

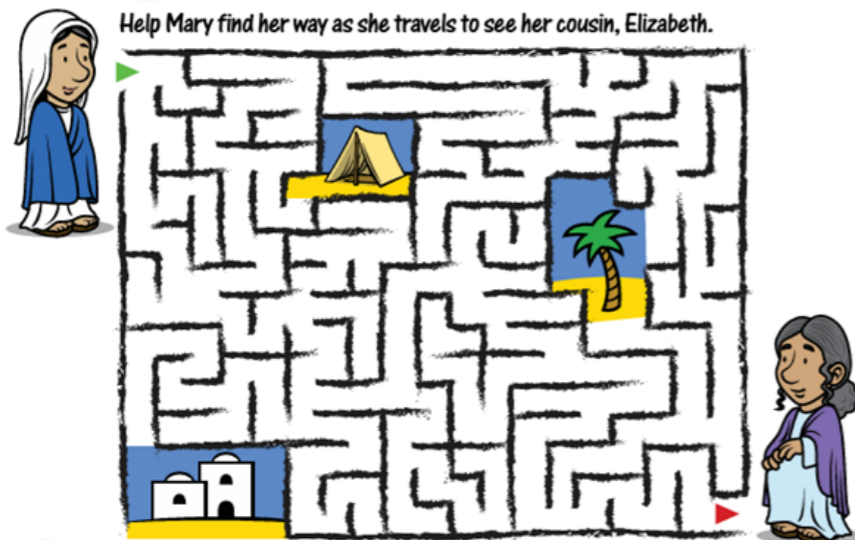
Date:	21st Dec/22nd Dec 2024		Fourth Sunday of Advent	
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading & Responsorial Psalm	Second Reading & Prayer of the Faithful	Music
Vigil: 5:00 PM	Ed Junis	Margaret Smith	Wilhelmina de Raadt	Chris Wilson
8:00 AM	Marek Grus	Ros Comfort	Georgia Cook	
9:30 AM	Bernard Ellis	Katherine Mahns	Phil Saville	Streeters
Date:	24th Dec/25th Dec 2024		The Nativity of the Lord	
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading & Responsorial Psalm	Second Reading & Prayer of the Faithful	Music
Vigil: 5:00 PM				
Children's Mass	Marek Grus	Jacinta Ellis	Martyn Ellis	Andrew Wilson
	Carrying of Baby Jesus: Archie Brown			
12:00 AM				
Midnight Mass	Phill Saville & Richard Merchant	Matt Aldous	Virginia Fortunat	Parish Choir
8:00 AM	Ian Miles	Georgia Cook	Tanya Graham	Margaret Gresser
9:30 AM	Bernard Ellis	Anne Ellis	Margaret Smith	Streeters
Date:	28th Dec/29th Dec 2024		The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading & Responsorial Psalm	Second Reading & Prayer of the Faithful	Music
Vigil: 5:00 PM	Ian Miles	Felix Kobus	Anne Maureen Scarff	No One
8:00 AM	Randall Noney	Kim Crawford	Jim Gresser	
9:30 AM	Phil Saville	Peta Sparkes	Domhnall MacCormac	No One

KID'S CORNER

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - YEAR C

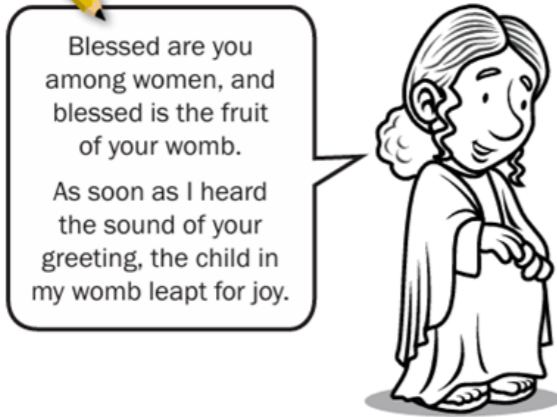
Lk 1:39-45
My name is

The Lord will keep his promise



Help Mary find her way as she travels to see her cousin, Elizabeth.

Draw Mary as she greets Elizabeth.



St Thomas Aquinas Parish

168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood, NSW, 2777
PO Box 4410, Winmalee, NSW 2777
Phone: 02 4754 1052; Emergency ONLY: 0474 631 168



Parish Email: email: springwood@parracatholic.org
Parish Website: 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)
Parish Pastoral Council: Email suggestions to springwoodparishpc@gmail.com
Parish Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm

Weekend Masses: Saturday Vigil Mass 5:00 pm, Sunday 8:00 am and 9:30 am
Weekday Mass: Monday - Saturday 9:30 am
Adoration: Monday - Saturday from 8:15 am - 9:15 am
First Friday Adoration: Every first Friday of the month 7:00 pm
Reconciliation: Saturday after 9:30 am Mass and 4:00-5:00 pm before the Vigil Mass
Children's Liturgy: 3rd Sunday of every month, 9:30 am
Baptisms: 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 11:00 am and by appointment
Weddings: By appointment
Funerals: Please Contact the Parish Office



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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.

Advent Candle 4: Love



Our Gospel for the fourth Sunday of Advent recalls the Visitation of Our Lady to her cousin Elizabeth; its a moving scene where we witness John the Baptist, as early as six months old, exercising his role as the 'voice of one crying out in the wilderness': 'Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.' Like King David who danced with all his might as the Ark of the Covenant entered Jerusalem so too does John the Baptist with the coming of the Messiah. As incredible as this scene is our reflection for today will not focus on the witness of John the Baptist. Today we explore the person of Mary in the Visitation and how she exemplifies love. With Christmas only a few days away it is necessary to see how she exhibits love as through her we have the perfect example of discipleship.

Consider the events leading up to the Visitation: Mary is greeted by the Archangel Gabriel who announces that she has been called by God to be the Mother of his Son. Despite her engagement to Joseph, and the backlash she would experience in conceiving a child outside wedlock Our Lady accepts God's vocation for her: "I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.'" She trusts the Lord's will for her flourishing and so accepts her vocation with grace and faith. This however isn't the only news: '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.' Moved by St. Gabriel's message 'Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah.' For readers this may seem like an insignificant detail, however when you consider the geography of Nazareth and Ein Karem (Elizabeth's home) Mary's journey takes on meaning. Ein Karem, one hundred miles from Nazareth, is on the outskirts of Jerusalem and is about 2,474 feet above sea level, while Nazareth is at 1,138 feet. This means Mary had to trek uphill nearly 1,336 feet in elevation. Besides the physical toll it must have taken on the newly pregnant Virgin Mary, the path she took had many hidden dangers. The dirt path that wound through the mountainous region is believed to have been a popular place for bandits, who would surprise unsuspecting travellers. Mary likely wouldn't have travelled alone, scholars agree St. Joseph would have organised a caravan for her or journeyed with her to Elizabeth. Regardless the journey itself would have been taxing, especially for one newly pregnant. Why would Mary readily undertake such a journey? Love. Mary's love for Elizabeth in her time of need moves the former to journey with haste. Our patron St. Thomas defined love as 'to will the good of the other.' Mary exhibits this through her courageous journey to assist Elizabeth.

Dear friends, in celebrating the final Sunday of Advent we light the fourth candle representing love. Love must never be understood as a simple emotion or affection towards another. Love at its finest is divine, its is the very bond that unites the Trinity. Love moves the individual to look beyond oneself to seek the highest good for the other. Mary sought to assist Elizabeth in her time of need. In doing so she also brought love incarnate with her. As we celebrate this final Sunday may we follow the example of Our Lady who in ministering to Elizabeth also brings Our Lord. May all our actions reflect our identity as Christians; those who bring Christ to others.

Wishing you a blessed Advent season,

Fr Chris



Second Reading [Hebrews 10:5-10](#)

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

I am coming to do your will.

This is what Christ said, on coming into the world:

You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation, prepared a body for me. You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin; then I said, just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book, 'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.'

Notice that he says first: You did not want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them; and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to obey your will. He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once and for all by Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation [Luke 1:38](#)

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

Gospel [Luke 1:39-45](#)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Why should it happen that I am honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Communion Antiphon [Isaiah 7:14](#)

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

Entrance Antiphon [Cf Isaiah 45:8](#)

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 [Micah 5:1-4](#)

A reading from the prophet Micah

Out of you will be born the one who is to rule over Israel.

The Lord says this:

You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, the least of the clans of Judah, out of you will be born for me the one who is to rule over Israel; his origin goes back to the distant past, to the days of old.

The Lord is therefore going to abandon them till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth. Then the remnant of his brothers will come back to the sons of Israel.

He will stand and feed his flock with the power of the Lord, with the majesty of the name of his God.

They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power to the ends of the land. He himself will be peace.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 79:2-3, 15-16, 18-19, R. v.4](#)

(R.) Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

- O Shepherd of Israel, hear us, shine forth from your cherubim throne. O Lord, rouse up your might, O Lord, come to our help. **(R.)**
- God of hosts, turn again, we implore, look down from heaven and see. Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted. **(R.)**
- May your hand be on the man you have chosen, the man you have given your strength. And we shall never forsake you again: give us life that we may call upon your name. **(R.)**



Recently Deceased: Jim Wallace

Sick: Colleen Baker, John Hunia, Eva Fitzgerald, Philip Coggan, James Connor, Richard Ford, Julie Somerville, 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: Please support our Parish and its projects.

- 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.

FIRST COLLECTION: This goes to the Board of Management. The fund supports the living expenses of the priests within our Diocese.

SECOND COLLECTION: This goes to our Parish of St Thomas Aquinas—directly funding operational costs, pastoral activities and various programs that enrich our community.

MASS OFFERING ENVELOPES are also available which can be used to express your ongoing generosity and support. Thank you.



SAVE THE DATES! **PARISH OFFICE HOLIDAY CLOSURE:** STA Parish Office will be closed for the holidays from **Wednesday 25th December 2024** and will reopen on **Tuesday 14th January 2025**. Masses and Confessions will continue as normal during this period.

FIRST FRIDAY ADORATION: is on **3rd January 2025 at 5:30pm**. All are welcome!

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS / Acolytes, Readers, Musicians: on **Saturday 8 Feb 2025 from 10.15am**. Please contact the parish office via email to confirm your attendance.

EPIPHANY PILGRIMAGE 2025 MEAL: You can be a part of the celebration and help welcome the pilgrims to our beautiful mountains by assisting with the festive meal when they visit us at STA Parish on the **3rd-4th January**. Please contact Colleen Kime on 02 4754 4335 / 0407 125 427 or leave your details at the parish office.

STA CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2024

Sun 22 Dec:	4.30pm Christmas Evening (Carols/ Readings/Reflections/BBQ)
Mon 23 Dec:	9.30am Mass
Tues 24 Dec:	9.30am Mass 5.00pm Children's Mass 12.00am Midnight Mass
Wed 25 Dec:	8.00am Christmas Morning Mass 9.30am Christmas Morning Mass
Thurs 26 Dec:	9.30am Mass
Fri 27 Dec:	9.30am Mass
Sat 28 Dec:	9.30am Mass 5.00pm Vigil Mass
Sun 29 Dec:	8.00am and 9.30am

FRONT / BACK YARD Pallet



CHRISTMAS TREES!

Plain Trees : \$30
Complete Set : \$40 (comes with lights and metal post)
Free delivery (if required)

All proceeds to the WIMLAH Women's Refuge Outreach and Domestic Violence Advocacy Service Blue Mountains

Please contact Johann on 0409 402 095 or the St Thomas Aquinas Parish Office on 4754 1052

WHOLE PARISH CHRISTMAS EVENT

CAROLS • READINGS • REFLECTIONS • BBQ

December 22, 2024 4:30 PM

Performing will be the CHOIR, STREETERS & GUEST ARTISTS
Santa will make a guest appearance!

Families are encouraged to dress their children up as an angel or shepherd for the evening.

St Thomas Aquinas Church, Springwood,
168 Hawkesbury Rd, Springwood NSW 2777

Thank YOU

The gifts were collected on Monday morning, in support of Wimlah Women's Refuge Outreach and Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, a specialist domestic violence service located within the Blue Mountains. A minivan was FULL of presents donated by our generous parish community. The representative from Wimlah was so incredibly grateful, so heart-warmingly genuine in her thanks and she wanted to make sure that you all knew how much this will mean to the women and children in the refuge at this time.

The proceeds from the pallets (we still have a small amount to sell) will be deposited into their account next week and further details will follow.



ST VINCENT de PAUL-THANK YOU: The members of St Vincent de Paul, and the families we support, are overwhelmed by the response of our Christmas appeal again this year. With money raised at Masses over the donation weekends and with hampers donated, we have been able to bring joy and love to many families this Christmas. Your continued support of the work of St Vincent de Paul enables us to put our faith, yes your faith as well as ours, into action. May God bless you abundantly during this wonderful Christmas season and throughout 2025.