



Dungog & Gresford Parishes

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

Incorporating worshipping communities at **St Mary's Church**, Brown Street, Dungog, **St Patrick's Church**, Rifle Street, Clarence Town, **St Helen's Church**, Park Street, East Gresford, **Sacred Heart Church**, Summerhill Road, Summer Hill via Vacy, and serving the surrounding districts.

SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2022

1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR A

Parish Staff

Fr Andrew Doohan (*Administrator*)
Kerry Copus (*Parish Secretary*)

Presbytery & Parish Office

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Office Hours

The Parish Office is staffed on Tuesdays from 10am until 2pm & Fridays from 10am until 1pm.

Parish Bulletin

Items for inclusion in the Parish Bulletin should be received at the Parish Office by 5pm on Wednesdays. Bulletins can be downloaded from the website.

Bulletin Coordinator—Lyn Barham (02) 4992 2110

Other Contacts

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Gresford Faith Banister
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Parish School

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Mrs Lisa McNeilly (*Principal*)

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A Pastoral Note...

Happy New Year!

Yes, I know, it's a corny liturgist kind of thing, but that will never stop me from saying on the First Sunday of Advent each year.

As we switch our Gospel focus to the Gospel of Matthew this weekend we will begin to revisit a whole range of well-known passages from Matthew's account of the public ministry of Jesus.

Like anything with which we are familiar, the challenge to listen to what God is attempting to communicate to us here and now, in this time and place.

The challenge of doing this well is particularly so as we get closer to the 'silly season' and all the things that come at the end of the civic year. We are but a few weeks from the end of another year, and it's only a month or so until the great Australian summer breaks upon us.

There will be end of year functions. There will be "Christmas" parties to attend. There will be plans to make for Christmas celebrations.

Yet as believers the Season of Advent is not about an ending but rather a beginning, a beginning that has lasted over 2,000 years (so far) and which will stretch into the future for many years to come.

So as we get caught up in all the usual round of events over the coming weeks, as we celebrate all that 2022 has been (as is right and proper) let's not forget that there are other things to keep an

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The Catholic Parishes of Dungog & Gresford recognize that they sit upon the traditional country of the Worimi people. We acknowledge their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with this land. We pay our respects to their Elders—past, present, and emerging—and commit ourselves to working together for reconciliation and justice.

eye on as well.

And those things might happen to be of eternal importance.

Have a blessed week.

Fr Andrew

The Commitment to Stroud

Parishioners would be well aware that Fr Derek had a commitment to assisting the Catholic community at Stroud with Mass once a month. This was something I was happy to continue in the short term while I settled into my new role here.

I have let the Parish of Gloucester know, however, that I will not be continuing with this commitment in 2023. This weekend will be my last visit to Stroud.

While I recognise the generosity of doing so, I feel that my first commitment on a weekend should be to the Parish in which I have been appointed.

Not having to dash away at the end of the 9.30am Mass to get to Stroud will mean that I have the opportunity to spend time with parishioners at Dungog—or celebrate baptisms as required in our various church buildings.

Fr Andrew



Safeguarding in our Parishes means ...

The Parishes of Dungog & Gresford hold that children, young people and vulnerable adults are a gift from God with an intrinsic right to dignity of life, respect and security from physical and emotional harm. They are to be treasured, nurtured and safeguarded.

In line with the Safeguarding Policy of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, our parishes have zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and is committed to safeguarding all who interact with the parishes through our activities, ministries and services, especially children and adults at risk.

Cuppa @ Clarence Town

Next Sunday, 4 December, there will be a cup of tea after the 8am Mass. Please bring a plate to share, and stay to enjoy company and conversation.

Dungog Christmas Hamper Raffle

A basket has been placed at the rear of the Dungog & Clarence Town churches where donations towards this year's Christmas Hamper can be placed. Your generosity in contributing to the hamper is gratefully received.

November Masses

The last of our November Masses for those buried in our cemeteries will take place on **Wednesday 30 November** at St Helen's, East Gresford at 5.30pm.

May the souls of the all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Getting Ready for Christmas

The Dungog Uniting Church invites everyone to a Combined Churches service of Carols and Readings to celebrate the Advent on **Sunday 4 December** at **6.30pm**.

The Service will be followed by a supper in their hall, and you are asked to bring a plate to share.

St Joseph's School Trip to Canberra

On Monday, 28 November, the Year 6 Class will make the annual trip to Canberra. We wish them a safe journey, an enjoyable time, and a safe return.

Waiting for Purpose—Advent Reflection

Waiting with Purpose is a resource that invites all members of the community to gather a circle of people – family, friends, colleagues, ministry teams – to reflect mystagogically on the Advent gospels. This is an opportunity to encounter Christ where we are, to pay attention to what Christ reveals in the scripture and the living tradition of our faith, to share this, to connect it to our life now and to be changed by it. Mystagogical Reflection deepens our capacity to live from Christ.

To access the resource, go to bit.ly/3TvOg7s.

There will be the opportunity for parishioners to gather each **Tuesday** evening of Advent (starting 29 November) at **7pm**. All are welcome.

For those wanting to connect via Zoom during Advent we will be hosting Waiting with Purpose Advent Reflection each Monday at 10am. To register go to bit.ly/3yQ0K1Q.

Opportunities Outside The Parish

Become An SRE Volunteer

Did you know that some 50% of Catholic children are in state schools? Have you ever thought of spreading the good news of the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ with children? Have you ever thought about becoming a Special Religious Educator?

This could be an opportunity for you to meet new people, discover new friendships and build quality relationships whilst mastering skills and confidence in Catechetics.

You can make a difference in the schools within your parish! For people of faith, knowing you are participating in Christ's call to share the Good News to all is a great source of joy and meaning.

If you would like to learn more about how you can help, please contact the Pastoral Ministries team on 4979 1200.

Palms Volunteer from Dungog Parish

You will have seen regular notices in the weekly parish bulletin concerning volunteering opportunities overseas with Palms Australia, which enables skill sharing, vocational mentoring and the enhancement of local capacity in overseas communities which have requested assistance.

Dungog parishioner John Bradley has answered the call and will depart in January 2023 to take up a placement at Don Bosco High School and Vocational Training Centre in Saloleloga, Samoa as a Science & Maths Teacher. John is an experienced Science teacher in Catholic high schools and previously volunteered with Palms in Kiribati from 2001 to 2003.

Members of Dungog Parish are invited to support John in his placement by making his mission a prayer intention. Parishioners can also support John's placement financially, either with regular support or a one-off donation, by visiting <https://palms.org.au/project/chemistry-maths-teacher-mentor-in-savaii-samoa/>

John's placement support team includes several members of the Dungog Parish community. Fr Andrew and Esmá Tiernan (who was herself a Palms volunteer in Kiribati) are part of that team, and will receive regular updates from John about his work in Samoa and how the support of parish members is assisting.

To enquire about opportunities with Palms, visit www.palms.org.au or phone 02 9560 5333.

Reconciliation During Advent

As part of our Advent preparations, the Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation) will be available as follows:

1st Rite of Reconciliation will be available each Saturday of Advent at St Mary's, Dungog between 10am and 11am.

A 2nd Rite of Reconciliation will be celebrated on **Thursday 22 December** at St Mary's, Dungog commencing at 6pm. At this point I do not believe that there will be a need to invite other priests to join us for this celebration.

Bulletin by Email

The Parish Office is no longer emailing the weekly bulletin to parishioners via email. This practice has been replaced by the automated mailing list attached to the parishes' website.

If you would like to receive a email notification when the bulletin is posted to the website, please sign up using the form on the right hand side of the front page.

Job Opportunity: Casual Receptionist

The Sisters of Mercy at Tighes Hill are looking for a Relief Casual Receptionist/Secretary for a short assignment from 8 December 2022 to 6 January 2023. The days will be each Thursday and Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Previous experience and an understanding of Catholic organisation is preferred. If you are interested in this assignment, please call Sister Margaret on 4964 6400.

SRE Teachers for Gresford & Vacy

Gresford parishioners currently attend Gresford and Vacy Primary Schools to offer Special Religious Education using the Sydney Diocesan program "Christ is Our Light and Life".

A additional teacher for either or both of these two schools—and especially for Vacy Primary School—would be very welcome.

Training and support are offered for any one interested in taking up this role.

Please contact the Parish Office in the first instance.

Bishop's Award 2022

Nominations are now open for the 2022 Bishop's Award! The award aims to recognise the good works of students and young people across our Diocese who were actively involved in their parish communities. Applications close on 2 December 2022. For more information visit bit.ly/3MCWdWi.

The Parish Diary...(for the week ahead)

1st Week of Advent, Year A

Monday—28 November

Tuesday—29 November

Wednesday—30 November

Feast of St Andrew

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Thursday—1 December

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday—2 December

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

11am Anointing Mass @ Lara Aged Care

Saturday—3 December

Memorial of St Francis Xavier

10am Reconciliation @ Dungog

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday—4 December

Second Sunday of Advent, Year A

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9:30am Mass @ Dungog

Today's Liturgy:

1st Reading Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalm Ps 121: "Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord."

2nd Reading Romans 13:11-14

Acclamation Alleluia, alleluia!
Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation.
Alleluia!

Gospel Matthew 24:37-44

Memorial Acclamation We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for November:

"We pray for children who are suffering, especially those who are homeless, orphans, and victims of war; may they be guaranteed access to education and the opportunity to experience family affection."

GOSPEL FOCUS

Get Ready!

Jesus draws a parallel between the people in Noah's time and the people of his own time. What it reflects is a complacency that periodically overtook the Jewish people. When the people bound themselves to God in covenant their lives gradually became better. Inevitably, their lives improved to such a state that they forgot God was responsible for their blessings. They ignored their relationship with God and became complacent about their good fortune. Ultimately, their comfort was brought to an end and they recognised once again their need for God. Jesus calls the people to get ready because the pattern is repeating itself.

SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

Burglars in the night

The teachings and sayings of Jesus reveal him to be a clever public speaker and story teller. His use of imagery and language captivated the imagination of his audience. However, we have tended to endow his every word with awesome significance and layers of meaning. Today's reading is an example where Jesus used a confronting image simply to gain his audience's attention. He does not intend to suggest that God sneaks up on us like a burglar and is seeking to catch us out. The image conveys the need to prepare for what might happen unexpectedly.

In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died:

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In November: Irma Iacono, Jean Harrison, Francis Kealy, Terry Amos, Raymond Dillon, Lee Murphy, Jenny Taylor, Bishop Bill Wright.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

May they rest in peace.

Those Who Are Sick: Maryann Smith, Tracy Copus, Daphne Bond, Maree McCulloch, Leonie Young, Lisa Reid, Lyn Barry, Bev Herbert, Denise Wenden, Warren Wade, Irene Robinson, Ray Tonkin (Qld), Luke Barry, Joanne Curry, Kathie Maynard, Kevin Ward, Brian Holstein, David Loudon, Michaela Brown, Phillip Hartup, Bella Duggan, Ella Rusak, Peter Byron, Colleen Primrose, Bert Preece.