

<b>Date:</b> 23rd/24th Dec 2023 - Fourth Sunday of Advent					
<b>Mass Time:</b>	<b>Acolyte</b>	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Prayer of the Faithful</b>	<b>Music</b>
<b>Vigil: 5:00 PM</b>	Ian Miles	Felix Kobus	Wilhelmina de Raadt	Margaret Smith	Chris Wilson
<b>8:00 AM</b>	Randall Noney	Kim Crawford	Jim Gresser	Vicky Walker	
<b>9:30 AM</b>	Richard Merchant	Martyn Ellis	Ingrid Merchant	Matt Aldous	Streeters
<b>Date:</b> 24th Dec 2023 - Sunday Christmas Eve					
<b>Mass Time:</b>	<b>Acolyte</b>	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Prayer of the Faithful</b>	<b>Music</b>
<b>CHILDREN'S MASS</b>					
<b>- 5:00 PM</b>	Ian Miles	Deb Breytenbach	Tom Horsfall	Vicky Walker	Andrew Wilson
<b>12:00 AM</b>	Randall Noney	Matt Aldous	Virginia Fortunat	Katherine Mahns	Chris Wilson
<b>Date:</b> 25th Dec 2023 - Christmas Day					
<b>Mass Time:</b>	<b>Acolyte</b>	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Prayer of the Faithful</b>	<b>Music</b>
<b>8:00 AM</b>	Marek Grus	Tanya Graham	Jim Gresser	Cecilia Hunt	Margaret Gresser
<b>9:30 AM</b>	Bernard Ellis	Katherine Mahns	Anne Ellis	Katherine Mahns	Streeters
<b>Date:</b> 30th/31st Dec 2023 Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph					
<b>Mass Time:</b>	<b>Acolyte</b>	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Prayer of the Faithful</b>	<b>Music</b>
<b>Vigil: 5:00 PM</b>	Ian Miles	Colleen Baker	Lynette Boyd	Tanya Graham	No One
<b>8:00 AM</b>	Randall Noney	Jim Gresser	Vicky Walker	Tom Horsfall	
<b>9:30 AM</b>	Richard Merchant	Phillip Saville	Margaret Hickey	Peta Sparkes	No One

St Thomas Aquinas Parish

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 Phone: 02 4754 1052; *Emergency ONLY:* 0474 631 168

**Parish Email:** email: [springwood@parracatholic.org](mailto:springwood@parracatholic.org)  
**Parish Website:** [www.stachurchspringwood.org.au](http://www.stachurchspringwood.org.au)  
**Parish Facebook Page:** St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood  
**Parish Administrator:** Rev Christopher del Rosario (E: [christopher.del-rosario@parracatholic.org](mailto:christopher.del-rosario@parracatholic.org))  
**Parish Pastoral Council:** Email suggestions to [springwoodparishpc@gmail.com](mailto:springwoodparishpc@gmail.com)  
**Parish Office Hours:** Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm



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**Weekend Masses:** Saturday Vigil Mass 5:00 pm, Sunday 8:00 am and 9:30 am  
**Weekday Mass:** Monday - Saturday 9:30 am  
**Reconciliation:** Saturday after 9:30 am Mass and 4-5 pm before the Vigil Mass  
**Children's Liturgy:** 3rd Sunday of every month, 9:30 am  
**Baptisms:** 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 11 am and by appointment  
**Weddings:** By appointment  
**Funerals:** Please Contact the Parish Office

*We respect the Darug people and their elders both past and present, as the traditional custodians of this land on which we celebrate the Eucharist.*

Kid's Corner



Draw a picture of yourself doing something special for your family or friends during Christmas

In the story of the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel tells Mary that God has chosen her to bring his Son into the world. What are some ways that we can bring Christ into the world for others?

Use the words below to find out what the angel Gabriel and the Blessed Virgin Mary are saying to each other.



Jesus afraid happen servant Lord Greetings pleased son

The Lord will make you a House



During my World Youth Day Pilgrimage in 2011 I was blessed to visit one of the most beautiful Churches in the World: La Sagrada Familia. This Cathedral is iconic due to its towering stature over Barcelona but also for its ongoing construction. Designed by architect Antonio Gaudi in the early 1880s the Church has been under construction since with no completion date in sight. When I visited it in 2011 my jaw dropped; it was tall, inviting, beautiful, and evoked a sense of mystery and wonder. The exterior and interior detail was second to none: everywhere I looked raised my heart and soul to God. It truly is a sight to behold and I encourage you to add this Cathedral to your bucket list. Originally the Church wasn't supposed to be this large and ornate; the idea of a Church was first proposed by a small group of devotees to St. Joseph as a means of drawing the faithful towards Our Lord after a hard days work. After the town received a large donation for the Cathedral's construction it was left in Gaudi's hands to design a Church appropriate for the community. Whilst some may criticise its grandeur or its construction period, its purpose remains the same: to draw the faithful to Our Lord in order to encounter the Divine. This purpose is consistent with every Church one enters - we seek an encounter with the living God.

Our readings for the Fourth Sunday of Advent speak of God encountering his people. In our First Reading David voices his desire to the prophet Nathan to build a temple for the Lord 'Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwelt in a tent.' At that time the ark of the covenant was the tangible sign of God's presence amongst his people. Interestingly God does not take up David's offer to build a dwelling for him, rather He promises David that He will build a house for himself and all David's descendants. Fast forward to our Gospel and we see the foundations being built: The angel Gabriel appears to Our Lady and asks her to be the Mother of God. God does not seek to have a temporary building of brick and mortar, but an eternal dwelling fashioned through the human person allowing humanity to encounter God. Through Our Lady's supreme yes God takes on our humanity which is the new eternal temple; here God and Man are forever joined in Jesus Christ. God can no longer be perceived as a foreign impersonal deity, but one who is so near through our shared humanity.

Dear friends, with Christmas around the corner may we recognise the closeness of God in our lives through the Incarnation. We are able to encounter the living God through Him who become one of us. May we continue to draw strength from Him and be transformed by his grace.

With every blessing in the week ahead.

Fr. Chris



**Second Reading** [Romans 16:25-27](#)

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

*The mystery kept secret for endless ages is now revealed.*

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

**Gospel Acclamation** [Luke 1:38](#)

Alleluia, alleluia!  
I am the servant of the Lord;  
may his will for me be done.  
Alleluia!

**Gospel** [Luke 1:26-38](#)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

*You will conceive and bear a son.*

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

**Communion Antiphon** [Isaiah 7:14](#)

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.



**Entrance Antiphon**

Drop down dew from above, you heavens,  
and let the clouds rain down the Just One;  
let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

**First Reading** [2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16](#)

A reading from the second book of Samuel

*The kingdom of David will be established for ever in the sight of the Lord.*

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent'. Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.'

But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan:

'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."'

**Responsorial Psalm** [Ps 88:2-5. 27. 29](#)

(R.) For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord; through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth. Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever, that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. (R.)
2. 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages.' (R.)
3. He will say to me: 'You are my father, my God, the rock who saves me.' I will keep my love for him always; for him my covenant shall endure. (R.)



**Recently Deceased: Marj Egliston, Lillian Pockran**

**Sick:** Fr Bob Bossini, Dane San Pedro, Marama Watson, Margaret Munro, and all Private Intentions.  
*Due to the strict privacy laws, names of the deceased and sick can only be included in the Bulletin with the express permission of the immediate family. Thank you.*

**PARISH AND DIOCESAN NEWS**

**FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING OUR PARISH AND ITS WORKS:**

There are a variety of ways you can support our Parish and its Mission:

- **QR Code:** located on the Bulletin Front Page.
- **EFTPOS Machines:** located at the back of the Church.
- **Direct Debit:** Please contact the Parish Office for more details.
- **Direct Deposit:** Details are as follows:

Bank Account Name: Springwood

BSB: 067-950

Bank Account Number: 00000560

Reference: Your name in full.

All donations go to maintaining our Church and supporting the various ministries associated with our Parish.



**CHRISTMAS MASSES:** We look forward to celebrating the Nativity of Our Lord. Just a reminder the 5:00pm Christmas Vigil Mass on Sunday 24th December is not 'counted' towards your Sunday obligation. This is a Christmas Mass, not a Sunday Mass.

**CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM BISHOP VINCENT:**

Sharing with you our Bishop Vincent's Christmas message for 2023, which can be viewed on line at:

<https://youtu.be/T7Rn2GyHVis>

May you have the gift of faith, the blessing of hope and the peace of His love at Christmas and always!

**PARISH OFFICE HOLIDAY CLOSURE:**

The Parish Office will be closed for holidays from the Tuesday 26 December 2023 - Monday 15 January 2024. It will reopen on the Tuesday 16 January 2024. Masses and Confessions will continue as normal during this period.

**ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT:**

Adoration will resume on Monday 5th February 2024. Our new schedule follows:

Monday - Saturday: From 8:15 am - 9:15 am

**First Friday Adoration** starts from the 1st of March 2024 at 7:00 pm



**EPIPHANY PILGRIMAGE 2024:**

The parishes of the Blue Mountains Deanery will host the Epiphany Pilgrimage from 2 -9 Jan 2024. You are invited to write any prayer requests on the cards provided and place them in the Epiphany Pilgrimage prayer box at the back of the church to be prayed each day by the pilgrims. You can also be a part of the celebrations and help welcome the pilgrims to our beautiful mountains by assisting with the festive meal when they visit us at STA parish on 3rd -4th January. Please contact Colleen Kime on 02 4754 4335/M: 0407 125 427 or leave your details at the parish office.



# GIRLS SUMMER CAMP

12-16 YEARS OLD  
SESSIONS ARE SPLIT INTO AGE GROUPS

Places are limited & registrations are necessary.

**START**  
15th January  
4pm

**END**  
17th January  
2pm

**COST**  
\$85

**Activities**

- ✓ Arts & Craft
- ✓ Games
- ✓ Spiritual Input
- ✓ Singing
- ✓ Prayers
- ✓ Discussions

**Venue**

"Home of Light"  
230 Fairlight Road, Mulgoa 2745

**Contact**

Sr. M. Rita Baysari  
0493 026 628  
srrita@schoenstatt.org.au

Schoenstatt Girls & Young Women

## My little piece of HEAVEN

Weekend Retreat for Young Women 17+

**START: FRIDAY 12TH JAN @ 6.30 PM**  
**FINISH: SUNDAY 14TH JAN @ 4 PM\***

COST: \$75  
VENUE: "Home of Light"  
230 Fairlight Road, Mulgoa 2745

Places are limited. Registrations are essential & close on 07/01/2024. CONTACT: Sr M Rita Baysari; M: 0493 026 628  
E: srrita@schoenstatt.org.au