

DEC 2024

in the house



stirlingfamilychurch.au

OPPORTUNITY – BY BEC FORTUNATOW

We as a church are heading into the final month of the year – and for many this means holidays and a time to relax and spend time with family.

This is actually a time that is filled with opportunity – it is not often that the world around us pauses and also focuses on Jesus.

This will look differently to each person depending on where their heart is in relation to Our Father. This is a season that stirs up many varied emotions and we should all be sensitive to this.

During this time we should pray for wisdom – God's wisdom that he so generously gives to us and the guidance of Holy Spirit during our conversations and interactions with others.

-Ephesians 1:17-18 "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened"

We are the light and the salt to those around us and as such it is our desire to be prepared to share the Gospel in a meaningful way.

I pray that hearts will be softened and open to receive God's word. Miracles can and do happen!! It is so important that

we don't limit God by our own limited imagination and faith.

-Ephesians 3:20 "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ask or think, according to the power that works in us."

-Psalm 73:23-24 "Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory."

As this year comes to a close we are transitioning to a new season. God has worked deeply among us. He has drawn us into a deeper relationship with him and with each other. He has gently corrected and guided us into revealing more of Jesus and less of self.

-Hebrews 10: 23 "Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering , for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see The Day drawing near."

May He lead and guide us into a deeper knowledge and love as we daily surrender ourselves to him through prayer and soaking in his Living Word.

God Bless, Bec Fortunatow



11.00A 1 DEC - STIRLING PAGEANT OPPORTUNITY

Trinity Church is organising the HCCC Pageant March on Sunday 1 December. This year, we have three camels and wise men. All churches across HCCC have been courage to pray and participate.

Richard McClelland is coordinating writes: 'Thanks - it's encouraging to hear that some of you are keen to join us on the day. Please encourage people to turn up and walk together the 400m from Druids Ave Stirling to the Stirling Oval. Key details:

- Wear a bright solid block colour shirt/tee, any bright colour is fine.

- Meeting from 10:30a. We are the third last float to leave - so we will be *meeting somewhere towards the top of Druids Ave towards the hospital.*
- Look for our banner "Hills Combined Christian Churches". Along with 3 camels and wise men on top
- Carparking will be tight, considering staying in the Stirling Carpark which will be 'gated' in the morning.
- For those marching, we will have things ready to hand out to those watching - provided on the day.
- Let us share the joy of Jesus!

UNITY IN HAVING A MEAL – BY BEN BONYTHON

It can be a tea or coffee – or if you are with Derek, hot water! Having a meal together is a way we connect, share life, build friendship, and enjoy fellowship.

Psalm 133 begins with a prophetic statement about being together...*How good and pleasant it is when people dwell together in unity.*

Unity itself can be a divisive word when we base unity on ourselves, our opinion, our ideologies or our experiences. Such unity basically serves to isolate, fortify and differentiate us from them, you from me, right from wrong. The Unity spoken in Psalm 133 is not a unity that comes from ourselves. This unity is what comes from knowing that **WE BELONG TO THE LORD**, that our lives are in Christ, and that His covering love removes even the most intrinsic fears. This sort of unity promotes and restores His peace.

On the cover, Rob and Judy are celebrating their 30,000th wedding

anniversary. The reason I state the occasion in this manner is because this is not their first meal together, nor their last, of enjoying pleasant unity!

It doesn't need to be lobster or wagyu. It doesn't need to be French wine or 7 star. It's the simplicity of enjoying the company of another, delighting in them as an image bearer of God, and sharing a satisfying 'filling' meal together being:

One food, **One** moment, **One** unity.

Meals are enjoyed in all cultures across the world in many different circumstances. However when Jesus is the basis of the **One** in the above, such is the blessing of unity, such is the pleasantness of the occasion, such is the sense of the goodness of God, that the meal becomes more than just naan and curry. The meal becomes a picture of shared, good and pleasant unity, reflecting a oneness, all One in Christ!

Congrats Rob and Judy!

5.30P 22 DEC – CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

Our Christmas theme for 2024 is **Indescribable**...how the Prince of Heaven was born unto us...humble...in a manger. It is the revelatory truth of the Spirit that causes an indescribable awe-like response. In the evening of Sunday 22 December, we will hold our Christmas Celebration Invite Event, with the hope to sit outside, near the main front doors, and sing Christmas Carols together, after enjoying food and fun for an occasion suitable for the generations. And based on rain percentages, we are also ready for an all indoors occasion too!

Please make a note to self to sleep in, there is no morning service on 22 Dec.

Celebrate Christmas is an opportunity to invite family, friends and neighbours. In 2020, an Australian NCLS study reported that we have a 37% of receiving a yes when we invite a close friend or family to Church. 15% were undecided. And 33%

would say no. Would you consider inviting someone to celebrate Christmas at Stirling Family Church and take a risk? On the night, we will need some help to rotate through different roles and needs. If Stirling Family Church was a cruise ship, then we are the crew! The overall format will be similar to last year.

Carols will take place between 7.30-8.30p, food between 6.00-7.00p, and fun between 5.30-7.30p. We are looking for some help in the area of MC commentators and facilitators for our indoor activities, help with hospitality like coffee, snow cones, photos, serving pancakes and serving sausage sizzles. We would also need help with setup and pack up, which is relatively easier than last year, with Christmas Day not being the morning after! If you can help and be involved for part of the night, please speak with Bec or Ben.

9.30A 25 DEC - CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE



Christmas Day has plenty of activity, eating and celebrating. But make it a point to gather first to worship Jesus. Our Christmas Day service is about reading the story of incarnation of Jesus, and singing and worshipping Jesus. Our one hour service will have no offering, notices, or communion. There will be no morning tea served after the service either – but feel free to bring Christmas chocolate to share.

TBC - 5.00P 25 DEC - STIRLING FAMILY CHRISTMAS

We have had someone offer to help create a Stirling Family Christmas Dinner. This may be an opportunity to invite someone into a Christmas space with others, celebrating Jesus and the

fellowship we share in Christ. If you would like to gather be part of a Stirling Family Christmas Dinner, RSVPs are essential to get in the door Luke 13:25



Please RSVP to Ben before 15 Dec.

Indescribable

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

5.30-8.30P SUNDAY
22 DECEMBER

Gathering in community for carol singing,
food and family fun as we celebrate Jesus

ADVENT EP NIGHT

Acts 12:5-12
SUNDAY
15 DECEMBER
6.30-7.30P



December 2024

stirling.elvanto.com.au/calendar

November '24

S M T W T F S
1 2
3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27 28 29 30

January '25

S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12 13 14 15 16 17 18
19 20 21 22 23 24 25
26 27 28 29 30 31

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9.00a Prayer 9.30a Family Services 11.00a Stirling Pageant	2 W8	3 7.00p EnKindle	4 7.00p Nairne Mens LG 7.30p Crafrers LG	5	6 7.00p re-Branded Yth	7
8 9.30a Prayer 10a Worship Service Guest Speaker Johan Roux Kids Church Missions Sunday	9 W9	10 7.00p EnKindle	11	12 10a Mens Coffee 10a Hahndorf Womens LG	13 7.00p Craft (Nairne) 7.00p re-Branded Yth	14
15 9.30a Prayer 10a Worship Service Kids Church & 10:40 Finale 6.30p Advent EP Night	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 No Morning Service 5.30p Celebrate Christmas	23	24	25 9.30a Christmas Worship	26 Boxing Day Holiday	27	28
29 9.30a Prayer 10a Worship Gathering	30	31 New Years Eve	1 Christmas Day Holiday New Years Day	2	3	4

DECEMBER SUNDAY TEAM

Date	Sunday Coord	Comm Serving	Comm Prep	Welcome	Giving Collect	Giving Count	Kitchen Support	GoNations Coffee	First Aid	Sunday Prayer
9.30a 01/12	JanetP	Ava Jackie Ev Dot	JanetP	Penton & Jenny	Ava & Josh	Janet & Luan	Diane	Milkshakes Dot & Ev	TBA	JimV
08/12	TimH	Derek BecF Roslyn JanetP	TimH	Shirley & Mia	Shane & Penton	TimH & Penton	AprilC	Coffee Mia & Ava	TBA	BecF
15/12	Rob	Mikinley Margaret AprilG Shane	Rob	Jackie & Mikinley	Rob & Luan	Rob & Simon	Ruthe & Juli	Coffee Anna & Allegra	TBA	Luan
5.30p 22/12		-	-	Helps	-	-	Helps	Helps	TBA	-
9.30a 25/12		-	-	BenB	-	-	-	-	TBA	-
29/12	Rob	JanetP Ava Allegra Mia	Rob	Shirley & Shane	Rob & Shane	Rob & PeterF	Shane & BenB	Coffee Anna & BenB	TBA	JudyK

Thank you for serving the Lord, and blessing our Church family. If you need to swap with someone, please contact another person directly. [admin@stirlingfamilychurch.au // www.stirling.elvanto.com.au]

PRAYER AND OPPORTUNITY TO PRAY

Praying is not our final option, but our first response. Praying is not an action of reaction, but taking the initiative in faith. Matthew 6:5-8 records Jesus saying the phrase three times: ***"When you pray..."*** **Not if you pray, but when you pray.**

The assumption or implication here is that we all should pray. Prayer is powerful. When we need something, we pray! Healing – pray! Help – pray! Peace – pray!

Jesus said in Matthew 6 to ***"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."***

For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 reminds us that it is God's will in Christ Jesus that we rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances! In Acts 16, the Bible records that Paul went looking for a place of prayer. We need to take the initiative, and stir ourselves up to pray. May Stirling Family Church be a House of Prayer, because its people have committed to pray to the Lord, and delight in praying to the Lord!

PRAYER & FASTING (MONDAY GROUP)

PRAYER & FASTING MONDAYS

Our desire is to continue in prayer, and continue in fasting, sharing together with those who have a burden, and are able, to fast on a Monday. If that is something the Lord places upon your heart, please let Bec Fortunatow or Ben Bonython know so we can setup shared communication. We would like to commence in 2025, and will contact those who have responded in January.

GIVING-SOWING GENEROUSLY INTO VISION & MISSION



Giving by EFT

bsb: 035039 acc: 587611

ref: Giving or Missions

**YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED AND
PLENTY LEFT OVER TO SHARE WITH OTHERS (2 COR 9:8)**

CHRISTMAS MATERNITY HAMPERS MISSION OPPORTUNITY



This Christmas, we want to give away Hampers to new mums at Mt Barker Hospital and others privately. This act of kindness is connected with the amazing chaplaincy work of Judy and Rob.

Can you help us? And would you pray?

As a Church, we are seeking donations of nappies, baby wipes, hand cream, baby clothes, bibs, socks, jumpsuits, baby hats,

singlets, muslin wraps, even a block of chocolate – in order to create the Hampers. There is list of what is needed in the foyer. Maternity Hampers is one of our Missions Partners. Please speak with Judy about how you can be involved with prayer and by contributing to these acts of lasting kindness and impact!

Baby wipes



Baby bibs - (b/g)



Baby socks - (b/g)



Baby toys



Baby singlets - (b/g)



Nappy bags



Nappies - size 2



Cotton baby wraps - (b/g)



Cream/pamper for mum



All-in-ones - winter (b/g)



All-in-ones - summer (b/g)



Chocolate treats eg. Tim Tams



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

Advent is derived from the Latin word “advenio,” which means “to come to, to arrive.” Sometimes we can get mixed up thinking we need to ‘get ready’ for Jesus. We need to purify our hearts and minds. Yes, it helps us to stop, reflect and consider the coming of Jesus at Christmas, however the purpose of this Devotional is to realise that Jesus does not respond to any works, rather He is moved by faith.

You might say that this is a Advent devotional of faith aiming to curate space in our busy lives at Christmas to give time to the gentle and relational work of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts teaching us everything about Jesus.

Engaging in reflection during Advent helps us to be aware of His love for us and that the Spirit continues to give us wisdom in how to live until that day when we meet the Lord. Therefore Advent focuses not on our preparation, but on God’s work for us, which then leads to our response. In this way, Advent is the indescribable awe we have in the revelation that God became human!

The below offers some thoughts and questions to consider for Advent.

Humility

Over 2,000 years ago, God stooped down from heaven and became a human being: Jesus Christ. As the Bible says, *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14)*. He lived a perfect life and laid down that life as a sacrifice so that all who believe in Him will have access to God’s coming kingdom. So that we can be His. And then He rose to life again and returned to His heavenly throne. This was a

fulfilment of a promise God had been making for centuries, and it was followed by a second, even more wonderful, promise: that Jesus will come back again and make all things new.

Questions for reflection: How did Jesus example humility? What is humility according to Jesus? How is humility practiced? What is our mindset around humility? What is the enemy of humility? How can we grow in humility?

Gratitude

Entitlement is the enemy of gratitude. If we have surrendered our lives to Jesus, then we give up all our entitlements, except what we are entitled to in Christ. This seems circular, but it’s the position of the circle that matters. When the circular nature of this statement above is centred in Jesus, for Jesus, we live truly hidden in Christ, and therefore such entitlement for living in Jesus becomes outward focused for the sake of Jesus alone. Gratitude is complete when we live for Jesus, knowing we are created by God, to enjoy God. Life is a gift. Transactions for self become less and less satisfying, and sacrifice becomes easier and normal, because we realise we died with Christ and it’s now no longer we who live, but Jesus living in us!

Questions for reflection: Does gratitude for Jesus affect my decisions and attitudes? Do I have gratitude for the gifts I have? Is my life like a constant set of transactions? Where do I feel entitled, like I am owed something? What is the attitude of Christ towards me?

Worship

Some worship the past, and are caught in memories of time past – including past

Christmas times. Some worship an idea or dream based on what was or could be. Some take a self-engineering approach to always deliver some benefit for self. While others worship family, sacrificing everything for family – even their own walk with, and testimony of Jesus.

We all have things and comforts we worship, walking a well-dressed line that is often the antithesis of sacrifice. And yet to be worship, it must be sacrifice!

A Christmas season seems to amplify any nuance of misdirected worship. It is like when something is out of alignment, Christmas brings it out even faster! Yet Christmas based in its truth in, and light of Jesus, can break into our world!

Jesus can change everything! When our hearts are oriented towards Christ, the rest of life has the best chance to fall into the joy of surrender in Jesus.

The way we love, and prioritise our time and resources will radically change when it comes from a place of true worship of Jesus. By way of questions, the below readings reflect a way to worship through daily reading with an advent lens, meaning we read these passages knowing Jesus came to be with us.

These passages are selected to bring to our attention to the indescribable awe of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. There is reading for each day of December until the 25th!

God's Good Creation and the Brokenness of Humanity:

1. Creation: Gen 1-2, John 1:1-14
2. Fall: Genesis 3
3. The Flood: Genesis 6, 8:13-9:17
4. Tower of Babel: Genesis 11

God's Promise to Bless All Nations Through His People:

5. Abraham: Ge 12:1-9; 15; 17:1-13
6. Isaac: Genesis 17:15-21; 21:1-7
7. Sacrifice of Isaac: Genesis 22, Galatians 3:6-14, 29
8. Jacob: Genesis 28, 35:1-15
9. Joseph: Genesis 37, 50

God's Covenant with Israel:

10. Passover: Exodus 12
11. 10 Commandments: Deuteronomy 5-6, Matthew 22:34-40
12. Joshua: Joshua 3-4

God's Kings and Prophets:

13. David Anointed: Judges 2:16-23, 1 Samuel 8:4-22; 16:1-13
14. King David: 2 Samuel 5, 7
15. Solomon: 1 Kings 8-9
16. Elijah: 1 Kings 18
17. Micah: Micah 5, 7
18. Isaiah: Isaiah 9:1-7, Isaiah 11:1-11, Jeremiah 31:27-40
19. Suffering Servant: Isaiah 52-53
20. Exile: 2 Chronicles 36:15-21; Zechariah 9:9-17
21. Daniel: Daniel 6-7

Promised One Fulfilled in Jesus:

22. Jesus' birth foretold: Matthew 1:1-17, Luke 1
23. Jesus' birth: Luke 2:1-38, Matthew 2:1-12
24. King Jesus: Hebrews 1, Col 1:15-20
25. Follow King Jesus: Hebrews 11-12:3

On behalf of all the people who call Stirling Family Church home, we pray that this Christmas, you may experience a renewed sense of indescribable awe of the humility of Jesus, a renewed sense of gratitude for Jesus, and a renewed desire to worship Jesus. Through Jesus, may your love, joy, hope and peace be renewed for you and your family!

God bless as 2024 draws to a close.

MISSIONS TRIP TO INDONESIA



PRACTICAL

Cleaning
Maintenance
Gardens
Painting



ACTIVITIES

Sport
Tutoring
Games
Encouragement



GOSPEL

Prayer
Ministry
Sharing
Miracles
Faith Step



JULY 2025 SCHOOL HOLIDAYS