



*We believe we are called by God to be an inclusive  
Christian community, committed to justice,  
learning, service and care.*



## **BLACKWOOD UNITING CHURCH**

*More than a Sunday Church...*

**Week of 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017 ~ Service on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

**9:15 & 11am – Rev Phil Hoffmann**

**Worship Leaders: Mark Williams / Kay Cranwell-Mullin**

**Lectionary readings – 17<sup>th</sup> December (Third Sunday of Advent)**

Is 61:1-4, 8-11 • Ps 126 or Lk 1:46b-55 • 1 Th 5:16-24 • Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

**Next week – 24<sup>th</sup> December – (Fourth Sunday of Advent / Christmas Eve)  
Combined Service – 10am & 7pm**

*Preacher - Rev Phil Hoffmann*

*Worship Leader – Chris & Wes Bray*

### **Reflections on the Reading**

**Reading: The Gospel of John 1: 6 – 8, 19 – 28 [Third Sunday of Advent]**

To what does your life point as being important? Or put another way, if your life could be imagined as a torch, what are you lighting up for others to see? Your love for your family? Your faith and or Church community? Your passion for the Crows? What would people who know you think you are most 'on about'?

Here in the Season of Advent we hear of John the Baptist bellowing in the desert lands out in the valleys beyond Jerusalem. *"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord,"* John's Gospel makes much of the Baptist. He is a pointer to the light, the light which is "coming into the world".

We are all advocates, witnesses, promoters and tellers. Question is, "Of what?" Your conversation will be a guide. Now is the opportunity to point to what matters most. In all that the Christmas season brings.

***Rev Phil Hoffmann***

## ***This Week***

### **Christmas Service Times**

**17<sup>th</sup> Dec at 6 for 6:30pm – Carols night with Cantamus - at BUC**

**21<sup>st</sup> Dec at 7pm – Blue Christmas – at BUC**

**24<sup>th</sup> Dec at 10am – Combined Service**

**24<sup>th</sup> Dec at 7pm – Christmas Eve Family Service**

**25<sup>th</sup> Dec at 9am – Christmas Day Service**

### **Message from Rev Phil Hoffmann**

Dear Blackwood Uniting Community,

It is with heartfelt appreciation of you all that I advise that I will be moving on to further ministry at year's end as Senior School Chaplain at Westminster.

This has been a difficult and quite emotional process for me. I have valued so many interactions and shared moments with people of Blackwood Uniting.

I treasure your stories, your goodness and your challenges.

This is therefore not a decision to leave Blackwood; I have been very pleased to lead this community for the past four-and-a-half years. And wasn't seeking to leave.

The opportunity to serve in a school environment, with a part in the formation of young lives and with families at the 'edges' of Uniting Church life was too good a 'fit'. And ultimately, I hear the call to serve where any gifts and skills I bear are put to best use for the wider mission of faith in God and the vision of the Uniting Church. It will stretch me.

Particularly I find it sad to end my partnership in the Office with Jacqui who has been one of the finest, most competent workmates I have had in any of my working contexts. I have served under three Chairs of Church Council in Ray Bown, Ian Penny and lately Chris Bray, and have marvelled at each's dedication to the community. I have appreciated all those who have given time and thought to Council in my time with you.

Because the School requires me for the start of the 2018 school year, my departure happens with some haste. My final service will be a Combined one at 10:00 a.m. on December 31st, appropriately on the eve of a year of new things for us all.

I join with Karen, Olivia and Lewis [and at a distance, Fabian, Matilda, Alex and Emmett, and Clancy] in thanking you for your trust in my leadership, your co-operation in the many activities of service we share and, finally, your understanding of my response now to a further call.

With Affections, Phil

### **Final Service of Rev Phil Hoffmann**

There will be a shared lunch after Combined 10am service on Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> December in the Main Hall to commemorate and farewell Rev Phil Hoffmann. Please bring a plate of food to share. Donations towards a farewell present can be made to Jacqui in the office, or to Jan Furness or EFT into our bank account as follows:-

BSB: 805 007, A/C No. 00710955, A/C Name: Blackwood Uniting Church  
Reference: P Hoffmann Gift

## Christmas Gifts Stall

Looking for that special Christmas Gift?

This Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December, during coffee time, is your last opportunity to purchase gifts from Uniting World's Everything in Common Gift Catalogue. This year there are

Christmas Cards and gifts that give life, hope and freedom from poverty. Some of the gifts cards include chickens to provide income and nutrition for a family, basic school supplies for kids in Fiji, honey bees and piglets.

Choose a gift that gives hope, life, peace and joy this Christmas.



## Office Hours during Christmas period

Jacqui will be taking leave from Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December, returning Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January. If you have any urgent business please contact Jacqui on her mobile 0411 057 393 or email using the work email [office@blackwooduc.org.au](mailto:office@blackwooduc.org.au).

Penny Harper will still be coming in Tuesday mornings and Fridays 9:30am to 3pm and Chris Bray will be available upon request.

## ***BUC Events***

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### **Carols Night Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December**

Please meet in the foyer from 6:00pm for a light snack which will be provided, followed by a night of carol singing featuring Cantamus.

### **C3PO Women's Social Group Christmas lunch**

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December @ Belair Hotel, 12.30pm: All women in the congregation and BUC community are welcome to join us to celebrate the Christmas season over a convivial meal. If you would like to join us please let Marnie Agnew know by Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> for booking purposes: [agnew05@bigpond.net.au](mailto:agnew05@bigpond.net.au) mob: 0408 474 699

### **Christmas for Everyone! God is with us**

Join us at 7:00pm on Christmas Eve for an interactive telling of the Nativity story – roles for everyone & lots of fun!

### **Property Working Bee**

The Property Committee will be holding a working bee on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January commencing at 9:00 am. In a true spirit of inclusiveness, members of the congregations are invited to join us for the day. No matter what your area of expertise – painting walls, cleaning chairs, removing cobwebs from a 6 metre ceiling, etc – you will be able to demonstrate your talents to an appreciative audience.

### **Movie Screening – “The Stones Cry Out”**

BUC in conjunction with the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network will be hosting the above movie screening on January 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:30pm. This screening is sponsored by the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network, an organisation of approx. 500 people across Australia and across more than ten denominations. They are Australian Christians seeking lasting peace for the people of Palestine and Israel. More details to follow.

## **Neville Pope's 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations**

Neville Pope will be celebrating his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on 28<sup>th</sup> January at the Mitcham Institute (103 Princes Rd, Mitcham) from 2-4:30 pm and anyone from the church is welcome. There will be entertainment and dancing (some easy dances for everyone, so soft shoes is a good idea). No gifts, please, but a small plate of afternoon tea would be welcome. An RSVP to [npope@bigpond.net.au](mailto:npope@bigpond.net.au) or 0416 131 771 or 0417 823 537 would be helpful for us to have some idea of numbers, but it's not essential.

## ***BUČ Family Ministry***

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### **Thank-you goodies for Messy Church and Playgroup helpers:**

We have been given thank-you presents from a couple of Messy Church and Playgroup families, so if anyone who has helped at playgroup this year – morning tea, music, story-telling, cutting up for crafts – would like a chocolate, and Messy Church helpers would like some shortbread, please see Marnie on Sunday (morning or evening) to collect your thank-you treat. We have also been given some cards, which I will put up on the notice board in the front foyer.

### **Family Ministry thanks**

A big thankyou to all who contributed to our Christmas gift bags appeal this year. We made 30 gift bags for Messy Church, Baptism and 9.15am families, with a Christmas story booklet from the Bible Society, a Christmas bauble, a sparkly cardboard Christmas tree with a message from Blackwood UC on the back, balloons and candy canes for the children, and a Christmas Grace written for them by Rev Sarah Agnew. We also gave the Christmas trees to all families who came to Playgroup on Monday. Your donations also helped meet the cost of wonderful crafts at both Messy Church and Playgroup, and a face-painter at the Playgroup Christmas break-up.

The message on the trees said:

As the Wise men travelled for miles to bring the Christ child the first Christmas presents, with love, so may we, too, remember with thankful hearts the love that comes with each present we open.

*Happy Christmas* from the people at Blackwood Uniting Church

If you would like a copy of Sarah's Christmas Grace I have some copies left over.

Many thanks also to the musicians (Neville, Bruce and Alex) who played for our carols at Playgroup on Monday. We had 20 families and 32 children along with a heap of extra dads, mums and grandparents and at least one great-grandparent! We farewelled 8 children who are moving on to Kindy, school or Day Care in 2018, two of whom have been with us since they were 5 and 10 months old. Thanks to Rev Phil for coming to present the certificates. I wasn't quite with it and didn't think till too late to give Phil a graduation certificate too! But that can be remedied...

Next Sunday (17<sup>th</sup>) a family from Mainly Music is having their children baptised at the 11am service. Yours prayerful support would be appreciated, and anyone who would like to support them in person at the 11am service would be most welcome.

## ***Community Classes***

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### **Classes Finished for 2017**

The Community Classes have finished for the year and what a wonderful year we have had. I can honestly say that Wednesday and Thursday's are my favourite days as I get to see the great friends I have made. There will be some school holiday classes being held by our Needlework/Embroidery & Knitting/Crochet teacher on the following dates:-

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January – 1-3pm  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> January – 10-1pm  
Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January – 1-3pm  
Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January – 10-1pm  
Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January – 1-3pm

Classes will be held in the Coffee Lounge and will be at a discount price of \$3.00 a class.

Our return date for next year is Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January & Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018.

## ***Wider Community***

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### **Stillpoint Advent Reflections**

This resource, suitable for individual or small group use was written for Stillpoint by Lynona Hawkins. It can be viewed on the Stillpoint website, [www.stillpointsa.org.au](http://www.stillpointsa.org.au) For your copy, contact Stillpoint at [stillpoint@internode.on.net](mailto:stillpoint@internode.on.net) or phone 8271 0329 (office hours 10am to 2pm, Tuesday to Friday) or download from website. Cost is \$15.00.

### **Blackwood Circle of Friends**

The Blackwood Circle of Friends have one last request for donations for the year. They are collecting Christmas presents for a 2 year old girl and a 7 year old girl who have arrived from Pakistan as refugees. If you have anything that would be suitable please leave in the boxes located in the BUC Foyer.

### **Wrap with Love 2017 Report**

Rain, nor hail, or burning sun can prevent our wrappers from creating beautiful wraps for others in need of a warm blanket. This year we have sent off 123 wraps to the following organisations:-

- 12 to Flinders Hospital Pastoral Team
- 46 to WWL Headquarters Sydney
- 28 to Edmund Rice Camps for the Harmony Camp for new refugees
- 37 to Our Street Family Matters supporting homeless in Adelaide

Thank you to all those knitters, stichers and donators of wool and to every one for your efforts and commitment to WWL. Hope you all have a wonderful Christmas – Sue Jackson (Area Coordinator).

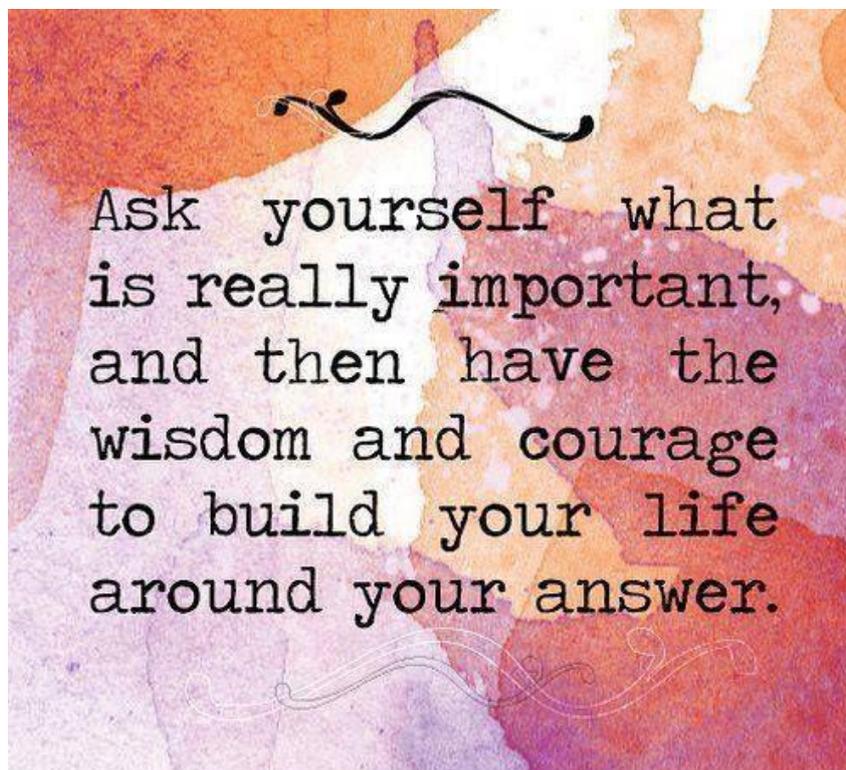
### **Thank you from Resthaven**

Resthaven Bellevue Heights have sent a card to thank the BUC for the generous donation of 10 Large Print Song Books. They noted that it means more of their residents can participate in Sing-a-long. Thank you to Anne Grear, Bev Eccleston and Jan Rawolle for organising this and for the congregation for their monetary contributions.

## Looking ahead in 2017...

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Sunday	17 <sup>th</sup> Dec	6:30pm	Christmas Carol night
Monday	18 <sup>th</sup> Dec	12:30pm	C3PO Women's Social Group Lunch
Thursday	21 <sup>st</sup> Dec	7:00pm	Blue Christmas (at BUC)
Sunday	24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10:00am	Combined Service
Sunday	24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	7:00pm	Christmas Eve Family Service
Monday	25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	9:00am	Christmas Day Service
Sunday	31 <sup>st</sup> Dec	10:00am	Combined Service followed by lunch for farewell to Rev Phil Hoffmann
Monday	15 <sup>th</sup> Jan	9:00am	Property Working Bee
Sunday	21 <sup>st</sup> Jan	7:30pm	Movie Screening "The Stones Cry Out"
Sunday	28 <sup>th</sup> Jan	2:00pm	Neville Pope's 70 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations



### Minister

**Rev Phil Hoffmann (0.5)**

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