



The ANGLICAN PARISH of  
*Leongatha*

Sunday 20th December 2020 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

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## PARISH VISION

Preparing the way for the love of Jesus Christ to reach all people.

## A YEAR OF MISSION

On Vision Sunday the Rector designated 2020 to be a Year of Mission.

### **Sentence**

This child will be great,  
and will be called the  
Son of the Most High. He  
will reign over the house  
of Jacob for ever, and of  
his kingdom there will be  
no end. Luke 1:32-33

### **Prayer of the Week**

O Lord, raise up your  
power and come among  
us, and with great might  
succour us, that, whereas  
through our sins and  
wickedness we are sore

let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, your bountiful  
grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through your Son our  
Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be honour and glory, now and for  
ever. **Amen.**

### **Pastoral Care**

For pastoral care needs please contact Rector of Leongatha- Graham Knott  
0490 045 581 [rectorleongatha@gmail.com](mailto:rectorleongatha@gmail.com)

Assistant Curate and Response Coordinator- Belinda Seabrook  
0438 622 721 [ministryleongatha@gmail.com](mailto:ministryleongatha@gmail.com)



## Weekly Services of Holy Communion – St Peter’s Leongatha

### **Sunday**

Holy Communion - 8am, 10:30am

### **Wednesday**

Holy Communion - 11am

### **Service of Holy Communion- St David’s Meeniyan**

Friday 7:30pm – 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the Month

**St Andrew’s Tarwin lower- To be advised**

There is now **no need to pre-register or “book in”** for a service. It is still a government requirement however that we keep, for a temporary period of time, the name and a contact number of every person that attends a service. This can be provided at the door on the day you attend.

### **Financial Stewardship**

Leongatha Anglican Church

Electronic banking details **BSB Number** 083 735 **Account Number** 515883623.

Cheques may be posted to PO Box 271, Leongatha, Vic 3953. Payable to ‘Leongatha Anglican Church Parish Council Parish Account’.

### **Readings Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 54:1-11

Song of Mary

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

### **8am Hymns**

276 There’s a light upon the mountains

152. Joyful, joyful we adore you

613. Lord of all hopefulness

155 O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder.

## **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS- MINISTRY UPDATE**

### **A note from the Rector**

We are always so blessed by the provision of God - personally and in our life together. As we move into the Christmas season such provision is evident in our life together. We are so thankful for those who serve faithfully to make the church building and our external surroundings beautiful, those who provide in so many ways for our worship and for those who are planning fresh initiatives this Christmas. It is such a blessing to be part of a large and willing team.

## Community Christmas Lunch- All Welcome

Excited to announce that this year St Peter's will be hosting Community Christmas Lunch at St Peter's Church at 12 noon. If you would like to come please **register your name** with Belinda Seabrook 0438 622721 for catering purposes. This lunch is open to community so please encourage others to come and share, especially those who may be on their own this Christmas.

## Christmas Services

Following the easing of restrictions we are now able to plan for Christmas. Please note the dates and times now and especially think of family and friends who you would like to invite. Let's all play our part to make this a really special Christmas after a challenging year. We still need to decide where services in Meeniyan and Tarwin Lower will be held- it may be that some events are held outside because the church premises are too small.



- Sunday 20th December:** 3pm Traditional Service of 9 Lessons and Carols at St Peters Leongatha
- Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December:** 7pm Carol Service at Tarwin Lower
- Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December:** 5pm Crib Service at St Peters Leongatha  
7:30pm Meeniyan Service- St Kevin's Catholic Church Meeniyan  
11pm Holy Communion St Peters Leongatha
- Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December:** 9am Holy Communion St Peters Leongatha  
12 noon Community Christmas Lunch

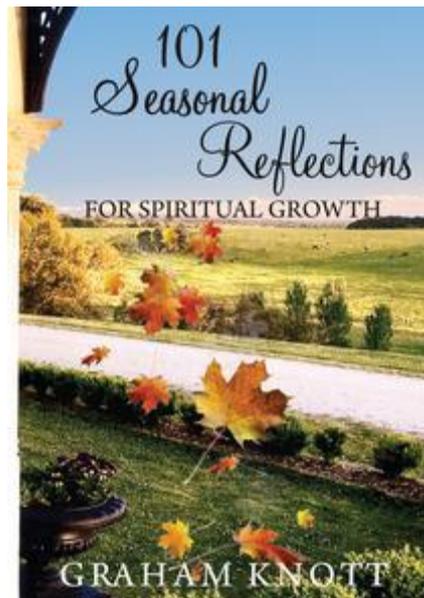
## Parish Council News

When the Parish Council met at the end of November we discussed Mission Support for the coming year. In a challenging financial environment we wanted to affirm our commitment to supporting the Mulherin family as they begin mission service. Accordingly, our allocation to CMS has risen by \$2,000 to \$12,000 per year. We have asked CMS to set the support for the Mulherins, Beers and the family in central Asia to \$4,000 each. Our commitment to and support of other mission partners remains unchanged. Marion Dewar was appointed Secretary and Hugh Chisholm as Treasurer for the forthcoming year. Consultative meetings with the congregation will be held during the year. Barry Savage and Geoff Coulter will be preparing Agendas for these. The Parish Council is spending a day together in January to consider vision for the future. We hope that members will be admitted to the Parish Council on Sunday 17 January - all having completed their Safe Ministry clearances

## 101 Seasonal Reflections

Congratulations to Graham as his first book has now been published- 101 Seasonal Reflections for Spiritual Growth.

Books are available for \$20 and can be purchased after public services in Leongatha or by contacting David Bishop on 0429 888 017. A great Christmas present for friends and family.



## Home Communion

If you or anyone you know would like to receive Holy Communion at home please let Graham Knott or Belinda Seabrook know.

## Communion Table Frontals

During the 8.00am Service today we will be dedicating the new frontals for the Holy Table. We are very thankful to Maryann Ashton for making these and know that they will be a focus of blessing to many in the future.

## The Gippsland Anglican December

[TGA December 20FINAL.pdf \(gippsanglican.org.au\)](http://gippsanglican.org.au)

Hard copies Anglican are available in the Narthex after Church services.

## Tween Bible Study and Group

A leadership team is currently working on developing a program for 2021 for those aged 10-14 years. If you would like more information please see a member of staff.

## Advent Sermon Series

There will be a short Sermon Series during Advent entitled 'Freedom is Coming' based on a Nick Baines book of the same title. 29 November: Voice of Comfort (Isaiah 40:1-11, 31); 6 December: Any Dream will do (Isaiah 41:17-29); 13 December: Fear and Faith (Isaiah 41:10-14, 48:6-7); 20 December: Joy finds a way (Isaiah 54:1-11).

## Readings for next week 27<sup>th</sup> December

### First Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 61:10-62.3      Psalm 148  
Galatians 4:4-7      Luke 2:22-40

## LET US PRAY

You shall go out with joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you. Isaiah 55:12

- Praise and thank God for His promises.
- Praise God for the opportunity to share His love and the message of the Gospel during services this Christmas.
- Thank God for Jesus who came as a baby and became as one of us.
- Pray for those who find themselves unable to join with their families this year. Pray for those who are on their own this Christmas.
- Pray for families, particularly those for whom this season brings pressure, those who have limited finances, those who find themselves in relationships which are threatening.
- Pray for those who are ill, facing surgery or living with debilitating pain.
- Pray for emergency services as we approach Christmas and a fire season.
- Pray for those country overseas and for those in N.S.W. who have contracted Covid.
- Pray for those countries suffering natural disasters, unrest or war.



## GRAHAM'S GEMS 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020

During Advent Graham's Gems will feature some poems by Rosemary Hector from her book 'A Quickening.' (Muddy Press: Edinburgh, 2019) Rosemary takes various themes relating to Advent, the conception and birth narratives of Jesus. Rosemary has the gift of infusing every word with rich meaning.

### ***"Matter of Belief***

*The guide from National Geographic suggested  
It could have been a trough, rather than a manger,  
Where Mary laid her baby, since Bethlehem,  
Banked by olive and almond trees, is on an aquifer  
And was built to defend water. He pontificated that  
Water and height, the soil and its fertility, defence,*

*Boundaries and access remain political issues.  
Trough or manger: a problem? The mystery is  
In contested territory. In politically charged times  
God became matter, and tiny, contained."*

In every biblical record of the birth narratives of Jesus one thing is held absolutely central. That is the silence of humanity at or immediately around the manger. We have hordes of angels singing 'Glory to God' from afar. We have shepherds deciding to go to Bethlehem having heard the announcement of the birth of Jesus from an angel. We have the wise seeking guidance as they journey towards Bethlehem. We have the parents receiving guests with no record of conversation. Something around the manger stunned humanity into silence. Words redundant or at best adding nothing worth recording. Somehow as people gathered at that initial crib scene something stunned them into silence.

Silence is our best response to absolute wonder or absolute tragedy. I am often asked by Christians who are involved in very difficult pastoral situations, "What can I say? Can you give me a Bible passage to help?" The answer is always negative. In absolute tragedy we sit with the wounded in stunned silence. It is our greatest gift. Silence in the face of something so much larger than us is the strongest and most healing presence. The need to say something is often more about us and our feelings of inadequacy or wanting to be helpful than about the person who receives our care.

Equally the majesty of creation, sculpture, architecture, art is best appreciated in silence. To try to describe Uluru diminishes the experience of standing in its presence. Yet it is always the shared experience of silence with others that is so much stronger and transformational.

There is transformational, shared and stunned silence at the manger of Jesus. No words.

It's too easy for words to create contested territory as the poem describes it. We have the desire to be right or to be thought of as intelligent. We have the desire to draw attention away from the main thing that matters. Words create and define boundaries. Was it a trough or was it a manger? Who cares? That's the point. We all too easily care about things that don't matter. The main thing is the plain thing and the plain thing is the main thing. Faith is not about arguing and discussing minutiae. Faith is not about learning every aspect of the Jewish faith as if that can save us. Faith is not about whether Christmas trees, lights, presents, celebration are in the bible narrative. Faith is stunned silence as we ponder the main and plain thing: "*God became matter, and tiny, contained.*" If we must speak – speak in hushed tones for this mystery is beyond expression.

## SERMON NOTES: