

The Parish Poster



**LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

OF AUSTRALIA

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

WAGGA WAGGA

Dec 2025, Jan & Feb 2026

www.waggawagga.lca.org.au

A Century of Faith: Journeying from Restoration to Joy

As we approach Advent and Christmas, our church is embarking on a spiritual journey inspired by the story of Nehemiah – a story of longing, rebuilding, and preparing for God’s presence. Nehemiah’s path mirrors our own anticipation during Advent, as we seek renewal and restoration in our lives.

Nehemiah Series: Returning to the Joy of the Lord

- Week 1: Longing for Renewal (Nehemiah 1)
- Week 2: Rediscovering God’s Voice (Nehemiah 8)
- Week 3: Confession and Covenant (Nehemiah 9:13-27)
- Week 4: Joyful Dedication and Anticipation (Nehemiah 12:27-47)

This series prepares our hearts for Advent, reminding us that God meets us in our longing and leads us toward joy, that He never abandons or forsakes us. Then we come to our focus for Christmas, as we look to that joy in Christ Jesus.

Advent & Christmas Series: Joy Has Come

- Week 1: Joy in the Waiting (Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85)
- Week 2: Joy in the Wilderness (Luke 1:5-25; Mark 1:1-8)
- Week 3: Joy in the Witness (John 1:6-8; 19-28)
- Week 4: Joy in the Arrival (Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 9:2-7)
- Christmas Eve: Joy in the Darkness (Luke 2:1-20)
- Christmas Day: Joy Made Flesh (John 1:1-14)
- Christmas 1: Joy that Grows (Luke 2:22-40)



Through these weeks, we discover that joy is not just a feeling – it is found in God’s presence, in faithful waiting, and in the revolutionary birth of Christ. Even in weariness, God speaks comfort and brings light to our darkness. The incarnation is God’s joyful “yes” to humanity, affirming hope and redemption for all.

Let us journey together, preparing our hearts for the coming of Emmanuel – God with us – and celebrating the joy that grows as we recognise God’s work in our lives.

A Century of Faith: Journeying from Restoration to Joy

This year, our Lutheran family celebrated a remarkable milestone – 100 years of worship, service, and community. As we mark this centenary, we find ourselves not only looking back with gratitude but also looking forward with hope in Jesus and what he will do through us. Our journey toward Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany is a time to reflect on God’s faithfulness and to prepare our hearts for the joy that is to come.

Our centenary year has been a tapestry of stories – of those who built, rebuilt, and renewed this community. In many ways, our journey echoes the story of Nehemiah, whose longing for renewal led him to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls and restore the joy of the Lord among God’s people. Through our recent sermon series on Nehemiah, we have explored themes of longing, rediscovering God’s voice, confession, covenant, and joyful dedication. Each week, we have been reminded that restoration is not just about bricks and mortar, but about hearts returning to God.

As Advent approaches, we transition from Nehemiah’s story to the ancient longing for the Messiah. Advent is a season of waiting, but not of passive delay. It is a sacred anticipation – a time when we prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ. Our Advent and Christmas series, “Joy Has Come,” invites us to discover joy in every stage of the journey.



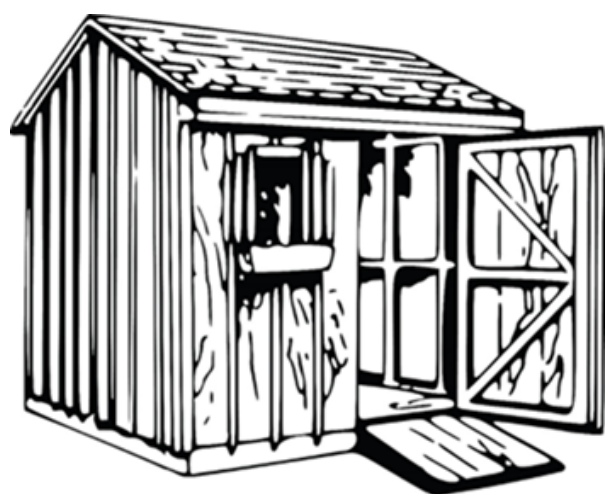
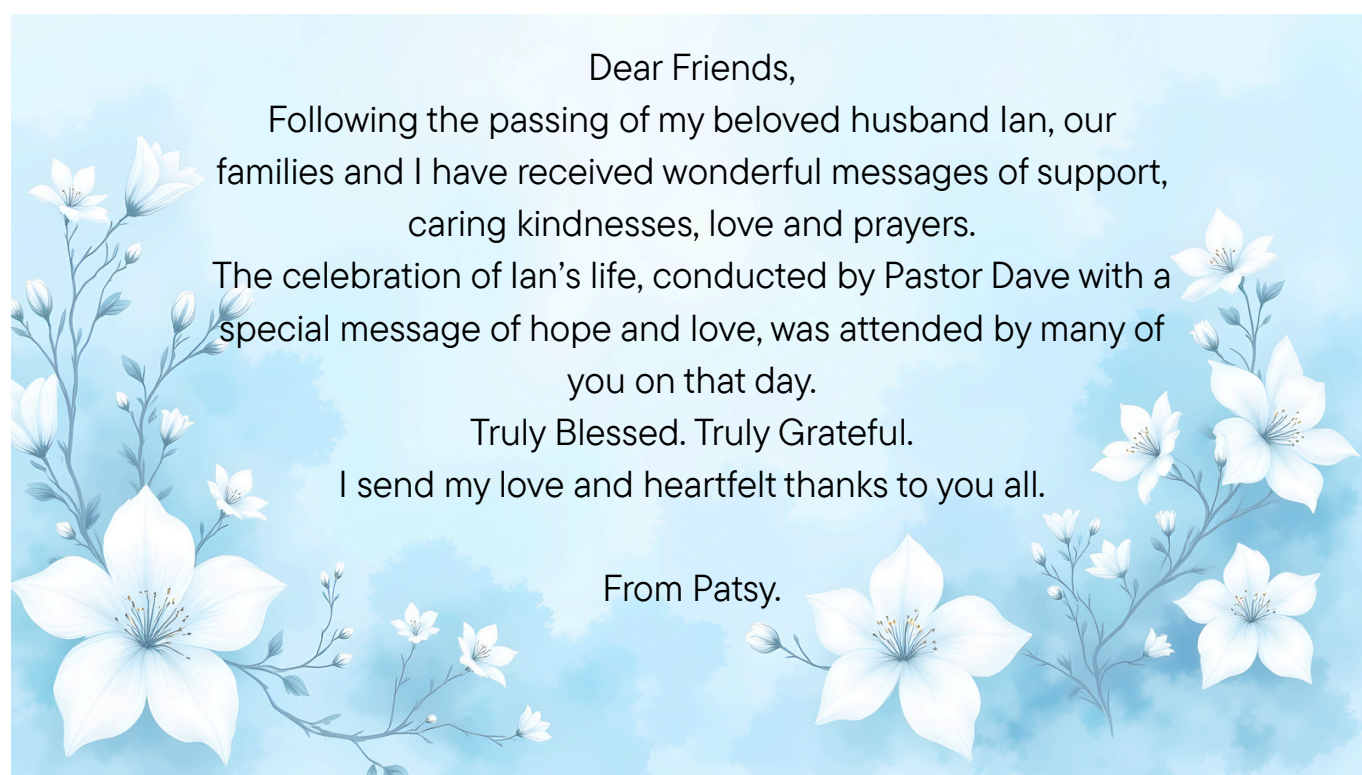
We begin with “Joy in the Waiting,” drawing comfort from Isaiah’s promise that even in weariness, God speaks peace. We move to “Joy in the Wilderness,” where God meets us in barren places and joy grows in unexpected soil. “Joy in the Witness” reminds us that while we are not the light, we bear witness to it, sharing hope with a world in need. “Joy in the Arrival” celebrates the coming of Emmanuel, God with us, not just as a feeling, but as a person who transforms our lives.

On Christmas Eve, we gather to hear the angel’s announcement that pierces the darkness with light. Christ’s birth is not sentimental – it is revolutionary. It brings joy to the weary and afraid, affirming that God’s love reaches into every shadow. Christmas Day proclaims “Joy Made Flesh,” as the incarnation becomes God’s joyful “yes” to humanity, affirming the dignity of creation and the promise of redemption.

Our journey does not end at Christmas. As we move into Epiphany, we reflect on “Joy That Grows,” inspired by Simeon and Anna who rejoiced in the fulfilment of long-awaited hope. Their faithfulness and patience remind us that joy matures as we recognise God’s work in our midst.

As a church that has stood for 100 years, we know that joy is not always immediate and can sometimes feel far off. It is cultivated through seasons of longing, rebuilding, waiting and witnessing. This Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, let us journey together, returning to the joy of the Lord, celebrating the presence of Emmanuel, and looking forward to the new things God will do in our next century.

Pastor Dave




Shed Men

Shed Men will resume after the summer break on 27th February. Watch the bulletin and your pigeon holes for the first shed meeting.

Brad will be looking for volunteer hosts for 2026. Please help with planning and let him know when your shed will be free.

The Shed Men wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a joyful 2026.



Wagga Christmas Worship Times

30th November 9.30am Advent 1

7th December 9.30am Advent 2

14th December 9.30am Advent 3

21st December 9.30am Advent 4

24th December 7.30pm Christmas Eve Worship with Children's Presentation

25th December 8.30am Christmas Day Worship

28th December 9.30am Lay Reading Service



Milbrulong Service Plan

December:

14th 9am Lay Reading Service

21st 6pm Christmas service with Pastor Dave. Holy Communion.

Bring a plate to share for supper afterwards and a drink if you would like.

28th No Service (9.30am Lay Reading Service at Wagga)

January:

11th 9am Lay Reading Service

25th 9am Preaching service with Pastor Dave. Holy Communion.

We will have a Australia Day Barbecue after the service. Early lunch.

BYO meat/salad/plates/cutlery etc.

February:

8th 9am Lay Reading Service

22nd 9am Preaching service with Pastor Dave. Holy Communion. Morning tea.

Sunday School

A heartfelt thank you to the parents and grandparents who bring their children to Sunday School each week. We aim to supplement what is taught at home, and this year have encouraged the children to learn the Apostles Creed and we have reinforced their praying with the Lord's Prayer.

On Christmas Eve, the children of the congregation will be taking part in the Worship Service, presenting their interpretation of the story of Christ's birth. It's one not to be missed!

Sunday School takes a break during the school holidays. We will start again in 2026 on Sunday, 8th February (after Term 1 starts).



Care and Share

This group has grown a little this year, as we welcomed Carol and Rhonda into the fold.

Recently Rhonda suggested that the "trauma teddies" that are used by hospitals, paramedics and others in the medical field to help children overcome their fears, are much needed. So, we have also turned our hands to making some of these special teddies.

We continue to enjoy each other's company over a cuppa, and supporting the CareVan through the making of rugs, beanies and other items.



Ladies Fellowship

The ladies have continued to meet monthly and this year we have enjoyed Bible Studies from 'Bible Project' that have taken us through the Bible from Genesis to Nehemiah. We look forward to continuing these studies through 2026.

We wish everyone a holy and blessed Christmas.



it's easier to care than to turn away

To everyone who has contributed to our CareVan collection basket, CareVan would like to extend their thanks and let you know that every donation is greatly appreciated and used in appropriate ways to care for the less fortunate in our community.

There is a full list of the items that they constantly use in their kitchen to provide food for those in need, but we offer a summary of that list here:

Non-perishable items: canned food eg: tomatoes, tuna. Sauces eg: pasta sauce, tomato paste, liquid stock, gravy mix. Dried foods eg: pasta, rice, cooking salt and cornflour, plain and SR flour.

Bathroom items: motel samples, shampoo, conditioner, hand cream, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, sanitary products.

Consumables: kitchen towel, dishcloths, serviettes, handwash, detergent, scourers, washing detergent, toilet paper.

Vouchers: Coles, Woolworths and Aldi.

Because Christmas is near, CareVan will close to give the volunteers a break over Christmas from 10th December until after the January long weekend. During this time, please continue to bring your donations to our church; we will store them until CareVan start again and then donate them so that they will have a really good stock of the above items when they return. Please delay donations of frozen or fresh foods until they return.

Once they are operating again, please feel free to deliver your excess fresh garden produce to them directly at 2/159 Fernleigh Rd (near the corner of Pinaroo Drive). Also, any frozen vegetables can be delivered to them when they are open.

CareVan is a registered charity and can accept cash donations at their office, at the above address. Tax receipts will be issued.



GRANDPARENTS' DAY

On Thursday 30th October we were blessed with beautiful sunshine and the company of 200 loved grandparents to celebrate Grandparents' Day. The day began with Chapel, time in classrooms, a concert by our talented students in the string ensemble, dance teams and Year 1 choral speech followed by a delicious morning tea.



Colour Run

Thursday 6 November was the school Colour Run where colour and joy was brought to the school grounds. The students raised funds for their legacy gift, a special contribution they'll leave behind as they prepare to graduate.



Lutheran School in action



Year 4 camp at Borambola



Year 6 visit to Caloola Court Nursing Home



Year 5 visit to Bendigo and Ballarat

A Century of Grace: 100 years of Lutheran Worship in Wagga Wagga

What an incredible afternoon we had on Sunday, 26 October 2025! Our church was buzzing with excitement as we gathered to celebrate a century of Lutheran worship here in Wagga.

The celebrations kicked off with a worship service with Holy Communion, ably led by Pastor Dave Cherry. The music for the service was beautifully provided by Enoch Fandrich on the organ, with selections by Brahms and Bach for the musical prelude. A brightly coloured banner created for the occasion by Leonie Kohlhausen and Jane Lieschke was in pride of place at the front of the church.

We were especially blessed to have NSW Bishop Richard Schwedes join us to deliver the sermon. Bishop Richard spoke about the wonderful opportunity to look back and celebrate what has been achieved but to not neglect the opportunity to look forward to see what we can make of the future.



The church was filled with current members, familiar faces from years past, friends from neighbouring congregations, and even some special guests including the Most Rev. Mark Edwards (the Catholic Bishop of Wagga Wagga), and the Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Dallas Tout.

The highlight for many was hearing the angelic voices of the Lutheran School Wagga Wagga Choir sing "Be Unto Your Name".

After the service, we had grand plans to unveil our centenary plaque, but Mother Nature had other ideas! The rain sent us scurrying into the hall for afternoon tea instead. Some delightful surprises awaited us there – the walls were decorated with beautiful artwork from the Lutheran School students, Michele Seymour Catering did an absolutely wonderful job with the food, and everyone truly enjoyed catching up over a cuppa.



The cake was a showstopper! Baked by Dawn Wenzke and decorated by Johanna Stanton, it provided a lovely moment when Pastor Clem Zanker, our oldest member at 99 years young, cut the cake alongside our youngest member, little Archer Salzke, who was just 2 weeks old.

Once the rain stopped, we all headed outside for the plaque unveiling. It now proudly stands on a tall stone under our church sign where everyone passing by can see it. Bishop Richard did the honours, dedicating the plaque in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

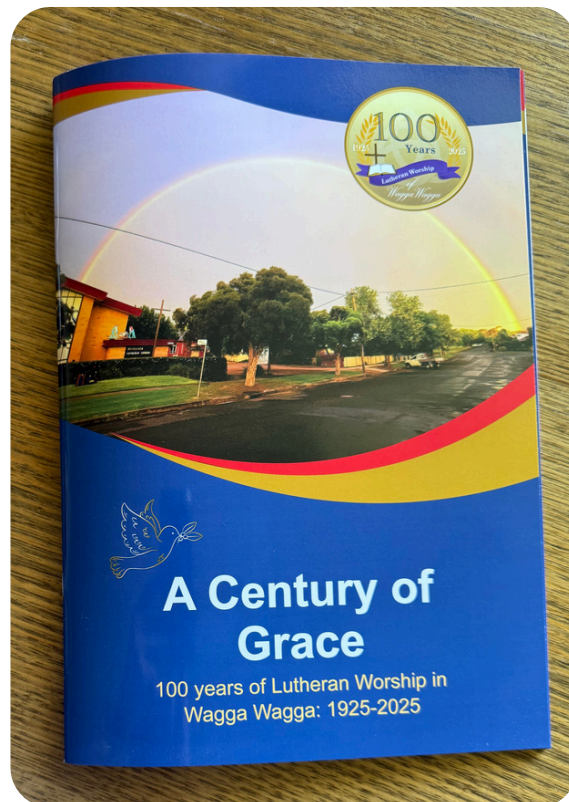


If you missed the historical display in the back room because you were catching up with everyone in the hall, Kayla Cherry put together a fantastic presentation of memorabilia and information that had everyone reminiscing about old times. Kayla has also spent many, many months creating a beautiful commemorative book, which was available free to everyone after the service. There are still copies available if you didn't manage to get one on the day.

You'll find fascinating spotlights on some of our previous pastors, the story behind our huge stained glass window, and memories of the Lutheran Young People's Society, the 2WG broadcasts, and our Sunday Schools. The book also features contributions from the Milbrulong Parish, the Living Waters congregation, and the Lutheran School Wagga Wagga. And here's the best part – it's filled with photographs, so you've got a great chance of spotting yourself or someone you know!

We're incredibly grateful to the Kohlhausen Trust for generously funding the printing of the book as well as the catering, and the purchase of the plaque and stone.

A huge thank you must also go to Kayla Cherry, Leonie Kohlhausen, Graeme Wenzke, and Pastor Dave Cherry for the months of hard work they poured into making this celebration so special.



As is written on our new commemorative stone, To God Be The Glory!







