



Dungog & Gresford Parishes

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

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.

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR C

8 DECEMBER 2024

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Parish Bulletin is published each Sunday. Items for inclusion should be received at the Parish Office by 5pm on Wednesdays. Copies of the Bulletin are available from the Parish website which is updated weekly.

Parish Website is updated regularly with copies of the bulletin and other information, and is found at www.dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au.

Safeguarding Promotion For all safeguarding concerns within the parishes, please contact Fr Andrew.

A Pastoral Note...

As I mentioned in last week's bulletin, I will spend some words and space this week in relating the outcome of the Parishes Assembly that took place during the morning of Saturday 30 November.

At the outset I have to say I was very happy with the number of people who gave up their morning to be involved in discerning and determining the future of our two parishes. I am equally pleased by the boldness of those attending who, after some good questions and conversation, were prepared to step out onto the next iteration of our parishes' existence and mission.

In summary, all four of the proposed resolutions contained in the meeting papers were adopted unanimously and without amendment. If you would like to know the details of those resolutions, together with the details that underpin them, they can be downloaded from the 'Resources' tab to be found on the main menu of the parishes website.

The first two of the resolutions have to do with the proposal to merge our existing two parishes—St Mary's Parish, Dungog and St Helen's Parish, Gresford—into a new parish to be known as the Parish of Dungog Gresford.

As I explained during the Assembly, the petition to be placed before Bishop Michael will be to suppress both the current parishes and to create a new parish that covers the territory of the former parishes.

In that way, neither of the current parishes will be seen to be 'taking over' the other. Rather, we will be a completely new creation, a new parish even though we will inherit the assets, responsibilities and territory of the current two parishes.

I hope to have the petition to Bishop Michael

before Christmas, even though the new parish entity will not come into being until 1 July 2025.

The harder part of creating a new parish entity will be in discerning a new patronal name. As I have previously mentioned, this is an opportunity to embrace a new identity and a new expression of the mission that will rightfully belong to the new parish.

As I have also mentioned, the name of the new patron cannot be the name of any of our current churches or even the school. This is a deliberate effort to ensure that we are embracing our new identity, even though we will continue to honour the titles of our churches and school as feast days within the new parish.

So we cannot have any Marian title (since we have St Mary's Church at Dungog), nor St Helen, St Patrick, St Joseph, or any title connected with Jesus (since we have Sacred Heart Church at Summer Hill).

It would also be infinitely preferable to adopt a title that is not already used within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, so that our unique identity is highlighted—and to avoid confusion with other parishes, schools and agencies.

To assist in avoiding titles already used elsewhere within the Diocese, I have created a document that contains all those already in use. This can be found on the 'Resources' tab on the website's main menu.

And so, now is the time to propose titles for the broader consideration of parishioners!

If you would like to make a suggestion, please do so in writing suggesting the name of a saint and including some information about the said saint, along with why you consider this saint to be a good choice.

Please make your submissions in writing (email is preferable) addressed to me by the end of February 2025.

In March 2025, we will begin a series of voting rounds to whittle all the suggestions down to our preferred option, which we can then pass onto Bishop Michael after Easter 2025.

If you have any questions about this process, please get in touch.

The third resolution that was adopted was about establishing a working party to review and catalogue the physical assets that are owned by the two current parishes, and to develop proposals for how best to make use of those assets going forward.

The working party will also look at what might be required in terms of maintenance for each of

those assets so that this consideration can be part of future discussions on this issue at another Assembly in the first half of next year. At this very early point in the process, I would hope to have the next Assembly take place in late May, but the timing will ultimately depend on the complexity of the work.

In order for this working party to complete its task, I will be seeking the assistance of a small group of parishioners who are both representative and have the right combination of skills to enable its work.

If you would like to offer your assistance—or you know someone who would be able to assist in the task—please get in touch with me sooner rather than later.

The last resolution will see the Planned Giving Programs of both parishes come to an end on 30 June 2025. The new parish entity will not offer such a program which will further simplify the required administrative tasks.

For the sake of clarity, a tax deduction will still be available for contributions made for the 2024-25 financial year, but this will be the last year such deductions are offered.

Again, if you have any questions about this, please get in touch.

And lastly, the Assembly discussed the implication of Bishop Michael's recent decision to lift the ban on Communion from the Chalice. While there was some general support for reintroducing this option there was also a general consensus to 'hasten slowly' in doing so.

Effectively, the decision about if and when will be in the hands of each worshipping community, with the proviso that some formation for Ministers of Communion be offered in advance of the reintroduction of Communion from the Chalice.

As I mentioned at the Assembly, there is no need to hurry and I would prefer that local worshipping communities be comfortable in reintroducing this practice. That said, however, being 'comfortable' also needs to recognise that those who wish to receive Communion from the Chalice have a right to do so, and so once a 'critical mass' in each locality is ready to once again receive Communion from the Chalice, then that is the time to do so.

Once again, if you would like to discuss any concerns about this development, please get in touch with me. I would be only too happy to talk through the issues with you.

My thanks to all who contributed to the outcome of the Assembly.

Fr Andrew

Morning Tea at Dungog

The next morning tea at Dungog will be held after the 9.30am Mass next Sunday (15 December) in our Parish Hall. This will be the last morning tea for 2024.

Please bring a plate to share, and join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

Dungog Christmas Hamper Raffle

The raffle will be drawn at the end of the 9.30am Mass at Dungog next Sunday 15 December. Please make sure you bring any outstanding tickets back before Mass begins next week.

LIVING THE GOSPEL

Make way!

Today's gospel is a reminder to us that Advent is a season of preparation. In this case, the preparation is all about making way for the love of God in our lives. The love of God surrounds us all the time. It's like a rapidly flowing stream and sometimes we have placed boulders in the stream that send the water flowing around us. The call to make a way for the Lord is a call to clear the rocks out of the stream; to remove the obstacles that are directing the love of God around us and allow it instead to flow directly through us.

Christmas Masses

With Christmas Day falling on a Wednesday in 2024, our parishes will celebrate the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (to give the day it's official liturgical title) as follows:

Christmas Eve, Tuesday 24 December
6pm Mass @ Dungog

Christmas Day, Wednesday 25 December
8am Mass @ Clarence Town
10am Mass @ East Gresford

Please pass these times to anyone who might like to know about them.

I also propose that the weekday Masses normally celebrated on Thursdays and Fridays will not be celebrated on Thursday 26 December and Friday 27 December, largely so I might have the opportunity to catch up with family in Sydney.

Fr Andrew

Columban Calendars Available

Columban Calendars for 2025 will be available from Sunday 17 November at the cost of \$10 each. Please see Lyn Barham if you're interested.

Parish Luncheon

A great day was had by one and all at the Dungog Parish Luncheon last Sunday. A very big thanks to all involved in preparation and coordinating the occasion.

We look forward to another occasion in 2025!



Lenten Program 2025—WATCH THIS SPACE!

Ash Wednesday in 2025 falls on Wednesday 5 March, which may seem like a long way away.

But it's not in terms of the preparation and production of resources to accompany a Lenten Program—the Parish Office is already starting to receive advertising from the usual bunch of providers!

Just after Christmas calls will go out for numbers for participants so orders can be made in good time for availability at the beginning of March.

Please give some thought in and around the Christmas celebrations about your involvement in a Lenten Program in 2025, and watch the bulletin for when numbers are called for.

Electronic Banking Details

BSB: 066 739
A/c Name: Catholic Development Fund
Reference: Your Surname and/or Envelope No., or other reference.

Account Nos:

First collection: 100 029 440

Second collection:

Dungog: 100 005 170

Gresford 100 005 173

Today's Liturgy:

Scripture Readings: **1st** Baruch 5:1-9; **2nd** Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11; **Gospel** Luke 3:1-6.

Responsorial Psalm: The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

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

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

2nd Week of Advent

Monday 9 December

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary

Tuesday 10 December

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 11 December

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 12 December

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 13 December

Memorial of St Lucy

9.30am Mass @ Dungog (including 'end of year' celebrations for St Joseph's)

Saturday 14 December

Memorial of St John of the Cross

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 15 December

3rd Sunday of Advent

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

The Catholic Parishes of Dungog & Gresford acknowledge the Worimi and Wonnarua peoples on whose traditional lands we live and work, and their continuing deep and abiding attachment to the land.

We acknowledge their cultural heritage and beliefs, pay our respects to their Elders—past, present, and emerging—and commit ourselves to working together for reconciliation and justice.

Safeguarding in our Parishes means ...

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is important.

Our Catholic Parishes of Dungog & Gresford are committed to fostering communities of safety and care.

We acknowledge our legal, moral, and spiritual responsibilities to care for and uphold the dignity and rights of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died: Neville Trappel, James Osmond.

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In December: Katie Rumbel, Elizabeth Holstein, Keith Schumaker, Margaret Egan, Ella Maher, Alan Robertson, Christine Knight, Margaret Miners, Mollie Smith, George Maurer, Mervyn Trappel, Paul Murphy, Rowland Young, Catherine Reid, Brian Smith, Thora Tindall, Valma Osmond, Nancy Dickson, Narelle Ritter, Anne Faber, Christine Brosie, Eileen Lane, Peter McGinty.

Those Who Are Sick: Maryann Smith, Daphne Bond, Leonie Young, Lisa Reid, Bev Herbert, Warren Wade, Irene Robinson, Luke Barry, Kathie Maynard, Kevin Ward, David Loudon, Michaela Brown, Phillip Hartup, Anne Newman, Graham McCarthy, Keith Edwards, Otilie Sheens, Neville Barry, Susan Barlow, Allwyn Gippel, Christine Elliott, Jean Robertson, Lorraine Rooke, Jessica Byron.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for December:

Together with Pope Francis, this month we pray:

"Let us pray that this Jubilee strengthen us in our faith, helping us to recognise the Risen Christ in the midst of our lives, transforming us into pilgrims of Christian hope."

