

LifeWords Christmas reflections

It has become increasingly difficult to celebrate a Christian Christmas.

Tinsel and baubles are hung in shopping centres in October. In November, stores begin broadcasting songs about winter. Suburban gardens are festooned with inflatable creatures that indicate people's fascination with polar climates. Workmates speak of "the silly season". People exchange greeting cards depicting mythical events. Even supposedly "Christian" cards have shepherds and magi crowding around a stylised feed trough bearing a little white baby rather than a Palestinian one..

Of course, the wise men from the East came when Jesus was about two years old, and Joseph, Mary and Jesus would not have stayed in that filthy shed beyond the first night.

The idea of exchanging Christmas cards and decorating evergreen trees began with Queen Victoria. Such was her influence that the practice caught on, quickly becoming "traditional".

Among early Christians, there was only one major festival celebrated widely: Easter, the dreadful crucifixion and joyous resurrection of Christ the Saviour. It took centuries for theologians to suggest that the birth of this long-prophesied Saviour should also be celebrated. However, since no one knew exactly when that date was, the date of the winter solstice was chosen; after all, this was the day when the light began to return to the "world." The known world was entirely north of the equator, not that anyone knew of an equator, or hemispheres, or planetary rotation.

The fact is, astronomical studies show that Jesus was most likely born in September. The gospel accounts make no mention of deep snow or freezing winds in the little family's return to Nazareth. (The year was probably about 6BC, but that just complicates things too much!)

Much of the now traditional Christmas music comes from writers concerned with ideas like warmth in the winter, sleigh travel across snowdrifts in Russia, candles to dispel deep European darkness, and highly embellished stories of a mythical gift giver. (The clothing of early Santa Claus depicted a thin man dressed in green, but the Coca-Cola company managed to change all that for its own commercial purposes, and now it's "traditional".)

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Prayer Chain - Rev Adam Tipple

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We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land - the Jarowair and Giabal people.

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So, here we sit in the twenty-first century AD, surrounded by spurious advertising and false tradition. It is, as I wrote earlier, very difficult to celebrate the coming to the world of the Prince of Peace, God with us. One idea, admittedly, did stay more or less true: that the Son of God arrived in a village byre as a helpless baby surrounded by animals and greeted by shepherds, not in an ornate palace greeted by fanfares of trumpets and surrounded by liveried servants.

How can we do this season, in summer, in a subtropical country full of people singing about mid-winter snowfalls?

Here is how we can do it. We can live lives full of hope, joy and peace, sharing gifts of forgiveness and generosity. We can even offer such gifts to people we do not even know, by buying gifts through Everything in Common, as Mardi Lumsden again reminded us on the first Sunday of Advent. Similar gift giving can be made through Act for Peace, the Australian Council of Churches agency. We can affirm that Christmas is not about self-indulgence, but about celebrating the beginning of the Christian era. Living lives as a Christian people, with God's help, ensures the continuation of the Christian era.

Another important way to celebrate Christmas in a Christian manner is to participate in worship with other Christians, something we offer here at Lifeworks at 8am on Christmas morning, or on Christmas Eve, Saturday 24th, with the Brazilian congregation at 7pm, also at Lifeworks.

Please, continue to pray and work for peace, not just at Christmas, but throughout the year.



December Services

**Sunday, 4 December 9am
(Holy Communion)**

Worship Leader: Margaret Thorpe
Preacher: Rev John Case

Sunday, 11 December 9am

Worship Leader: Jesse Huth
Preacher: Rev Lynne Hindman

Sunday, 18 December 9am

Worship Leader: Louise Walker
Preacher: Rev Ruth Harding

Sunday, 25 December 8 am

Worship Leader: Rev Adam Tipple
Preacher: Rev Adam Tipple

Livestreams - please see [Facebook](#) for the latest link.

Giving Details

If you would like to give to Lifeworks, you can use the following methods:

Electronic direct deposit
Bank: Westpac Bank
Name: Lifeworks Uniting Church
BSB: 034 242
Account Number: 359 011

Write a cheque to Lifeworks Uniting Church, and post in the mail to: PO Box 18093, Clifford Gardens, Qld, 4350

Cash can be left in the offering bag on Sunday mornings.

We thank you for your generosity!

Quick Links

www.lifeworksuniting.org.au



[YouTube](#)



[Facebook](#)

Midweek online prayer link (Weds 7am) <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81432040065...>
Password: B1x6cs

Christmas Around the World

A MULTICULTURAL AND FAMILY FRIENDLY
CHRISTMAS CAROLS

AT

LIFEWORKS UNITING CHURCH

615 BOUNDARY ST GLENVALE

SATURDAY 17TH DECEMBER

5.00PM

FOOD - KIDS CRAFT

SAUSAGE SIZZLE - COFFEE

7.00PM

Carols Under the Stars

PLEASE BYO PICNIC RUG AND/OR CAMP CHAIRS



Sunday Morning Prayer

Before the
service, every
Sunday 8.30am
in the meeting
room

Lifeworks Uniting Church

News and Announcements

There will be no Lifeworks Christmas Eve Service. All are welcome to join with the Brazilian Congregation at 7:00pm on Christmas Eve. **Christmas Day Service is 8am**



Prayer Points

- Please pray for Rev Adam and the family.
- Pray for the upcoming Carols Around the World and for the families that will attend.
- Pray for safe travelling as many people head off on holidays.
- Give thanks for the tremendous support of the Red Bag Appeal.
- Pray for the families that will receive the red bags.
- Please continue to pray for peace throughout the world.

