



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
30 Nov / 1 DECEMBER 2024
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
HAPPY NEW CHURCH YEAR

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Why do we have Advent?

You say, "I don't know, it always just comes along," or, "I don't know, no one ever told me." I have heard these answers and others a number of times. Especially this one: if Christ has already been born, what is this Advent waiting all about? Have we forgotten about his birth?

Strangely that is part of the answer. It has to do with his birth into our hearts and also to do with our forgetfulness.

Our hearts get drowsy and scatterbrained, tired out by the anxieties of daily life. Maybe we distract ourselves from our troubles by working very hard, or becoming depressed, or becoming fascinated with drink, or sex, or out-of-control emotions, or gambling, or email, or golf, or surfing the web, or pride, or, or, or (you name yours). Whatever it is for you, the very clear message of Advent is, "Settle down for a while." Open the door just a bit to let God in.

The Church has a liturgical strategy in the Advent Sunday readings. Each week's first reading is the carrot: usually positive, a promise of good. Then the Gospel hits us with a big stick to wake us up.

Take the first reading this Sunday. It reminds us of the promise God made to his people: Rightness and justice will come to the earth. Security. The day of the Lord will arrive, though long delayed. Peace in our day.

What a lovely thing it is to desire such a time. Too good to be true? Just pious thought? Read the first reading now and ask yourself such questions. Spend time with the puzzles. Pray to God for help. The Responsorial Psalm will help you. It asks God to make known his ways to us, to guide us and teach us.

The second reading urges us to put God's promise of peace into action, even if we are not yet sure what it means. Love others and be loved. A challenge.

Ah, and then Gospel the It tries to wake us up, especially if the above has not helped. "But I am perfectly awake," you say. Alright then, go ahead and read the Gospel. It is the "stick."

It features signs in the sun, moon and stars, nations in dismay, the roaring of the sea and the waves, people dying of fright, and the Son of Man appearing in the clouds with power and great glory.

Terrifying?

So, you are completely ready for it? Let yourself imagine it what it might be like. Picture it scene by scene and don't worry about being exact. Just experience it.

Will such a shakeup really happen literally? We do not know. Maybe much worse is yet to come, judging from the state of the world today. Do you live without fear of terrorist acts, of proliferating nuclear weapons, of a horrific climate change, of a crash of the entire economy, or the greed that fills so many hearts to overflowing in your city, in your state, your world?

If you can say "You are right, I do find I am afraid of these"; then go back to the Psalm and pray. Beg that Christ be given birth in your soul and in so many others in this world that need it so badly.

Welcome to Advent.

Luke cautions against carousing, drunkenness, and worldly cares (Luke 21:34), which weigh a person down and distract from pressing issues. We may snicker at this trio of distractions and conclude that our ancestors in the Faith were not very different.

The ordinary peasants, who constituted about 95% of the population of 1st century Palestine, lived at a subsistence level and would hardly have the means or the opportunity to carouse, to get drunk, or to dream about and pursue creature comforts. They regularly worried about where the next meal was coming from and whether there would be enough for everyone. They were intensely focused on the present moment and the challenge of staying alive.

No, this kind of warning would be directed particularly to the elites, who had both the leisure and opportunity to carouse and get drunk and to allow themselves to be consumed by "worldly cares." Luke addresses especially the wealthy who are greedy, who refuse to share (see Luke 12:13-34, esp. 12:15) with the needy, as this culture honourably requires. Indeed, at every mention of the "rich" in Luke's Gospel it is advisable to cross out that word and pencil in "greedy." That is what irks Luke and Luke's Jesus and, indeed, all the people of Luke's Gospel.

Such people will be caught quite by surprise when the Son of Man returns in judgment! No wonder Luke urges: "Keep yourselves awake."

Wake Up Call



✚✚ Religious prayer is a form of communication directed to a person who is perceived as controlling the general order of existence. In the Bible, this is God. The cosmic signs and earthly catastrophes that Luke has described are clearly under God's control. Hence while we would be prone to check with their intelligence-gathering and weather satellites, radio telescopes, astronomers or meteorologists to identify and evaluate cosmic signs and imminent earthly catastrophes, Luke's advice to believers is to "pray that you may be strong enough to escape from all these things."

Our ancestors in the Faith who were the first to hear or read Luke's warnings were mired down in present concerns. Peasants fought to survive; the elite sought to make life even more elite. We tend to think so much about the future that we totally miss the present. Digital wristwatches remind all of us of how fleeting the present moment is. The advice of Luke's Jesus suits listeners of every era: "Keep awake!" so that you can escape the final calamity.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Jeremiah 33:14-16

✚ We welcome a new year of grace and the Lord's surprises. "The days are coming, says the Lord." What do the coming days of Advent awaken in you? How will you prepare?

✚ In this reading Jeremiah reminds the people of the Lord's promise to them. How does that promise relate to hope? Why is Advent called the season of hope? Is hope a risky virtue? Is it ardent expectation? What would your life be like without hope? What can you do to bring hope to people you know?

Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

✚ What does Pope Francis say in the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* about what community helps us do together? Would St Paul's prayer, "may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all" do the same thing? Who benefits? The ones loved or the ones loving?

With the courage born of truth, he answered: "I am a king." He took responsibility for his own life: "I have a mission and I will carry it to fulfilment in order to bear witness to my Father's Kingdom. For this", he says, "I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth" (John 18:37). ... Jesus' freedom draws us in. ... Let us allow it to resonate within us, to challenge us, to awaken in us the courage born of truth. ... Be free and authentic, be the critical conscience of society. Don't be afraid to criticize! We need your criticism. Many of you, for example, are critical of environmental pollution. We need this! Be free in criticism. Be passionate about truth, so that, with your dreams, you can say: "my life is not captive to the mindset of the world: I am free, because I reign with Jesus for justice, love and peace!"

Dear young people, it is my hope and prayer that each of you can joyfully say: "With Jesus, I too am a king." I too reign: as a living sign of the love of God, of his compassion and his tenderness. ... And whenever I fall, I discover anew in Jesus the courage to continue fighting and hoping, the courage to keep dreaming. At every stage in life.
— *Fratelli Tutti: Encyclical On Fraternity and Social Friendship*, 3 Oct 2020

✚ St Paul said he "abounded in love" for the Thessalonians, to strengthen their hearts. Discuss "abounding in love" as an effective method of strengthening hearts or eliciting change of a kind. Do you think great change or growth ever happens without immense love?"

Gospel Luke 21:25-28,34-36

✚ Could much of this Gospel passage have been written today (roaring sea, drowsy hearts, dying of fright, anxieties, carousing, imminent tribulations)? Jesus tells us to pray for strength. Do you believe that if you ask for strength you will receive it? Could God send it through other people? Could you be a source of strength for others?

✚ If you said the prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus," several times throughout the day, do you think it might keep your heart from becoming drowsy and maybe free it from anxieties?

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL – THIS WEEKEND AND NEXT

The annual **Vinnies Christmas Appeal** will be held over **this weekend and next weekend**. You can support the Appeal in any of the following ways:

✓ **Hampers** – 3 categories (families, single female, single male) *notices in the church*
✚ if you cannot attend church, but want to make a hamper up, contact the Parish Office

✓ **Giving Tree** – tags on the tree have name and gender of children (up to 11 years)

✓ **Donation Envelopes** – available in the church for cash or credit card donations, as well as **online** donations

You can also bring in **CHRISTMAS ITEMS** – *Christmas cakes, puddings, long-life custard, tinned ham, biscuits, lollies, soft drinks, tinned veggies, chips, jelly – no cigarette or alcohol products please.*

You can donate online to the Thirroul Vinnies Christmas Appeal:

<https://my.fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way-conference/vinnies-thirroul-christmas-appeal>

Vinnies Christmas Cards are available this weekend – only \$5 for a pack of 10, *and you are supporting Vinnies.*

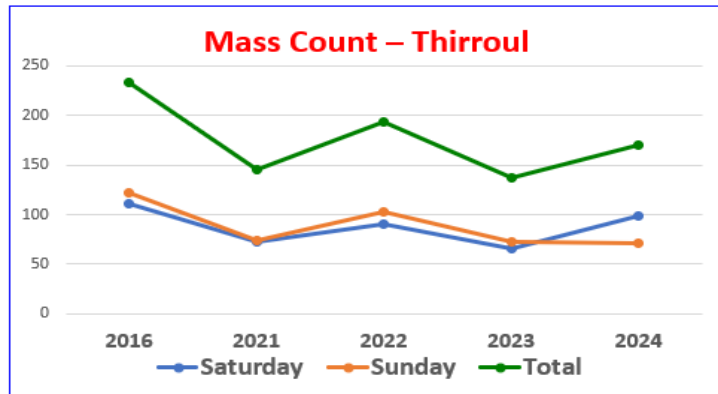
Thank you for your anticipated and continuing generosity to the needy of our local communities.

**PLEASE BRING IN ... ANY CHRISTMAS ITEMS EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA**

MASS COUNT 2024 RESULTS

The detailed results of the recent Mass count during November are shown at the right [9 November was the Family Mass].

Previous results	2023	2022	2021	2016
Saturday average	65	91	72	111
Sunday average	72	103	74	122
Total average	136	195	146	233



Total Attendances	Saturdays	Average
2 November 2024	56	99
9 November 2024	163	
16 November 2024	90	
23 November 2024	85	
Total Attendances	Sundays	Average
3 November 2024	68	72
10 November 2024	63	
17 November 2024	101	
24 November 2024	54	
Total Attendances	Weekends	Average
2/3 Nov 24	124	170
9/10 Nov 24	226	
16/17 Nov 24	191	
23/24 Nov 24	139	

FIRST COMMUNION 2024

Congratulations to these 14 Candidates who will receive First Communion this weekend – on Saturday: Isabelle Elks; Evie Matts; Eva Hyslop; Elliot Scimone; Nicholas Bland; Jai Witten; Annalise Elks; Vincent Scimone – and on Sunday: Isabella Fleming; Sabrina Smith; Poppie Tiene; Hugo Emery; Ava Milham; Brooklyn Emery. Next Saturday, seven Candidates will receive First Communion and two on Sunday. Please remember before the Lord these Candidates and their families.



Congratulations to the Candidates and to their families and friends.

YEAR C – THE YEAR OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE


The three-year cycle of Scripture Readings of a Sunday uses (mostly) in Year A, the Gospel of Matthew, in Year B – which we have just concluded – the Gospel of Mark, and in **Year C**, which we start this week, **the Gospel of Luke**.

Luke has a special perspective on Jesus, for he is the only writer in the New Testament who is not a Jew. His is the perspective of an outsider. For those of you who come from another culture and who sometimes feel like an outsider, and for those of us who, though born here, feel alienated by much of what passes as culture in this land, this is *our* gospel, reminding us that God is for everybody. In today's world there is no place for a particular people thinking that they alone are God's chosen people. In today's world there is no place for a particular religious group thinking that they alone have the truth and that they have nothing to learn from others. Again and again Luke will focus our reflection on Jesus who reveals God's love to everyone, who honours the Samaritan and the Gentile as well as the Jew, and who calls everyone to welcome, care for, share with and learn from our neighbour – whatever his or her race or religious tradition.

Luke sees himself as an historian. He was a physician (Colossians 4:14) and “a messenger of Jesus Christ” (Luke 1:1). Luke was one of Paul's “fellow labourers” (Philemon 1:24 – he is called Lucas here) and Paul's missionary companion (see 2 Timothy 4:11). Luke also wrote the book of **Acts of Apostles**. Luke intended his Gospel to be read primarily by a Gentile audience, and he presented Jesus Christ as the Saviour of both Jews and Gentiles. Luke specifically addressed his gospel to “Theophilus” (Luke 1:3), which in Greek means “friend of God” or “beloved of God”. The Gospel dates from about 80–90AD.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Monday	2 Dec	Monday of the 1 st week of Advent	Isaiah 2:1-5	Matthew 8:5-11
Tuesday 	3 Dec	St Francis Xavier, priest	Isaiah 11:1-10	Luke 10:221-24
Wednesday	4 Dec	Wednesday of the 1 st week of Advent	Isaiah 25:6-10	Matthew 15:29-37
Thursday	5 Dec	Thursday of the 1 st week of Advent	Isaiah 26:1-6	Matthew 7:21,24-27
Friday	6 Dec	Friday of the 1 st week of Advent	Isaiah 29:17-24	Matthew 9:27-31
Saturday	7 Dec	St Ambrose, bishop, doctor	Isaiah 30:19-21,23-26	Matthew 9:35-10:8
Sunday	8 Dec	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT • YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Friday, 6 December 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
14:00 Year 6 Graduation Liturgy
- ✦ Weekend, 7/8 December **Vinnies Christmas Appeal continues at both Masses**
Blessing of December Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays
- ✦ Thursday, 12 December 16:45 School and Parish Christmas Concert and Dinner
- ✦ Friday, 13 December 09:30 End of Year School Mass
- ✦ Weekend, 14/15 December Blessing of the Christmas Crib
- ✦ Tuesday, 17 December 19:30 Sacrament of Penance, Reconciliation Rite II for Advent

A BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

All glory and praise to you, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for sending your Son in human flesh. He became one of us in order to make us your children, and he died upon the tree of the cross to bring us eternal life. We praise you for the beauty of this tree that we have decorated: may its ever-green branches remind us of your unending care for all people; may its lights illumine the darkness of these days; may its presence bring cheer and hope for all people. As we gather in the presence of your Son, we ask you to strengthen your love in our family and friends, and grant that we may always rejoice in the gift of salvation Jesus has given us. Glory to you through Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY – IN ENGLISH

A working translation of the Final Document of the Synod on Synodality is now available in an English translation: <https://www.synod.va/en/news/final-document-of-the-xvi-assembly.html> See attachments to the email Bulletin.











**PLEASE BRING IN ... ONE CHRISTMAS ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA – THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY**

AT THE BEACH: KEY SIGNS WHEN YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A RIP

Deeper and/or darker water; fewer breaking waves; sandy coloured water extending beyond the surf zone; debris or seaweed; significant water movement. Look for where the waves are breaking consistently, and then look to each side where they don't break consistently – where they don't break are usually rip currents.

WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND THE DIOCESE?

Every week, there are many great opportunities to be part of special events, courses, free resources and to nurture and encourage you and your family in your faith. Stay informed by subscribing at <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/staying-connected/> or visit <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/weekly-bulletin-notice/>

<p>THIS Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT ♦ YEAR C</p> <p>1st Reading Jeremiah 33:14-16 2nd Reading 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2 Gospel Luke 21:25-28,34-36</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ♦ YEAR C</p> <p>1st Reading Baruch 5:1-9 2nd Reading Philippians 1:4-6,8-11 Gospel Luke 3:1-6</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SUNDAY MASS TIMES</p> <p>Saturday  17:30 Sunday 08:00  Saturday Mass is recorded.</p>
<p>Parish of St Michael – Thirroul <i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i> <i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i> Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00</p>	<p> www.thirroulcatholic.org.au  325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive  PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515  4268 1910  4268 1976  thirroul@dow.org.au Parish School of St Michael  4267 2560</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES</p> <p>Monday _____ Tuesday  17:30 Wednesday 09:00 Thursday 09:00 Friday 09:30 <i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i></p>