



11 DECEMBER 2022



Third Sunday in Advent

Welcome to worship this morning, and a special welcome to Oksanna and Kennedy and Nyanna and Sela-Seini, and their family and friends who are joining us for Sela-Seini's baptism, we hope you enjoy being with us.

There will be a special morning tea this morning, courtesy of grandma Lola, in celebration of the baptism, so please stay and enjoy morning tea with us.

Lectionary Readings

This week 11 December, 2022

Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Next week 18 December, 2022

Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Christmas Gift Collection

This year, instead of collecting gifts to give to charities at Christmas, we have decided to collect funds for those affected by the floods in the central-west of our state.

Thank you to those who have already donated, we have raised \$350 so far.

There is a retiring offering today and next Sunday for this, if you would like to contribute, please place your donation in the plate at the door of the hall after worship. Alternatively, you can transfer your donation to our bank account, BSB 112-879, account number 428 172 081.

Op Shop Half-Price Sale

The shop is having a half-price sale until Christmas so why not drop in and find that special Christmas gift or grab some new decorations for your Christmas tree.

Christmas Day Service

Our Christmas Day service will be at 9am.



Greystanes Uniting Church

Cnr Cumberland & Eldridge Roads (P O Box 5064)

Greystanes NSW 2145

Minister: Rev Gail Hinton 0407 269 162

Office Phone: 9636 3245

Email: office@greystanesuniting.org.au

Website: www.greystanesuniting.org.au

Gail's Message

We are now half way through the Season of Advent, which is the four weeks leading up to Christmas Day. During this time we anticipate and prepare for the coming of Christ, remembering the events of that holy night in Bethlehem, all those years ago and looking ahead towards Christ coming once again in glory. Each week in Advent we light a candle, three purple candles and one pink, the candle of joy.

Last week we lit the candle of Peace, and I invited you to think of yourselves as signs of God's coming realm of Peace. The Peace candle is known in some traditions as the Bethlehem candle and during the week I read an interesting reflection on how we can also be signs of inclusiveness, non-judgement, and grace just like Joseph and Mary.

Melanie Rigney, writes in *Living Faith*, an online weekly prayer guide, that Mary prepared for the birth of her firstborn child away from her own community, yet she was not alone, a new community of shepherds came to bear witness to her newborn and were forever changed by the encounter. Melanie suggests that at Christmas time we too are forced into different communities, forced by the demands of social protocol to spend time with family and associates whom we might otherwise try to avoid. With the pressures and time restraints of preparing for the 'big day' we may also "roll our eyes when the checkout person at the store moves too slowly or engages in conversation with the customer in front of us instead of moving on to help us."

Melanie suggests that they are part of our "community as well, permanent or fleeting. Just as Mary and Joseph welcomed the shepherds, may we welcome all we encounter in their Son's name. May we be the Bethlehem candle."

I believe that the community of believers in this church, model this kind of hospitality and grace. Last Sunday you were truly like the Bethlehem candles, welcoming little children to take part in the service of worship, even if it was somewhat impromptu! Like the wild and untameable Spirit of God, life is best lived when we open ourselves up to the flow of grace upon grace. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, may we be like droplets of living water that join together, becoming a stream in the desert, a sign of change and transformation, new life, grace, hope, joy, love and peace. (Isaiah 35: 6)