



Crookwell Uniting Church

“To Know Christ and Make Christ Known”



*Witnessing to God’s love for the world
From the main street to the paddock.*

December 2023

In Light and In Darkness

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God,
Has shone to the world the light of wisdom.
For by it, those who worshipped the stars
Were taught by a star to adore Thee,
The Sun of Righteousness,
And to know Thee, the Orient from on high.
O Lord, glory to Thee!

- The Orthodox Liturgy of St Basil

As we enter Advent, and a new church year begins on December 3rd, I am conscious of the conflicts, the hardships, and the suffering with which the old year has ended.

Many of us are currently grieving for family or friends who have died during the year. Others I know are

suffering from recent medical diagnoses, or are wrestling with the ongoing impact of surgeries and treatments.

The social cohesion of our community has been pushed to the limit by the cost-of-living crisis, as the recent discussion about rates in the Upper Lachlan Shire has revealed deep divisions and made poor behaviour commonplace. Neighbour has turned against neighbour, and words of hatred and distrust pervade Facebook, coffee conversations and the local paper.

Contact Us

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Meanwhile, the failure of the recent referendum seems to have been the permission some needed to let loose their racial hatreds once more. Indeed, a recent report in the paper revealed that people had booed an Acknowledgement of Country at a recent community forum. One wonders how such actions can be reconciled with God's vision of "loving our neighbour as ourselves," not to mention common respect and decency.

But then, perhaps this is not surprising, given the state of the world. The unprovoked murder and kidnapping of Israeli children, women and men in their homes by Hamas has revealed the spectre of the Holocaust and the reality of anti-Semitism still haunting the world. Meanwhile, the deaths of thousands of civilians on the Gaza strip have left many of us feeling helpless, and undermined all narratives of what makes a 'just war'.

For Christians, these events in the Middle East also provoke us to reflect on our own history, and the ways our churches continue to spread both anti-Semitic and Islamophobic narratives. Perhaps now, more than

ever, we in the Church need to be reminded that our salvation is not secured by our own deeds or righteousness, but by the faithfulness of a first-century Palestinian Jew, born into poverty in Bethlehem, who loved briefly, died violently, and rose unexpectedly for all the world.

This Advent, therefore, we will join together to remember and anticipate the arrival of the God who is with us in both light and darkness. Making use of resources from *Illustrated Ministry*, we will have the opportunity to explore this theme in depth throughout December, in both our worship and our personal devotions, so that come Christmas Day, we who have dwelt in the land of deep darkness may come to see the light of Christ shining in our world, even today.

- Daniel



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Blue Christmas

This year, we are once again partnering with RJ Sidney Craig and our ecumenical partners to host a Christmas Memorial Service.

Though Christmas is often a time of joy and celebration, it is important to recognise that for many it is also a time of sadness and grief. This is especially true for those who will experience their first Christmas without a loved one.

Recognising this reality, the Christmas Memorial Service (also known as a 'Blue Christmas') seeks to create a reflective space in the middle of the Christmas busyness for people to grieve together.

If you or anyone you know would like to join us, the service in Crookwell will be on **Thursday, December 14th at 6pm**. For those who cannot attend on this date, a second service will be held at the Goulburn Uniting Church on **Wednesday, December 20th at 6pm**.

Worship & Readings

Sunday 3 December

9:30am Crookwell and
Crookwelluniting.org
Holy Communion

Readings: Isaiah 64:1-9; John 1:1-5

Sunday 10 December

9:30am Crookwell and
crookwelluniting.org

Readings: Isaiah 40:1-11; Luke 1:26-39

Sunday 17 December

9:30am Crookwell and
crookwelluniting.org
2:00 Jerrara

Readings: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Luke 2:1-14

Sunday 24 December

9:30 Crookwell and
crookwelluniting.org

Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 2:15-20

Sunday 31 December

9:30 Crookwell and
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Readings: Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148;
Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

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Christmas Bowl

Through the Christmas Bowl our church will help provide practical care so refugees and people who have been displaced can live in safety and dignity and know that they are loved and not forgotten.

If you would like to donate online, please visit mycb.link/45883.

Thank you for continuing to take part in this important tradition and helping to create a world where uprooted people have a safe place to belong.

December Roster

Please find below the roster for December services. If you would like to volunteer for future services, please contact Daniel.

DECEMBER 2023	WORSHIP LEADER	ELDER/PRAYERS	BIBLE READER	STEWARDS
3/12/2023	Daniel	Gill	Joi	Gill & Allan
10/12/2023	TBA	Barbara	Ron	Margaret & Reta
17/12/2023	Daniel	Allan	Heather	John & Jan
24/12/2023	Daniel	Margaret	Allan	Louise
31/12/2023	TBA	Gill	Louise	John & Jan

Christmas Services

Please find below details about our Advent & Christmas services. You will note Christmas Eve this year is on a Sunday, so in addition to our Jerrara Christmas Eve service, there will be a normal Sunday morning service in Crookwell. This year, our book for Christmas Eve at Jerrara will be *The Legend of the Poinsettia* by Tomie DePaola.

Please remember that ***Christmas Day service is at the special time of 9am.***

For families, we are going to make a real effort to make these services intergenerational, and we would love to have you join us.

Advent 1

Sunday, December 3 at 9:30am, Crookwell

Advent 2

Sunday, December 10 at 9:30 am, Crookwell

Blue Christmas

Thursday, December 14 at 6pm, Crookwell

Advent 3

Sunday, December 17 at 9:30am, Crookwell

Sunday, December 17 at 2pm, Jerrara

Advent 4

Sunday, December 24 at 9:30am, Crookwell

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24 at 7pm, Jerrara

Christmas Day

Monday, December 25 at 9am, Crookwell

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