultivating our ability to focus beyond our own concerns and respond to the needs of other people so that Christ can come into our lives through them.

Joseph was a man of few words but decisive and significant actions. His behaviour made a difference. Unfortunately, some of us speak many words but these words are rendered meaningless by our contradictory behaviour. This can easily occur during the days of Christmas when we gather as families and friends. Therefore, let us learn from the example of Joseph. Let us discern and accept joyfully God's will in our lives. And

let us pray to Joseph, asking him to help us to do God's will always.

Stay Healthy, Stay Safe and Stay Blessed!



O Come, All Ye Faithful

"In spite of all the hype, I truly do love Christmas. I happily sing carols in the weeks leading up to that blessed event. Singing loudly and proudly of mangers and shepherds, kings and angels and 'snow that lays round about, deep and crisp and even'," writes Father Greg Barker.

Listen to our Diocesan Administrator's Christmas message in the linked video or read it in the latest edition of Aurora available in your Churches.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2xbhcn094Y>

COMMUNITY Christmas Carols
5.00PM • SATURDAY 17 DECEMBER 2022
IN THE GROUNDS OF ST ALBAN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, MUSWELLBROOK
Corner of Brook Street and Hunter Terrace
PLENTY OF STREET PARKING AVAILABLE
BYO CHAIRS/PICNIC RUGS, PICNIC FOOD & BEVERAGES
OR PURCHASE FOOD & DRINKS ON SITE:
BARISTA COFFEE CART WITH HOT & COLD DRINKS
MUSWELLBROOK ROTARY CLUB BBQ
Music and Singing provided by the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music
CAROL PROGRAMS AVAILABLE FOR A GOLD COIN DONATION
Everyone is Welcome!

Anglican Church Muswellbrook | Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music | ENQUIRIES 02 6541 2718 atalbansoffice@bigpond.com

Prayer for the Appointment of our new Bishop

Shepherding God you reveal your way of unflinching love in the image of the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost, shows compassion, knows and is known by the sheep and lays down his life for them.

We your people of Maitland-Newcastle are without a bishop to shepherd us. We ask that your Holy Spirit who moves through this great south land, inspire the choice of our new Bishop, empower his 'yes' and open our hearts in hospitality and love. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help pray for us.
Mary MacKillop of the Cross pray for us.

ADVENT BOOKLETS AND COLUMBAN CALENDARS

We have a small supply of Advent reflection booklets and Columban calendars left over if anyone would like to purchase. Please contact the Parish office.

PAYMENT FOR ADVENT BOOKLETS AND CALENDARS

Please return your payment in the envelope that was provided with your order as soon as possible. If you have misplaced your envelope and would like to know the amount owing, please contact the Parish office. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS

Christmas offering envelopes are available in the Church foyers. This contribution supplements the First collection which supports the Priests in our Diocese. Thank you in anticipation of your support.

ST JAMES PARISH SPIRITUAL RETREAT

Please join our community for a day of spiritual renewal led by Fr Roni George and the team from The Divine Retreat Centre, Somersby.

Date: Saturday 17th December

Time: 9.30am – 3.00pm

Venue: St James Church, 65 Brook Street, Muswellbrook
Morning Tea will be provided. Please bring a plate to share for Lunch

There is no charge for the retreat but a donation on the day to help with the cost of transport for Fr Roni and his team would be greatly appreciated.

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CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES AROUND THE DIOCESE

Are you thinking about attending mass this Christmas? If you're not sure where to go, we've put together a list of services happening across the Diocese! You'll find it here: www.mn.catholic.org.au/places/parishes/

2023 LENTEN REFLECTION: FINDING LIGHT WITHIN THE DARKNESS

Pastoral Ministries has prepared a Lenten resource for our diocese, Finding Light within the Darkness. Every Lent there is a fresh invitation to retreat from the noise and busyness of daily life. To listen with our heart, to contemplate our humanness so we can actively focus on humanity. We are invited to turn to God dwelling within us and consider how we can find light in the darkness and how we can be light to others. This resource provides opportunities for prayer, faith-sharing, and outreach in our local community. This resource will be available at the end of January.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA APPEAL: A CHILD'S SMILE. A MOTHER'S JOY. YOURS TO GIVE THIS CHRISTMAS.

Christmas is a time of miracles – of hope and renewal. Throughout rural Vietnam, children and families living with disabilities, like Mrs Lan and her children Quan and Loah, are less likely to be employed, and children are less likely to go to school. Mrs Lan's dreams for her children are simple. She wants them to "live like every other child, going to school, playing, having a happy life, and growing and learning like other children."

Through the generosity of our supporters, Quan and Loah joined a community-based classroom and learned to socialise with other children and found confidence in themselves. They found more joy from having fun with others, learned to tell jokes and found themselves smiling more. This Christmas, you can help create opportunities for children and adults with disabilities and to enable more families like Mrs Lan's to access resources to improve their income and living status.

Please join Caritas Australia's wonderful community of generous supporters this Christmas in giving loving parents of children with disabilities the incredible gift of seeing their children smile. Visit www.caritas.org.au/christmas this Christmas or call 1800 024 413 toll free to help bring more smiles to children's faces this coming year.

Christmas Mass Times

Christmas Eve

5pm St James Church
Brook Street, Muswellbrook

8pm St Thomas Church
Segenhoe Street, Aberdeen

Christmas Day

9am St James Church
Brook Street, Muswellbrook



Weekly Mass Diary

Monday 19 December	Tuesday 20 December	Wednesday 21 December	Thursday 22 December	Friday 23 December	Saturday 24 December	Sunday 25 December
					Christmas Eve	THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (Christmas)
9.00am Private, Personal Prayer and Adoration St James Muswellbrook		9.00am Mass St James Muswellbrook	11.30am Adoration and Benediction 12.05pm Mass St James Muswellbrook	9.00am Mass St James Muswellbrook	5.00pm Mass St James Muswellbrook	9.00am Mass St James Muswellbrook
	5.00pm Mass St Thomas Aberdeen				8.00pm Mass St Thomas Aberdeen	

Minister Roster Sunday 25th December 2022

4th Sunday of the Month	Readers	Cantors	Musicians	Gifts	Extraordinary Ministers	Altar Servers	Sacristan
5.00pm Saturday Muswellbrook	M. Flanagan T. Furlong	C. Hayes	Sr. Dorothy	Can you fill this position?			C. Hayes
8pm Saturday Aberdeen	S. Milton	J. Lonergan	C. Bowen				M. Hamilton
9am Sunday Muswellbrook	A. Jacob Can you fill this position?	Can you fill this position?	K. Mason				K. Goodwin
Counters	Jane Thatcher		Can you fill this position?				

MASS AND PRAYER REQUESTS:

We remember and pray for those who are ill at home and in hospital at this time, may they know the healing presence of Christ: Iris Spittles, Pauline Coleman, David Curran, Pat Hogan, Abbie Sweeper, Kym Mason, Mollie Hofman, Melanie Hoch, Kim Goodwin, Anne Hugo, John Presland, Margaret Blake, Rodrigo Canete, Fay Biddle, Helen Tumbers, Hilda Carey, Lucrecia Casia, Anne Rawson, Enrique Tuazon, and Victoria Diputado.

Baptism:

Recently Deceased: Greg Maloney

Anniversary:

Privacy Laws. All parishioners are encouraged to pray for the sick. Masses will be offered on request. Due to privacy laws, names of the sick and deceased can only be put in the bulletin with the permission of the immediate family.

St James and St Thomas - Pray for Us

BULLETIN

Please contact the Parish Office on 6543 1167 if you have any notices for the bulletin, or alternatively email:

muswellbrookparish@mn.catholic.org.au

The Parish bulletin can be accessed on our website: muswellbrookcatholicparish.org.au

or on our Facebook page: **Catholic Parish of St James Muswellbrook**

Please email muswellbrookparish@mn.catholic.org.au if you would like the bulletin emailed to you each week.

SAFEGUARDING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Please visit our 'Safeguarding' page to access a range of safeguarding resources: muswellbrookcatholicparish.org.au

Have a complaint or wish to provide feedback? Visit: officeofsafeguarding.org.au/feedback/

"Our mission is to spread the Kingdom by being an alive and informed Community, united as one family in care and consideration for each other in the love of God."