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Church Prayer Chain: Ring or text Lynda Ratcliffe 0402622406

Food Coordinator: Jill Donnelly (02)4229 5248

Please continue to join our activities:

- ⊗ **Tuesday Bible Study will resume in the new year**
- ⊗ **Personalised cards** can be ordered from Lynne Grimm, 3 for \$5.00 Proceeds go to the Building Fund 0438770764
- ⊗ **The Offering taken on Christmas Day will go to 'TEARFUND'**
Envelopes for giving will be available from today for those people wishing to donate to this appeal. If you want a tax deductible receipt, complete the form attached to the envelope. Make cheques payable to Wollongong Congregational Church. Place in offering plate on Christmas Day or prior, if you wish.
Any questions please contact Glenn Martin
- ⊗ Volunteers needed to do the **POWER POINT**. Lessons will be available. Please see Richard Donnelly

Church account details:
Congregational Church Wollongong
BSB: 032695 Account No: 494743

Thanks to everyone who has been faithful in tithing and giving



Wollongong Congregational Church

27 DECEMBER, 2020

— Welcome all and be blessed —

Please only attend Church if well
Masks are available should you need them
Please follow Covid-19 protocol

Please stay for Morning Tea following our service

ANNOUNCEMENTS

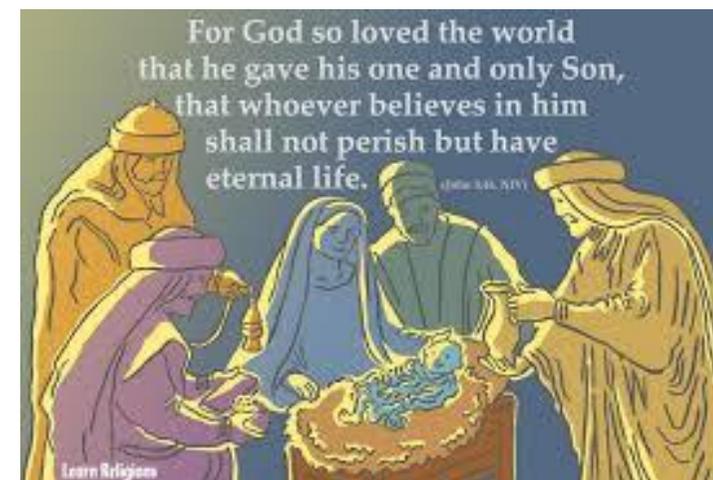
Covid-19 update

The 4 square metre rule is back in place. This means our numbers are again reduced to 25 in the main area of the church, 4 in foyer, 8 upstairs and 31 in the hall. There is to be no singing. Anyone who is from or has been to the Northern Beaches Municipality since 10 December is not allowed to attend. Please have any QR code app on your phone to make digital recording of attendance easier

- Pastor Con and Leonie's last Sunday is today.

After a quick morning tea, those who registered and paid Jill will join Con and Leonie at Rashay's Restaurant in Nth Wollongong for lunch

"Thank you Con for being our pastor for the past 11 years and for being so faithful and so true to God's word. You and Leonie will continue to be in our prayers as God uses you wherever he calls."



Summary of last week's Sermon by Pastor Con Despinidic

As I reflected on a summary of last Sunday message, I was struck by the thought that this will be the last Newsletter that I will write to you. Again, allow me to say that it has been an honour and privilege to live amongst you these past 11 years. My prayer is that as a congregation the love that you have for each other will continue to grow, and that you may always be open to God's leading.

Last Sundays message: - Christmas means so many things to different people. For me Christmas became exciting on the 23rd December 1969 in that I had an unforgettable encounter with God, a Damascus experience of sorts! I do not believe that we can be politically correct when it comes to Christmas; if we were, we would take away from its true purpose and meaning. How often do we hear: 'Tis the season to wish one another joy and love and peace? Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! May Santa Claus bring everything you wished for. Best wishes for Happy Holidays and a wonderful New Year. Warmest greetings of this festive season and best wishes for happiness this New Year. Each of these statements about Christmas are designed, intentionally or unintentionally to strip Christmas of its true meaning adding to the confusion. What if I knew nothing of our Christian terminology or of the faith or the church? Would I understand what is being said? Would I be drawn near to hear? There are many who honestly believe that they have no need of the Gospel or accept the Gospel as the true meaning of Christmas. The Church is part of the community, a club like Rotary, the CWA, Red Cross, local Sports Clubs, or Choir and so on, they are just not interested. The Church is no different, not exceptional, it is just like everything else in society. It does not stand out, nor would they get upset if it faded away. Foolishly, they do not see the relevance of the Christian Church in the 21st Century.

Many of the good things in society have their roots in the Christian Church, from hospitals to education. I believe that there would be CHAOS if you systematically cut out all Christian influence. Imagine if Christians stopped being Christians and Christian organisations ceased their activities? Groups such as the St Vincent de Paul Society, Salvation Army, Anglicare, the ministry of Uniting Care and what of all the good works done by every Christian within our shores, and every small congregation. How do we get the message across as we are faced with a mighty challenge in the 21st Century? Matthew had the same problem, he could have started with the birth of the Lord Jesus or the crucifixion, he did not. He began with a long list of names! What's that about? The Old Testament passages are the proofs of the Lord Jesus's existence; they make him credible, like our birth certificate and driver's licences. There are many OT proofs to show us Who the Lord Jesus is. The question is, does our society really want to know? The truth is out there, and it is as plain as daylight, that is if one really wants to know. A truth is good, it is what you do with that truth that makes an impact. Christmas is about the Lord Jesus, foretold centuries beforehand that the Christ Child would have a profound impact on individuals today and evermore.

May the truth of the Christmas message continue to have a profound impact on our lives.

Con

PRAYER POINTS – Please pray for:

◇ Australia: for God's wisdom, leading and authority over our Nation, Government, Land and Peoples and the recent COVID-19 pandemic

- ◇ Thank God in anticipation for a new Pastor
- ◇ Our church family. Surround each other with love
- ◇ God's leading and authority over decisions concerning our church
- ◇ God's leading for new Elders and Deacons - **Nominations sought**

- ◇ Church family members: **Fasiu NAQURA**
- ◇ Those In Care: Joan Weber & Dawn Coleshill
- ◇ Jill Donnelly's great-nephew Macca, as he recovers from his operation; pray for his health and a speedy recovery
- ◇ Roger and Robyn McFarlane-Clark for healing
- ◇ Lee and Geoff Venables's daughter Michelle for ongoing healing. Also keep her children in prayer
- ◇ Dennis Grimm for his ongoing health and healing
- ◇ Janice Roworth for her ongoing healing and the ability to cope and have support at home. Also pray for her son Steve
- ◇ Margaret, Dianne and Wendie as they wait on the Lord for justice
- ◇ Joyce Souter for ongoing healing and pray for her son John, who is battling cancer. He recently suffered a stroke
- ◇ Bernice for healing of leg ulcers, and for Peter as he cares for her
- ◇ Ruth Murray, Pam Shrubbs and Nabila for ongoing healing

- ◇ Wisdom and opportunity to reach our community with the Gospel
- ◇ Dennis and Karen Bagnall and the letter box distribution of "Living Water" (Gospels of John) throughout the Illawarra
- ◇ SRE and school ministry workers for rest and renewal
- ◇ Pulse 94.1 FM and the effectiveness of Con's radio program

- ◇ FCC Churches: **RACEVIEW (1881)**
- ◇ WECF(World Evangelical Congregational Fellowship): **Manipur, India**
- ◇ Romani Evangelical Congregational Church in **Macedonia**
- ◇ Jenny and Dave Rowe in USA working for Wycliffe Bible Translators
- ◇ Adam and the Work in Togo
- ◇ Persecuted Christians in **IRAN**

Praise God for his goodness and any answered prayers in your life