

HOLY COVENANT ANGLICAN CHURCH

a place for everyone



SUNDAY 3 DECEMBER 2023
FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

To join us on Zoom, please use the link below:

<https://zoom.us/j/8820962366?pwd=YUpja05YTXFCN0N4MGRiSFVIRlI0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 882 096 2366
Password: 033643

SUNDAY 3 DECEMBER

8am & 10am Holy Communion
Celebrant : Revd Wendy Robertson
Preacher: : Revd Dr Wayne Brighton

WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER

12 Midday Communion Service and lunch

SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER

8am & 10am Holy Communion
Celebrant & Preacher : Revd Wendy Robertson

Coming soon:

7 Dec: 12 midday Community Lunch
16 Dec: 9am-midday Working Bee
17 December: 5pm Blue Christmas
24 December: 4pm Kids' Christmas

Bank details for direct debit:

Bank: Commonwealth
Branch: Jamison Centre ACT
BSB 062 907
Account No: 802588
Name: Holy Covenant Anglican Church

Misery and Mercy—

Isaiah 64: 1-9

Each Advent I am struck by the contrast between the modern world and the Kingdom world. Even before the end of October, there were signs in the shops and on our TVs of Christmas approaching. Pictures of happy families, and groaning tables, and calls for consumption are now common. This expectation of joy and abundance is exhausting.

In contrast to the modern world, the writer of this lament in Isaiah is sitting in pain and despair “all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf” (v.6). The writer yells at God “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down” (v.1), and blames God for the state of things “because you hid yourself, we transgressed” (v.5). There’s a lot of mood swings in this passage. If it were me talking, my GP would remind me that I am living with depression.

Advent is a challenging time for people with depression. Barbara

Lundblad suggests that Advent can be a time to practice a Triple A way of feeling—**Admit** our feelings. **Ask** for help. **Accompany** each other through this season of ups and downs. The writer of this passage from Isaiah gives us permission to be angry, to yell at God, to be sorry for our mistakes, and to blame God for making us mess up!

Importantly, the passage from Isaiah has yet another mood swing, to assurance. “Yet, O Lord, you are our Father [and Mother]; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand” (v.8). Even in anger, despair and depression, the writer knows that God is present.

Since the Voice referendum, it’s been a struggle to feel the presence of God in the pain, frustration, anger and despair. But I choose to sit with the writer of Isaiah, in the “Yet”. And our upcoming Blue Christmas service calls to me, as it provides a place for me and others to bring those feelings of loss to God.

Megan Arthur

Finding safety

Last week I arrived at work to find a figure lying on the grounds of the church under

a small blanket, using their backpack as a pillow. When the person woke a little late, I offered some assistance with a coffee, a warm breakfast and a new compact sleeping bag. It became evident that he had been seriously assaulted. His eyes were surrounded by large dark bruises, he had several large deep lacerations on his face and his movements indicated he was in pain. He introduced himself as W and happily accepted the items I had brought to him.

W lived in a public housing complex that has high rates of drug use and crime. He had items stolen from his house several times. A few nights earlier, W was walking near his home when he was approached by two men who he had seen around the complex. The men produced a knife and demanded W hand over his belongings. He refused and was severely assaulted. He hobbled the short distance back to his home and went to sleep. The next day W collected the few belongings he had left, put them in his backpack, and left his home, fearing for his safety in and around his home.

W came across St John's Care, and immediately felt safer, deciding to sleep here overnight. Over the course of our conversation, W agreed to report the assault and to contact ACT housing to halt his rental payments.

W seemed unsure about the future. He had previously lived in NSW where he had friends, family and a support worker. However he had no money and no way to get there. W said, 'I feel horrible, I just want a warm shower and some clean clothes before I do anything'. I called Civic Pool and arranged for him to use their shower facilities and provided him with some clothes that had been donated to us – W was thrilled.

He returned an hour or so later and his demeanour had changed significantly. We called his support worker from NSW – I was glad to hear that she was happy to continue supporting him. Finally, I organised a train ticket for W and gave him as much food as he could fit in his backpack.

W left St John's Care with a complete transformation in how he looked and felt. Over the coming weeks, I will touch base with his case worker to ensure that he is going well, and receiving the support he needs.

I would like to thank everyone who contributes towards making St John's Care a safe place for those who are most vulnerable to come and receive support. It means the world to those who need it most.

Robbie Speldewinde Operations Manager

Items needed: Tea bags, 1 litre UHT full cream milk, large bags of nuts, sultanas

Yesterday and today

The joy of the Lord is my strength. Nehemiah 8:10

It can be so hard to stay positive sometimes in this struggling world where we seem to hear nothing but the destruction of lives through war and famine day after day after day. It can be so easy to let these thoughts steal our joy. To find positive thoughts I turn to God who has always been my strength and I recall writing some time ago these words:

Yesterday I had a wonderful day. I woke with the Lord and opened the day in prayer with a chorus of birds in the background. *Today* I had a wonderful day. I woke with the Lord and opened the day in prayer with a chorus of birds in the background.

May we continue to hold up in prayer all those who are suffering and pray for peace.

Let the peace of Christ dwell in your heart.

Anne, servant of the Lord



Wake each day with the Lord

<https://comewalkwithme-reflections.blogspot.com>

Anglican News

The November edition of Anglican News is now available: <http://anglicancg.org.au/news-and-events/anglican-news/>

Farewell for Revd Wendy

Revd Wendy's last Sunday with us is 10 December 2023. Wendy and her family have been with us a short time. We have all been blessed by her gifts for pastoral care and community engagement as she has moved from being our children's worker to community chaplain, curate and assistant minister. Her family is moving to Perth where Lachlan has been for 12 months. Please keep all the Robertsons in your prayers.

There is a farewell card for Revd Wendy near the serving window for anyone who would like to sign. If you can't make it into the church, please email your farewell message to the office: office@holycovenant.org.au, and Megan will add your words to the card.



16 Days of Activism

The Anglican Church of Australia supports 16 Days of Activism to eliminate violence against women and girls. This is an international campaign, supported by the United Nations, that extends from 25 November (International Day for elimination of violence against women and girls) to 10 December (International human rights day).

Strategies used during the 16 days have included online petitions and social media campaigns, grassroots national awareness-raising initiatives, outreach in schools, engaging young people and faith-based organizations and garnering concrete national commitments from governments, and more.

It's not too late to join in the action. You will find more information and campaign resources at <https://www.tencommitments.org.au/16-days-of-activism>

You are loved
by **God**

You are worthy
of **respect**

You have **gifts** and
skills and **wisdom**



First Sunday of Advent



Hope for families forced to flee

Jehan*, a brave mother of five, made the courageous decision to escape on foot to Pakistan with her family when Afghanistan fell to the Taliban in 2021. Your gifts through the Christmas Bowl can help Act for Peace coordinate rapid emergency responses with local partners, like Church World Services Asia, so that they can immediately act, giving families like Jehan's safety in exile – and hope for the future – when they need it most. **Please give today.**



*Name changed for safety reasons

CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

Christmas Community Lunch

Our final community lunch for the year is happening on 7 December. The sign up sheet is on the back noticeboard in the Worship Centre.

- **When:** 12 midday , 7 December
- **Where:** Holy Covenant Worship Centre
- **Cost:** \$5

RSVP to the sign on sheet or email

office@holycovenant.org.au



Parish Council Elections

Parish Council elections will be held on 17 December. Council is comprised of 3 wardens (2 of whom are elected and 1 nominated by the Rector) and 8 members (6 elected and 2 nominated).

It will be opportunity elect some new wardens and members to Council.

Parish Council enables us to plan ahead and make decisions that affect our whole community. Wardens play a critical role to think through issues in parish life alongside the rector. Members of council assist with planning, congregational engagement and the realisation of our parish mission and vision.

A mix of people from both 8am and 10am congregations from all walks of life is especially helpful.

Would you consider helping us out in 2024? Why not talk to Wayne or a staff member if you'd be interested to serve in this way.

Small jars wanted

Thanks to those who have already answered the call. But our jam makers are still seeking donations of small glass jars (approximately 200gm-275gm size) with lids. The jam stocks at church and at St John's Care are very low.

Please deliver clean jars to the office, and Megan will arrange for them to get where they are needed.

Page One Writers for 2024

Have you enjoyed reading the page one reflections this year? Have you ever wondered about joining the writing team?

Wonder no more! Interested writers are encouraged to contact Megan in the office:

office@holycovenant.org.au

Christmas

**Holy Covenant
Anglican Church**

17 December

A Blue Christmas, 5pm

Christmas Eve

Kids Christmas, 4pm

Carols, Candles & Communion, 11pm

Christmas Day

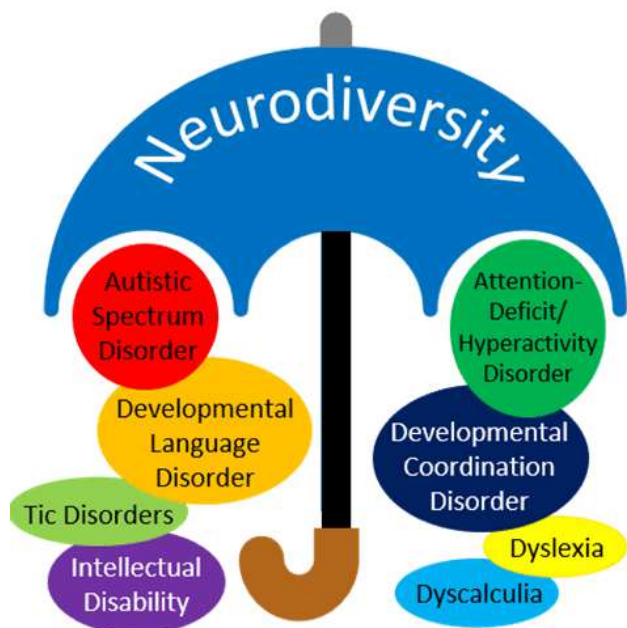
Classic Christmas Service, 8am

Contemporary Celebration, 10am

89 Dexter St, Cook

Neurodiversity and Faith

What do neurodiverse and neurotypical mean? A simple explanation is that brains work differently. Most people think in similar ways, so we call that neurotypical. Some people think in ways that are less common, and that's called neurodiverse. Deacon Jon explains it like this: "the neurodiversity of brains means that each has their own particular way of doing things and some ... have big strengths in certain areas while struggling to handle other tasks which neurotypical brains handle intuitively."



Many of the systems and structures of the way faith is traditionally practiced are set up for neurotypical brains. And this means that neurodiverse brains can encounter barriers accessing faith.

"Be still and know that I am God (Ps 46:10). Being still is very difficult for some people with neurodiversity. And they have to concentrate so hard on being still, that they can't absorb any information from the sermon, or Bible reading, or whatever else is happening that they need to be still during.

Another example is 'flat processing'. For some neurodiverse brains, every piece of information coming in gets treated with equal importance. The feeling of clothes on skin, the sound of the kettle boiling, what is being said by the preacher—in flat processing they all receive the same treatment.

Neurotypical brains have hierarchical processing, and that means what's being said by the preacher is (at least in theory) more important than any other input.

Isaiah 55:8-9 says "My thoughts are not your thoughts". Learn more about neurodiversity and faith here: [https://](https://www.christianity.org.uk/article/opinion-neurodiversity-thinking-differently-about-faith)



www.christianity.org.uk/article/opinion-neurodiversity-thinking-differently-about-faith

Chalice at Communion

Sometimes we're asked "When might the chalice return as an option for Communion?"

The chalice is an important part of Anglican spirituality symbolising our shared connection with Christ and each other around God's table. Nevertheless things changed during the pandemic. We adjusted by introducing individual cups rather than foregoing the wine completely. Although restrictions eased some time ago perceptions about risk vary markedly due to appetite, life experience, age or wellness.

The chalice will return in December as an option for receiving the wine. The intinction vessels will not return just yet.

This means that the process of offering the elements will change slightly. Three people will move along the Communion rail: (1) bread with stickers, (2) individual cups with basket, (3) chalice. This will allow communicants to: receive either wine or grape juice from an individual cup; dip from an individual cup; or receive from the chalice.

Receiving the bread and wine is an important moment for spiritual connection. Our goal is to allow people to receive in whatever manner they feel most comfortable while managing risk appropriately.

Wayne

PRAYER POINTS

IN THE WORLD

- ⇒ Peace in Ukraine, Israel, Palestine and Sudan, and an end to occupation and civil war
- ⇒ Proceedings at and achievable outcomes from COP28

IN AUSTRALIA

- ⇒ Those affected by extreme weather
- ⇒ Food and housing security for all Australians
- ⇒ All Australian thalidomide survivors, their carers, families and loved ones

IN THE DIOCESAN CYCLE OF PRAYER

- ⇒ Diocese of Armidale
- ⇒ St Saviour's Cathedral, Goulburn
- ⇒ Friends of St Saviour's Cathedral
- ⇒ Lucas Tooth Scholar: The Reverend Gavin Krebs
- ⇒ Anglican Women of Australia
- ⇒ Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care Goulburn Health Service
- ⇒ Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn
- ⇒ The Cathedral Chapter, and all aspects of the work and ministry of St Saviour's Cathedral, the mother church of the Diocese.

IN OUR PARISH AND COMMUNITY

- ⇒ For all members of our parish family including Catherine D'Cruz; Judith Ann Daniells; Lou Daniels; Steve Daniels; Audrey Dargan; John Dau; and Evelyn, Jay, Elizabeth, Hannah, Mary and Sarah David-Hoole.
- ⇒ We uphold those in special need of prayer (often for long term needs) including Barry & Sandra Button; Bev Barnes; Brian and Elaine Dennis; Glenys Wimmer; Ann & Peter Bazeos; Bev Chambers; Gracie Bonnett; Bob and Kath Arthur; Reg Holmes; Hugh MacWilliam, Chris Olsson and anyone known to us personally

COMMEMORATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

4 Dec Sandra Button

BIBLE READINGS

Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7,17-19
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
Mark 13:24-37

COLLECT

Eternal God,
through long generations you prepared a way
for the coming of your Son,
and by your Spirit
you still bring light to illumine our paths:
renew us in faith and hope
that we may welcome Christ to rule our thoughts
and claim our love;
to whom be glory for ever. **Amen**

MINISTRY TEAM CONTACTS

Rector

The Reverend Dr Wayne Brighton,
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Resources Team

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