



*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 21st December ~ Service on Sunday 23rd December 2018

9:15am & 11am – Rev Judi Hartwig

Worship Leaders: Ken Bardsley / Jan Wiseman

Lectionary readings – 23rd December (Fourth Sunday of Advent)

Mic 5:2-5a • Lk 1:47-55 or Ps 80:1-7 • Heb 10:5-10 • Lk 1:39-45, (46-55)

Next week 30th December – (Christmas 1)

Preacher 10am – Craig Mitchell

Worship Leader 10am – John Whitbread

Reflections on the Reading

Joy is a strange thing – it is more than happiness - one can have joy even when life is tough.

Mary knew that God had chosen her for a great work, but God had not made it easy. She chose to visit her relative Elizabeth – possibly to escape from the whispers of the people of Nazareth. When Mary met Elizabeth, she began to sing what has become known as the Magnificat.

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.” Luke 1:46-49

Mary had experienced the presence of God. She knew that God was blessing the world through her. Even though she was a peasant girl, God had anointed her with a special gift. God might not always make her life easy, but would always be with her and bless her.

Mary's life was no bed of roses – the pregnancy, journeying to Bethlehem when she was ready to give birth, the flight to Egypt, the death of her husband Joseph, and as Jesus began his public ministry and moved toward the cross her heart was pierced. But God enabled Mary to find joy even in the midst of adversity.

For some Christmas can be a time of fun and partying. For others Christmas can be a difficult time through family conflicts, the absence of a loved one, isolation or loneliness. Whatever your circumstances I pray that during this Christmas season you will find joy – the joy of knowing that God is with you. This is the most important message that I can give you – you are known and loved by God – today and always.

Blessings

Judi

This Week

Office Opening Hours during the Christmas Break

Jacqui will be on leave from Friday 21st January and returning Monday 21st January. Penny will be in the office Tuesday mornings 9:30am to 11:30am and Fridays 9:30am to 3:00pm. For any urgent pastoral enquiries, please contact Chris Bray on 0417 821 468. The office emails will be checked sporadically over this period and the phone messages will be checked Tuesday and Fridays.

Christmas Eve - "Outback Christmas"

Monday evening 24th 6-7pm. On Christmas Eve we will celebrate an Australian-themed time of song and story with the music by Leigh Newton and band. Join us for an-all-age interactive event followed by a sausage sizzle with OH&S approved onion serving. Leigh Newton will also be sharing songs with us in worship at 9.15 am on Sunday 9th December.

Christmas Day – "Angels announcing the gift of Christmas"

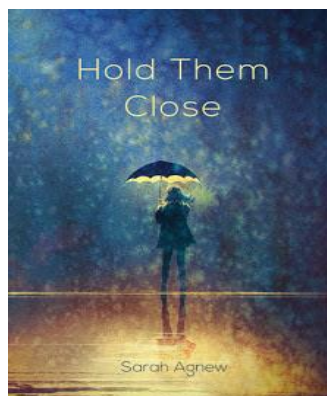
Tuesday morning 25th at 9am will be a family friendly worship with "Angels announcing the gift of Christmas". Please come along and celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Property Working Bee

The Property Committee will be holding a working bee on Monday 7th 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.

Billet hosts needed for National Young Adults Leaders Conference

From 17-20 January the Uniting Church's National Young Adults Leaders Conference will be held at Nunyara. This is a fantastic event that runs every couple of years for 18 to 30 years old's and is being hosted by SA. The national Assembly is seeking local billets as Nunyara is nearly booked up. The accommodation is needed for the event organisers and Assembly staff – bed and breakfast. If you might be willing to offer a bed to a young adult from interstate, please contact Craig Mitchell craigmitchell01@gmail.com or 0417323088 or via the Church Office.



Hold Them Close – the new poetry book by Sarah Agnew: 5 copies of Sarah's new poetry book are now available and more are coming at Christmas. If you are interested in purchasing a copy (\$15) please see Marnie Agnew agnew05@bigpond.net.au mob 0408 474 699

An Australian version of the Nativity Story

Christmas in the Shed

24 December 6-7pm Blackwood Uniting Church

All-age, interactive event with music by Leigh Newton

Followed by sausage sizzle



Christmas Day Service 9am

Family friendly worship

*Angels announcing the
gift of Christmas*

Looking ahead in 2018 ...

Friday	21 st Dec	7:30pm	Blue Christmas at Holy Innocents
Monday	24 th Dec	6:00pm	Christmas Eve Service
Tuesday	25 th Dec	9:00am	Christmas Day Service
Monday	7 th Jan	9:00am	Working Bee

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Minister

For any urgent enquiries please contact
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