

Christmas ~~alone?~~ with us?

Wk 1

TODAY'S 9:45AM SERVICE:

- Welcome
- Songs
- Spotlight
- Bible Reading:
[Genesis 3:1-15](#) &
[1 Timothy 1:15-17](#)
(Bible p.3 & p. 1192)
- Sermon
- Song
- Prayer
- Holy Communion
- Song
- Conclusion

If you are a visitor to our service please don't feel obliged to contribute financially.

Most St Stephen's collection is received electronically.
BSB: 062 272
Account Number:
00490436

Sunday 4 December 2022

Our 9:45am service is live streamed to our YouTube and Facebook Channels. If you don't wish to feature on our stream, please occupy the pews towards the back.

Welcome to St Stephen's. It's the season of Advent – a time when we remember the birth of Christ and the promise that he will return. We hope you enjoy your time with us. We would love to hear from you. So, please take a moment and fill in the online Connect Card. You can access the card via the QR Code. On Saturday, 10th December, we will have our annual Carols on the Grass. We would love to have you and your family & friends join us. We kick off at 5pm with dinner, and then groups from Willoughby Public School and the Come & Sing Choir, along with our musicians, will lead us through carols. Last year was such a great afternoon, and we hope you will join us this year.



After a year full of ups and downs, we want to remind ourselves and our community that God is a source of hope. His great hope is seen most clearly in the birth of Jesus. When Jesus came into the world, he showed us how deeply he cared for the world he has created.

Prayers for those not sharing in Lord's Supper

Participation in the Lord's Supper is for those who have professed faith in Jesus - it's a powerful and important symbol of the Christian message. As such we want to encourage those who are still exploring the Christian faith to feel free to remain in their seats when others move to the front to receive the Lord's Supper. During that time you may want to reflect on the sermon or Bible reading. You may also want to pray one of these prayers below.

Prayer for those searching for truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me who you are. Give me an understanding of you that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer of belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Prayer for those struggling with sin

Lord Jesus, enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race set before me, looking to you, the pioneer and perfecter of my faith. Amen.

Prayers adapted from Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York.

Lord's Prayer

This is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray (Matthew 6:5-14).

Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name

Your kingdom come

Your will be done on earth as in heaven

Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever

Amen

Sermon Notes

The Baby Who Saves | Passage: Gen. 3:1-15 & 1 Tim 1:15-17

1. The fall and the promise

2. Waiting in desperation

3. God's fulfilment

4. Waiting in hope

Gospel and Prayer (GaP) Group Questions

1. Why do you think gift-giving is so prevalent during Christmas time? Why do people give gifts?

Read Luke 2:1-20

Getting your head around the passage:

Use as many questions as you need to ensure you understand the passage's contents.

1. What time markers does Luke include?
2. Who comes to see Jesus?
3. What is the content of the angel's message?
4. How do the shepherds respond?
5. What is the 'good news' about Jesus's birth?

2. What is the central purpose of a Christian's celebrations at Christmas?

3. How can we be distracted from the central purpose at this time?

4. How can we reshape our celebrations and traditions to ensure we do not lose the central purpose this year?
5. Why is Christmas 'good news' for us even when we are distracted from the central message?



GaP Group Reflection

Watch the video provided to your group leader.

1. What can you give thanks for?
2. How can you encourage each other even over the holiday break?

Prayer

1. Pray that God might help you and your household enjoy the central message of Christmas.
2. Pray that God uses you to reach family and friends with the message of Jesus this Christmas.

Read the Bible with us!

1. Why is this passage helpful in preparing you for Christmas?
2. What do you need to remember as you come to the Christmas season?
3. How can God use you to glorify him this Christmas?
Pray about this.

Monday - [Luke 1:1-4](#)
Tuesday - [Luke 1:5-25](#)
Wednesday - [Luke 1:26-38](#)
Thursday - [Luke 1:39-56](#)
Friday - [Luke 1:57-66](#)

Notices

Christmas Campaign.

Each year, we use our offertory from our Christmas day services to support Anglican Aid's Instika Campaign in South Africa. The Intsika Community Outreach Programme is helping underprivileged children on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth through a partnership with the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa. These communities live in extreme poverty – many do not have water or electricity in their homes and can't afford essential school supplies. There is a high rate of disease, HIV and Tuberculosis, alcohol problems, unemployment and family breakdown. Intsika was established in 2016 to prepare young children for school and support them through their primary education. Christmas is all about God's generosity to us. What better way to mark it than by being generous to others? Visit our 'Give' page for more information and to give.



Praying for Christmas

Over the Christmas season, it can be easy to consume ourselves with the material needs of our family and friends. One way to find a balance (at this time) is to re-invest in prayer for others. Why don't you set up a pattern of praying for three non-Christian families or friends and three church members each day? Pray for their spiritual welfare, pray for their emotional welfare and pray for opportunities to serve them. To make this time even more fruitful, you may like to tie it in with your bible reading. You can find a bible reading plan on page five of this booklet.

Thank you for working bee!

Thank you to those who gave their time to the Working Bee on Saturday. There are many ways to serve at St Stephen's. Coming along and cleaning the site, making it ready for ministry and outreach and accessible to all, is a great way to serve. If you would like to know more about other opportunities to serve, please fill in the connect card. You can access the card via the QR Code on the 1st page.



Carols on the Grass

Christmas celebrations at St Stephen's commence with the Carols on the Grass event on 10th December. Everyone is welcome! Come and celebrate Christmas with us. There will be carols, dinner, kid's activities and more! Also joining us will be the Willoughby Public School band and the Come and Sing choir. Last year 300 people came along including many from friends,

family and neighbours. Who could you bring along this year? Get your tickets at st-stephens.com.au/summer.

Summer of opportunities.

After Christmas, our church programs are on a break (during the school holiday period) until February. Over the summer holidays, we want to encourage each other to spend more time with our non-Christian friends. We want to utilise this downtime to share our lives and our faith in Jesus with them. Those in GaP groups will support and pray for each other during this endeavour. If you are not in a GaP group but would like support, prayer and training on being a witness to your friends over the summer, fill in the Connect Card which is on the front page of this booklet.



Thanking our SRE teachers

The SRE team is putting together small thank-you packs for Willoughby Public school teachers. We do this to show appreciation for all their hard work and to strengthen our relationship with the school. We would love your help in filling these thank-you packs! What can you bring? Individually wrapped chocolates (lint balls, Ferrero Rochers, etc.). Where: **Church**

Office. When: **Before Monday 12th December.**

What's Coming Up

Monday 5th	Weekly Prayer Meeting - Zoom Link Meeting ID: 837 9111 9200 Passcode: qKga12
Tuesday 6th	Playtime Christmas Party - 9:30am to 11:30am
Friday 9th	Half Past Six Youth Group. 6:30-8:30pm
Saturday 10th	Carols on the Grass, 5pm to 7pm. Tickets available @ st-stephens.com.au/summer .
Christmas Eve	4pm - A service for the whole family with a sausage sizzle. 10pm - Champagne supper followed by Candlelight Lessons and Carols service
Christmas Day	7:45am - Holy Communion Service 9:45am - All Ages Service

Our Staff - Contact Us!



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