

Christmas Services on the Peninsula

Tanilba CRC, Cnr Peace Pde and Tanilba Ave, Tanilba Bay
6pm Christmas Eve and 9am Christmas Day

Uniting Church, 49 President Wilson Walk, Tanilba Bay
8.45am Christmas Day

Then at 12 noon **Community Christmas Luncheon**
Ph. 4982 3343 or Mob. 0447 668 393 for catering purposes

Baptist Church, 41 Beatty Bvde, Tanilba Bay
9am Christmas Day

Anglican Church, 8 Strathmore Rd, Mallabula
9pm Christmas Eve and 9.30am Christmas Day

Catholic Church, 152 Lemon Tree Passage Rd, Mallabula (near pool)
8pm Christmas Eve and 7.30am Christmas Day

Women's Get Together

The local get together for women next meets at Tanilba CRC church on the first Friday in March 2016, 7pm. Call Ella on 0439824507

Men's Breakfast

Next meets at Henderson Park, Lemon Tree Passage at 7.30am on the first Saturday of the month in February 2016. Call Steven on 4984 5442

Pete's Kitchen

Pete's kitchen is in recess after Thursday December 18th, resuming in February 2016 on Thursdays at 6pm at the Baptist Church, Tanilba Bay.

Come along and enjoy a meal among friends and neighbours.

Published By Tanilba CRC 02 4984 5442

Cnr of Tanilba Ave and Peace Parade, Tanilba Bay.

Sunday Service 9am All welcome!

If you would like to find out more about our Church's activities on the Tilligerry Peninsula, we invite you to contact us or attend one of our regular activities for more information.

The Oyster



"...opened in hope of finding pleasure"

December 2015

Christmas Hope in Brief

By Maurice Wark

By now, some will have decorated a Christmas Tree, perhaps with a Christmas star at the top. Some set up lights all around the yard, and others have none. Some will await the day with anticipation, but for others the burden of overloaded credit cards clouds the joy. For some, Christmas is the time when busy families make time for each other, but for some Christmas just makes the daily loneliness more intense.

Especially if there are younger children around us, the excitement builds towards Christmas as we anticipate the looks on their faces on Christmas morning. We make preparations for Christmas in the hope of a joyous family time, full of festivity and food, along with rest and recreation. That's what hope should be about, that happy anticipation that something good will occur, but for those who have suffered loss through the year or who are estranged from their family, will there be happy anticipation?

Christmas Day is crunch time for those with hopes. Gifts are given and received – does that look on



their face mean a good choice or is it just politeness hiding disappointment? Oh, the food's good but why did we have a hot meal on such a hot day – cross that off for next year. Disappointment – the bon-bons don't crack (and I bought the dearer ones). Isn't it great to hear the squeals of the kids and the happy chatter of the family reminiscing? I'll need a sleep after lunch or I won't last the day. Oh, is it time for goodbyes already? I must have drifted off. We'll have to do this again. How about Uncle Geoff and Auntie Karen's place next year.

Or was the day not what was hoped for? Did the family forget to ring? Did deep wounds from the past rear their heads and family hostilities bubble over? Was Christmas Day just the same as any other day – or perhaps worse because even friends and neighbours were otherwise occupied with themselves?

What are your hopes for Christmas? Will they last when normal routine resumes? There is a Christmas Hope that offers forgiveness, friendship, and lasts.

Jesus – Immanuel – God with us

“But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in King David’s hometown a Saviour was born for you. He is Christ the Lord.”

(Luke 2:10-11)

Christmas Hope that lasts – the start for all our Christmases

But there was a Christmas full of even greater hope, long before ours. God’s Christmas preparations weren’t made in a last minute rush, and He wasn’t just hoping for a good time with his best mates. God was revealing the hope of the world, forgiveness, and friendship that lasts. God’s Christmas star was not just an adornment on top of a tree, but was the star put in the sky at just the right time to guide the wise men to God’s hope for the world.

Bethlehem, the town where the first Christmas was celebrated, was booked hundreds of years in advance, but the guests invited were not all family, and some only received their invitation that first Christmas Night. When the shepherds arrived there was no feasting or family chit-chat. Instead, just as the angel told them, they found the Saviour promised by God, and they left glorifying and praising God. Of course I am talking about the birth of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, on that first Christmas, the realisation of the wonderful hope that God had been preparing for all mankind throughout the ages – the hope of Immanuel, God with us.

BUT, unlike our short lived hopes at Christmas, Jesus, God’s Christmas hope, didn’t just fade into a memory within days or weeks. God’s preparations for that first Christmas weren’t in the hope of a good family time for just a few days. The Bible tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men, but more than that, that Jesus died for the sins of the world and rose again, so that whoever believes in him will not perish, but will receive the gift of life, in friendship with God in this world and the next. The hope of ‘God with us’ is not a brief celebration, but rather a hope that extends into eternity.

This is hope that lasts beyond Christmas. Jesus offers hope to all throughout the year. He doesn’t just turn up in stores once a year to entice us to buy gifts for others. Instead he offers each of us a gift, the gift of forgiveness and friendship with God through his death and resurrection. He not only offers the gift of everlasting life to all who believe in him but here and now he promises that he will never leave us or forsake us. Without Jesus we are without hope before God, but whoever puts their hope in Jesus is welcomed into God’s family, regardless of past mistakes. This is a certain hope, because God does not lie. Jesus says, *“I am the good shepherd... My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand.”* (John 10:27,28) So what do you hope for this Christmas? May God bless you with a joyous family time, full of festivity and food, along with rest and recreation, but more than that, may you find hope that lasts throughout the year and into eternity, God’s lasting Christmas hope – Jesus, Immanuel, God with us. God bless you all this Christmas.

‘It doesn’t feel much like Christmas’ by Steven Goring

Coming from Scotland, at Christmas time I’m used to cold weather, perhaps with some snow, building snowmen and throwing snowballs. We go to work in the dark and come home in the dark. We sing Christmas carols that match our cold weather, and put on lots of layers of clothes and warm jackets, and there’s always turkey for Christmas dinner!

So if it’s light when I get up and it stays light till quite late, and if the weather is hot, and there are plans for a family BBQ on Christmas day with not even a turkey in sight, how can it be Christmas? It just won’t feel much like Christmas in my shorts and T-shirt, eating shrimp on the barbie.

But do these things really ‘make it’ Christmas? Will the lack of familiar symbols stop me being able to celebrate it? But then, when I stop to think, I realise that no matter where I am in the world, Christmas is all about Jesus, a little baby born in a manger.

So why do we celebrate Christmas at all? Why were there angels and shepherds and wise men? Why did Jesus come into this world?

He came for you and for me, because we needed to be rescued from our sins. And God so loved the world that he gave his son to die, to pay for our sins. This was God’s own son coming to earth to save us because he cares for you and me, he loves you and me and has done everything needed so that you and I might have life eternally with him.

So what, you might ask? Does it really matter whether we remember that at Christmas it’s all about Jesus?

Yes! God demands our response. Either we do not care who he is or what he has done and face him as our judge, or like the shepherds, wise men and angels, we worship and adore him. When we believe in him and follow him with all our hearts, we receive the joy and blessing of knowing Jesus and the forgiveness he offers. This rejoicing in his coming into the world is available to all people everywhere.

Wherever I am, for me Christmas will always be the same – all about Jesus!

Tanilba Bay SUFM (Scripture Union Family Mission) is

coming to you again. Something special and free for the kids after Christmas.

When: Monday 28th December to Saturday 2nd January. 10am to 12 noon

Where: On the grounds of Tanilba Bay Primary School.

Register at 9.45am on the day at the school hall or

Beat the queue at <http://scriptureunionnsw.wix.com/tanilba-bay-sufm>

Programs for **school aged kids**, Playgroup style program for **you and your under 5’s** and craft/DIY workshops for **adults and teens**, OR sign in your kids and then relax in our cafe with **free barista coffee** and homemade treats.

For further information go to the website, find us on Facebook (Tanilba Bay SUFM), email tbsufm@gmail.com or phone Anthony Gentle on 02 49823022