

WEST EPPING UNITING CHURCH

Our Vision:

*We are people sent to share the love,
hope and compassion of Jesus Christ with
all the world*



December—January 2019

Welcome 환영합니다

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THE YEAR AHEAD

What does the New Year look like for you? I always feel New Year's Eve creeps up on me, given the fact that Christmas is such a busy time.

But for many people New Year is big. Celebrations are much bigger than Christmas. Churches in places like Africa, the Pacific and Asia are packed for watchnight services while the streets of major cities around the world are crammed with revellers, whether it be Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong, the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Times Square in New York or Circular Quay here in Sydney.

With these celebrations come many traditions. My mother's family used to open the front door at the stroke of midnight to let the old year out and to let the new year in. In Ireland people bang bread against the wall to chase the bad spirits of the old year away while the Chinese, when they celebrate the New Year later in February, paint their doors red, the colour of good luck.

Such activities point to the hope for a new year that brings health, wealth and happiness. These are the things we long for. We constantly expect things will get better.

But we really do not know what's around the corner. I am moving close to my retirement date. And when people ask me about my plans, I am, honestly not quite sure. One thing is for certain, I will continue to engage in ministry in some way or another.

What do you have in store for 2019? Perhaps your plans are clearly laid out? Perhaps they are not? Perhaps the future looks a little hazy, even uncertain?

West Epping is facing a different kind of year as a new minister is sought to replace me and as Rev Vladimir Korotkov, your part-time supply minister, takes the helm from February.

Whatever 2019 has in store, remember, we do not journey alone. The truth of the matter is that this is God's world. We are gifted with the immense privilege of being part of it.

And that means we need to listen to God, we need to trust God and we need to journey with God, wherever God takes us!

Blessings to you in 2019!

Rev. John Barr

PRAYER POINTS

- ✝ Pray for world as we begin a new year. Pray for peace, justice and equity among all people.
- ✝ Pray for West Epping Uniting Church as we journey into new places.
- ✝ Pray for all who are travelling or are absent. Pray for their safe return.
- ✝ Pray for all those who are sick, grieving, sad, stressed, hurt or are lonely.

PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

O God, as we stand at the beginning of this new year we confess our need of your presence and your guidance as we face the future.

We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us – but you alone know what it holds for us, and only you can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet its challenges. So help us to humbly put our hands into your hand, and to trust you and to seek your will for our lives during the coming year.

In midst of uncertainties in the days ahead, assure us of the certainty of your unchanging love.

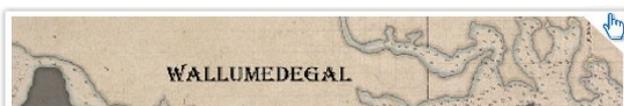
In the midst of life's inevitable disappointments and heartaches, help us to turn to you for the stability and comfort we need.

In the midst of life's temptations and the pull of our stubborn self-will, help us not to lose our way but to have the courage to do what is right in your sight, regardless of the cost.

And in the midst of our daily preoccupations and pursuits, open our eyes to the sorrows and the injustices of our hurting world and help us to respond with compassion and sacrifice to those who are friendless and in need.

May our constant prayer be that of the ancient Psalmist: "Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end" (Psalm 119:33).

(Billy Graham, 2008)



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which we gather, the Wallumedegal people of the Eora nation and give thanks for their care of the land over many generations.





Diary Dates

- ◆ **Sunday 6 January to Sunday 27 January** ~ Worship, 9am
- ◆ **Friday 18 January** ~ Friday Discovery, 10am. Board Games. Enquiries: Joan Ross
- ◆ **Tuesday 22 January** ~ Mid-week Communion, 10am
- ◆ **Sunday 27 January** ~ Closure of Ministry Service for Rev John Barr, 9am
- ◆ **Sunday 3 February** ~ Worship 8am & 10am with HC
- ◆ **Saturday 13 April** ~ Mystery Coach Tour
- ◆ **Saturday 4 May** ~ West Epping Women's Retreat

Closure of Ministry for Rev John Barr

Sunday 27 January at 9am

Following the Service we will move to the Maurice Davies Hall for fellowship and Brunch.

Contributions towards a gift for John can be placed in a box visible in the church foyer or by bank transfer to the West Epping account with the description John B farewell. Bank details: Westpac BSB 032 081 Account 961263.

STAFF NEWS

Helen Tattersall, Office Administrator, will be on leave from Friday 21 December to Monday 14 January. During that time the Church Office will be closed. However, urgent enquiries can be referred to Rev John Barr 0457 879 099.

Rev John Barr will on leave from Monday 8 January to Tuesday 15 January.

During John's leave Rev Greg Woolnough (Epping Uniting Church) will be available for urgent pastoral matters contact: 0407 291 958, or gregwool91@gmail.com



THE CHRISTMAS BOWL

On Christmas Day or on one of the three Sundays following Christmas you are invited to make an offering to the Christmas Bowl Appeal. This is a program of the National Council of Churches in Australia. Funds raised are used to support communities in Vanuatu to combat natural disasters, in Pakistan to provide education for girls, in Jordan to provide relief for Syrian refugees, in Zimbabwe to assist communities in drought and in Bangladesh to support the displaced Rohingya community.

Place your contribution in an envelope marked "Christmas Bowl" and put it in the offering on Christmas Day or on any Sunday until 13th January.



COMING WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY 30th DECEMBER at 9am

Bible Reading: Luke 2:41-52 – "And all who heard him were amazed"

Worship Leader: Doug Blunden | Preacher: Rev John Barr

SUNDAY 6th JANUARY at 9am with HOLY COMMUNION

Bible Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12 – "Wise men from the East"

Worship Leader: Jan Venn-Brown | Preacher: Rev John Barr

SUNDAY 13th JANUARY at 9am

Bible Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7

Worship Leader: Lois Rees | Guest Speaker: Andy Corkill from ACT for Peace.

Andy will speak about the important work of international aid and development that is carried out through ACT for Peace, an agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

This includes the Christmas Bowl, an appeal West Epping supports every year.

Note, contributions to the Christmas Bowl can be placed in the offering each Sunday on Sunday 30 December, Sunday 6 January or Sunday 13 January.

MID-WEEK COMMUNION Tuesday 22nd JAN at 10am

NOTE: Mid-Week Communion is celebrated on the third Tuesday of the month. However, for January only, Mid-Week Communion will be celebrated on the fourth Tuesday.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SEX AND MARRIAGE?

Rev John Barr will conduct two study sessions on key texts of the Bible related to sex and marriage. This is an opportunity for all of us to reflect on God's Word in relation to important issues.

Sunday afternoon 20th January: 2.30pm to 4.30pm; in the cottage

Tuesday evening 22nd January: 7.30pm to 9.30pm in the Cottage **ALL WELCOME**

Blessings for
a safe and
happy
New Year

Minister

Rev John Barr 0457 879 099

Office Administrator

Helen Tattersall 9868 3574

Safe Church Contact Person

Erica Harrison 9873 3989

Church Office

Office Hours 35 Orchard St Epping 2121 p: 9868 3574

Monday to Thursday 8.30am—3.00pm

Friday 8.30am—12.30pm

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WEUC Bank Account Westpac BSB 032 081 Account 961263