

# WEST EPPING UNITING CHURCH

## Our Vision:

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



Newsletter

Sunday 28 November 2021

## Readings

### 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.



### Luke 21:25-36

'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.'

'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

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.

# Geoff's Reflection

## First Sunday of Advent

### When the Stars Begin to Fall...

I There's a song, a spiritual, I remember from the time of the 'The Seekers.' I remember Judith Durham's voice ringing out as she sang 'When the stars begin to fall.' The words go like this:

*My Lord, what a morning/ My Lord what a morning/ My Lord, what a morning*

*When the stars begin to fall.*

*You will weep for the rocks and mountains/ You will weep for the rocks and mountains/*

*You will weep for the rocks and mountains/ When the stars begin to fall.*

*My Lord, what a morning/ My Lord what a morning/ My Lord, what a morning*

*When the stars begin to fall.*

*You will hear the shout of victory/ You will hear the shout of victory/*

*You will hear the shout of victory/ When the stars begin to fall.*

*My Lord, what a morning/ My Lord what a morning/ My Lord, what a morning*

*When the stars begin to fall.*

When the stars begin to fall!! What is it like, when the stars begin to fall?? What are the signs that the stars begin to fall?? How do we respond when stars begin to fall in our lives? For all of us there will be the time(s) when the stars begin to fall.

We feel a pain in our body, our chest, head... and we suddenly wonder. We feel a lump or a strange feeling in a body part; can't see or hear or speak... There are signs and the stars begin to fall.

A relationship shows signs of stress and strain, conflict, awkwardness or deep frustration, hurt, fear or anger – the signs, as the stars begin to fall. As they fall we descend into a place where everything is questioned and the foundations, once seeming rock solid now flounder and shake. That which we once felt so sure about, which we depended upon, now feels uncertain, shaky and less firm. The clear blue, sunny skies of life floating along without too many cares or woes, have turned grey and the clouds are building. Storms and quakes, signs in the skies above and the Earth below seem to fill our mind and being and stumble, fall and descend into confusion, despair and struggle.

The stars begin to fall and all around were the signs that this would be so but somehow we missed much of this. The signs of impending doom and gloom or disaster are easy to ignore and avoid. We distract ourselves, hoping that they will disappear and the chaos to which they may point, will right itself and all will be well. Julian of Norwich declared: 'All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.' And it may be so and come to pass but the sense and feeling that all is not well and our world has crumbled, will overwhelm us and shake our foundations.

This Sunday begins a new year in the Church's seasons – it is Advent, a season of preparation for Christmas celebrations. Luke's story of Jesus will be read (Luke 21:25-36) and in it Jesus points to the signs that will appear, writ large across sky and Earth, in the world beyond and the world within. People will faint from breath-less-ness – being out of breath. This is a pointer to Genesis 2 where God breathes life and Spirit into the human and there is animated life and being. Without breath, we cease to live. In our breathless fear, we cease to live, whether that be the ultimate death of the physical body or the giving in to fear, pain or desperate hopelessness. Perhaps it is losing ourselves within a world of distraction or addiction, chasing the wind and looking for life amidst inanimate, soulless existence.

Jesus points to the reality that all around are signs, not just of endings, death and fear but also life and hope and the deeper reality experienced in the Reign of God, that is ever-present and everywhere real. If we are open to the signs and realities around us, the raw and wild beauty and wonder that also rips the breath from us, leaving us breathless before the profound, Divine possibility.



In a story of about a fig tree ripening my mind shifted, wandered and filled with the wondrous image of the neighbourhood abloom with Jacarandas. Just this morning I was entranced by the beautiful mauve filling a grey sky. As the grey clouds built, the mauve glowed more richly, as if laughing at grey skies, of doom or dismal weather. Jacarandas blossomed and filled my vision with beauty and wonder. Along the footpaths, there were velvet carpets of mauve, slippery and wonderful underfoot. A mauve carpet transporting me into a new season that awaits: summer almost here and Christmas is coming hot on its heels. I am lifted by the vision of God's possibilities in the world where humans struggle and strive and fight and complain, win or lose, hope and despair and constantly trust in those things that flail and fail us. Money and property, power and control, careers and celebrity, proving self and striving to be significant or in a place where we can control life and feel secure and strong – invincible. We side with the strong and powerful, in private, public and national life. We want certainty and seek it, claim it and stand firm on it...

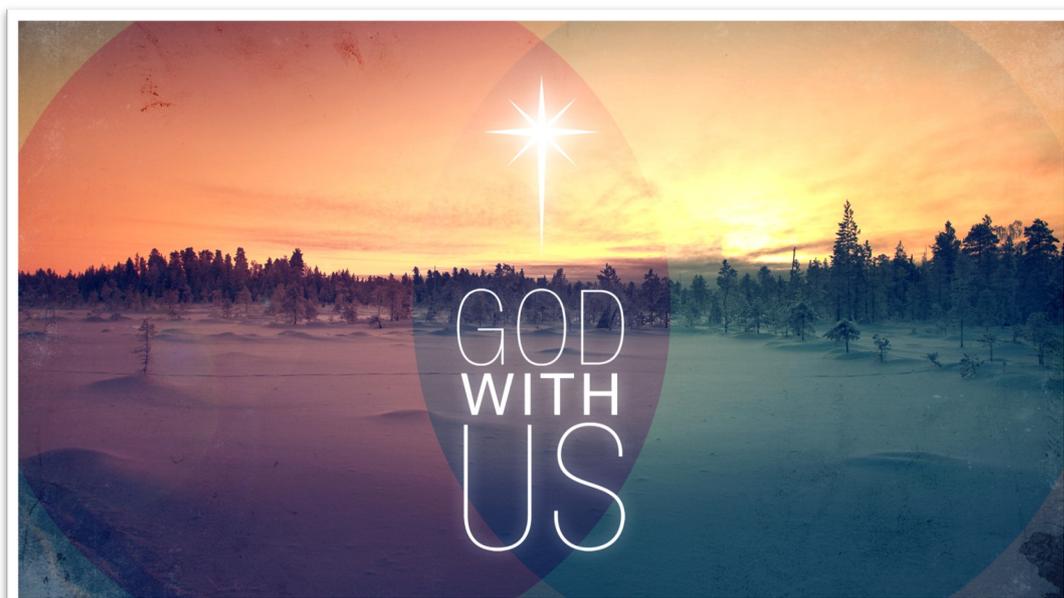
Until... until it all falls apart and our money, carefully saved, invested and stockpiled can't save us; nor can the power we think we have or have aligned ourselves with. Fame and fortune suddenly appear hollow and vulnerable as life mocks us. Just cast a glance at the social pages or celebrity mags and find out who is today's failed celeb and how much money they have that has not kept them afloat...

Jesus turns life around and upside down, seeking the lower, simpler way and reaching out to marginalised, elderly, outcasts, minorities, refugees, indigenous – whoever. He wanders through their struggling lives and reaches out a hand for them to join him in the journey into deeper reality, life and being. Listen to those who appear before a group of equally struggling down and out people in an AA meeting or a city squat. Listen as they talk, without airs and graces, unable to hide the grime and struggle of life as they begin the journey into a deeper way through pain, shame and beyond into forgiveness, life and a new freedom, trusting in that infinite power of love that comes from beyond, but experienced within as Spirit that receives, welcomes and loves deeply.

Jesus points us to the reality of a Reign of love that transcends our ability to control everything – and nothing. This Reign is deep and rich, free and broad, open for all people to enter, to be, to live, to hope. It is a way that recognises that we will die and die again before we are raised into new frames of being, deeper awareness and richer life. Each death will have its signs and as stars begin to fall, we will feel the sinking feeling as foundations shake. But this must be for us to trust the deeper reality of life and being in the love and grace of God. The falling stars will open our eyes to grace and love!

The link to the video reflection is: <https://youtu.be/T4Vxu0oV9Ws>

***Rev Geoff Stevenson***



# SMILE 😊 warms a heart ~ Share with US

Send your "Smile thought" to Helen at -  
weppinguca@gmail.com or post to

"Smile thought"

c/- 75/129 Lanhams Road, Winston Hills 2153.

Looking forward to 'Sharing a Smile' with you.

*Pastoral Care Team*



A true conversation between Tommy (age 6) and his Mum

**Tommy:** Where did you meet the man that you love?

**Mum:** Where did I meet Daddy?

**Tommy:** Yeah.

**Mum:** We met through a friend!

**Tommy:** Oh ok. And... if I wanted to meet a person to love and who loves me, where would I go?

**Mum:** Umm, well people meet the person they end up loving at lots of different places.

**Tommy:** Hmmm ... And could we live here in this house?

**Mum:** Possibly not. I don't think Mummy and Daddy will live here at that time. Why's that?

**Tommy:** I just thought it would be nice for us to all live together.

*Elva H*

Another story from Tommy (age 6) and Eva (age 4) brother and sister.

**Tommy:** Hey, Eva - Let's play the icebreaker game where you say what you like about the other person. I'll go first.

**Tommy:** I like you because you always have a big smile on your face when you see me.

**Eva:** I like you because you help me.

**Tommy:** I like you because you teach me to be a ballerina!

**Eva:** I like you because you teach me karate!

*Elva H*



What a beautiful sight to wake up to, a blanket of purple 'snow' from the jacaranda tree.

*Helen T*



Smiling is infectious,  
you catch it like the flu,  
When someone smiled at me today,  
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner  
and someone saw my grin  
When he smiled I realized  
I'd passed it on to him .

I thought about that smile  
then I realized its worth,  
A single smile,  
just like mine  
could travel round the earth.

So, if you feel a smile begin,  
don't leave it undetected  
Let's start an epidemic quick,  
and get the world infected!

- Russell H. Conwell

## Prayer for Advent

Lord Jesus,

Master of both the light and the darkness,  
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for  
Christmas.

We who have so much to do seek quiet  
spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look  
forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for  
the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your  
presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet  
seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Amen.

(Henri Nouwen)



## Synod Insights

Wing and a prayer: "Flying Padre" Uniting Church Minister Rev David Shrimpton has made it his mission to visit remote communities during the pandemic to provide pastoral support and care. While we are lucky to have the technology to keep in contact, nothing beats face to face contact.

**Under Church News:** 'Is Your Church Newcomer Ready?'

Check out the self assessment test!

Find this and more in the newsletter link below.

[Weekly Newsletter \(vision6.com.au\)](http://www.vision6.com.au)

## Christmas gift cards

The Mission Team will again be selling Christmas Cards supporting projects in aid of;

- OVC project in Mwandia
- Act for Peace
- UnitingWorld

These cards will be on sale from Sunday 5 December.



## Worship this Sunday at 9.30am will be a hybrid service

Everyone is welcome to attend  
(masks must be worn)  
or join us on zoom

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Telephone 02-8015-6011

Meeting ID 864-749-2332 passcode 2121

Or watch on our Youtube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNf7ULm92n4lwV43xXykEWA>

## Fresh expressions of worship

Sunday at 4.30pm in the Maurice Davies Hall.  
Families and friends welcome.

## Mid-week devotion

Join us on Wednesdays at 10am on zoom led by  
Pastor Lyn Graham.

Join Zoom Meeting at 10am

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/91952761718?pwd=WmtNRhKbDV3OTZLaVJVRWk4VGvkZz09>

Meeting ID: 919 5276 1718 Passcode: 2121

## Zoom prayer group

You are invited to join our weekly prayer time on  
zoom on Thursdays at 4pm. Everyone is welcome  
to join in. For more information contact Lois Rees.

Join Zoom Thursday Prayer Group at 4pm

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/98939453219?pwd=dG9paSs1eGg4MGZDbGozNWdqOHlQQT09>

Meeting ID: 989 3945 3219 Passcode: 2121

## Coffee and chat

Join us on Fridays on zoom at  
10am for a chat and catch up.  
Join Zoom Meeting at 10am.

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/95597404691?pwd=QIB2WjJjRHdRSXJkNmFPWkR2S0dpUT09>

Meeting ID: 955 9740 4691 Passcode: 2121



## CCA food collection

Our final food collection for Christian Community Aid for the year will be this Sunday 28 November. If you are unable to bring them to church we are happy to pick up your donations or you can drop them to our homes. If you would like to include Christmas items such as puddings, tinned ham, shortbread, tinned fruit, chocolates, biscuits, tea/coffee etc. they would be much appreciated. Many thanks for your great support of our food collections,

*Carolyn 9871 2661*

*Margaret 9871 8276*



## Christmas Markets

Gifts – CDs, Toys, Books, Cards,  
Clothes and More, Plus FOOD

Saturday 4 December

8.30am to 1pm

Epping Uniting Church

at the Chester/Oxford Street Roundabout

Enquiries: Carolyn 0408 747 880



## A Christmas invitation

Ladies Fellowship warmly invite ALL ladies from our church family to a special Christmas Morning Tea on Friday **10 December at 10am**.

Come along and enjoy a morning of fellowship, fun and yummy morning tea as we are now able to celebrate this special time of year together once again.

Please reply to Lyn MacGregor (0400 701 876) or Barbara Newton (0419 244 254) by Sunday 5 Dec for catering purposes or there will be a sign-up sheet in the church foyer.

You may like to bring a sandwich and stay for lunch. A donation of food for Eastwood Community Aid would be appreciated to help restock their pantry.

We look forward to seeing you.

## Use of WEUC Voting Saturday 4 Dec

Voting Centres NSW approached Church Council requesting the use of WEUC for an election booth for local council elections on Saturday 4 December. Over several meetings where we reviewed all the details provided, Church Council agreed to this request.

Voting Centres NSW will be using the foyer, Maurice Davies Hall, the kitchen and outside toilets for the election, setting up on Friday evening and departing no later than midnight on Saturday.

A deep clean of all areas has been arranged with our regular cleaners to take place after vacating the church and before 0700 hrs on Sunday morning.

Church Council saw this as an opportunity for mission in our local area where we know few people but would welcome them at any time. The church brochure has been updated and we would like to pass these to guests to the church as they leave from the side driveway entrance. It is expected that children will attend with their parents and may use the outdoor play equipment while they wait. These families may be interested in later attending church, playgroup, mainly music etc so it is a great opportunity to welcome them.

Official voting times are from 0800 to 1800hrs.

### Can you volunteer for a rostered time to help?

Your help to hand out brochures and greet people attending with a smile will be very much appreciated. Please let Alison Anderson know by email or phone message with your name, time you can help, and a phone number.

*Alison Anderson*

m: 0418 623 446 e: [gja.ando@gmail.com](mailto:gja.ando@gmail.com)

## Do you enjoy flowers?

Each week we have a volunteer who provides flowers to enhance our church building. If we are to keep this service going new volunteers are needed.

If you can only do 1 week a year (not a big ask) that would be helpful. Please consider joining this roster! Many of our wonderful regulars are finding it difficult to continue.

Please contact me on 9871 2661 or 0413 506 652

*Carolyn Button*



## mainly music

Welcome back to mainly music in our downstairs church hall on Wednesday 1 December and 8 December from 9.45am. You can find out more and register for our fun music session for children 0-5 years and their parents/carers.

Email Elizabeth at [mmwepping@gmail.com](mailto:mmwepping@gmail.com)

You can find out about our family Park Play on Wednesday 12 January too!



## Prayers

If you would like to know of some specific names of people with particular pastoral needs to pray for, please **contact Annabelle Avern** (member of the Pastoral Care Team) on 0428 368 870, preferably on weekday evenings.



## Peace in your pocket

Do not go where the path may lead,  
go instead where there is no path  
and leave a trail.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*Christ  
IS Coming!*

## Word search puzzle

T N A I D N H G C M W N S R Y  
H D A T O E E E C Y J P T F T  
F J F T K W V S A A H L A N W  
I I I F I B A L C V R D N M S  
L F B D W O A T Y A E E D V E  
I R S S H Y N Q C S P N F K A  
F E G U A L T S Z H D E J U E  
E D B G N X F U T G L O R Y L  
V E C H B O D R B A W O R L D  
D M L S E I L R U Y R H L D H  
Q P O S I G N S M F U S S T N  
G T U I P D R G Q Z P F R O S  
B I D P O W E R S Z D A O T X  
W O Q G R H E A D S E M W N V  
G N L P R A Y G Q J A Z J U E

CAREFUL	GLORY	MOON	REDEMPTION	STARS
CLOUD	HEADS	NATIONS	SEA	SUN
EARTH	HEAVEN	POWER	SIGNS	WATCH
ESCAPE	LIFT	PRAY	STAND	WORLD

## Rosters

(hybrid service)

Sunday 5 December	9.30am
Liturgist	Desy Chapple
Ministers Assistant	John Hall
Prayers for the people	Heather Petrie
Reader	Soraya Raju
Welcomer	Helen Aiton
Stewards	Morris Ross, John Norman
Communion stewards	John Hall, Ian West John Norman, Sue Elliott
AV desk	Phil & Desy
Lectionary Readings Advent 2	Malachi 3:1-4 Philippians 1:3-11 Luke 1:68-79 Luke 3:1-6

## December Diary Dates

- Saturday 11 December  
Pastoral Friends afternoon tea
- Thursday 16 December  
Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance  
7.45pm
- Friday 17 December  
Friday Discovery 10am
- Friday 24 December  
Christmas Eve Carols in the carpark 7pm
- Saturday 25 December  
Christmas Day Service 8.30am
- Sunday 26 December  
There will be no service at West Epping

## January Services

- Sundays 2, 9, 16, and 23 January  
Hybrid service with zoom only at 9.30am  
(no Youtube)
- Sunday 30 January  
Hybrid service 9.30am with Youtube recording

### Minister

(Vacant)

### Seniors Ministry

Pastor Lyn Graham 0412 990 949

### Office Administrator

Helen Tattersall 0408 972 957

### Safe Church Contact Person

Erica Harrison 0409 044 923

### Church Office

35 Orchard St Epping 2121 p: 9868 3574

Office Hours Thursday & Friday 8.30am to 2.30pm

Email weppinguca@gmail.com

Website weppinguca.org.au

Facebook facebook.com/weppinguniting

WEUC Bank Account Westpac BSB 032 081 Account 961263

West Epping Uniting Church uses information and news provided by its members, adherents and officers for the purposes of conducting its pastoral ministry. In the course of that ministry, material published in this bulletin may reach an audience wider than the membership of the congregation.