

Cross & Keys

Christmas 2024 – Newsletter of
Saint Peter's Church



Anglican
Church
Saint Peter's East Maitland

The Anglican Parish of East Maitland
Saint Peter's Church
49 William Street East Maitland

Serving the Communities of Ashtonfield,
East Maitland, Four Mile Creek, Louth Park, Metford, Pitnacree, Tenambit and the Hunter Region

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SCOTT'S SPOT



I'm offering a somewhat different Scott's Spot for Christmas this year.

I am writing this in what is often referred to as the "Sunshine State". However, since I arrived here in the evening of the First Sunday of Advent it has been anything but sunny! Instead I have experienced many overcast days with heat and humidity.....and then there's been the rain! At one stage I thought I should check my GPS coordinates to make sure I was actually in south-east Queensland and not Darwin. But all evidence points towards me not overshooting the mark and landing in the far north. Whilst here I have prayed a lot, reflected a lot, and you all at St Peter's have been very much in my mind and on my heart.

During these past weeks I have also been feverishly working to prepare our investment property for sale. It went on the market this past Wednesday. This has involved using skills I thought were long forgotten to me and over exercising muscles I think I wish I could forget. There has also been quite a bit of work to be done preparing our campervan for sale. All of this has been done in a hurried way to get things ready to go before Christmas.

Like at no other time in my life, I have been aware of what I imagine life might have been like for Mary and Joseph in the lead up to that first Christmas in Bethlehem. On top of the usual preparations for the arrival of a baby, add to that a trip to another city to meet the requirements of a census. It was about a 90-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. It was quite possibly done on foot, as there is actually no mention of a donkey in any of the Gospel accounts. (apologies to 2000 years of Christmas Pageant organisers).

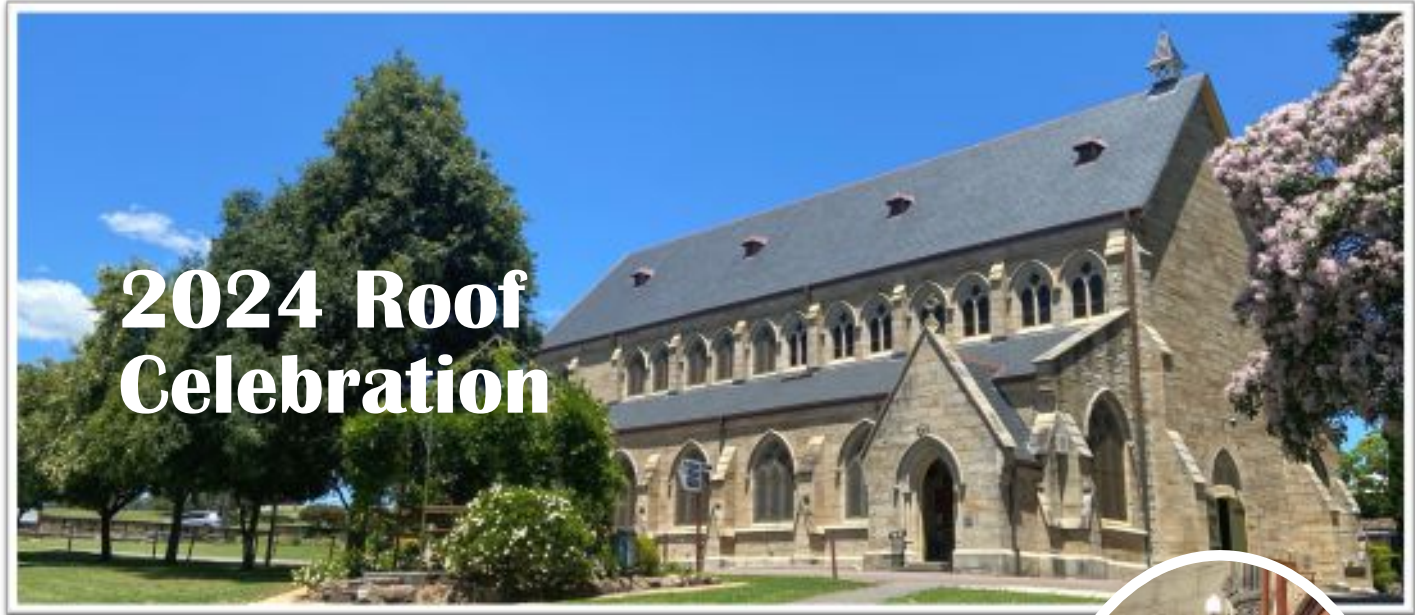
Scholars think it likely it would have taken them about a week of travel. And that's just the practical, physical side of things. Imagine the emotional anguish that journey might have wrought on Mary. Would the baby come during the trip. Would something go wrong. Will everything be ok. Not to mention the stress that Joseph might have been feeling as he did his best to keep Mary and the special child she was carrying safe. It was a recipe for disaster, no doubt. And yet by the grace of God they persevered. They got through it, the child Jesus arrived safely, and the world was changed for ever. A miracle indeed!

And isn't it amazing that this is still so often the way that our life and faith journey plays out for us today. Through all our feverish activity, anguish, stress and turmoil God still breaks into our world and comes close to each of us in the most unexpected and incredible ways. Shining light into our darkness, dispelling all of our fears and soothing our pain.

I am sad not to be with you to celebrate this most special time of year. But wherever you find yourself this Christmas and whatever you find yourself doing, I pray that you will know the deep and abiding love of God made real for us all in the babe of Bethlehem.

Be safe, be kind and be gentle!
Christmas blessings to you and yours.

Your Priest and Brother in Christ.
Scott



17th November was a very special day for St Peter's as we held a celebration and dedication of the new roof. Bishop Peter Stuart presided and was assisted by the Rector Reverend Scott Dulley and Reverend Wendy Brack. During the service thanksgiving was given in the Liturgy for the new slate roof.



Bishop Peter (L) and Reverend Scott

The Reverend Scott Dulley

"Bishop Peter, these items represent the hard work and expertise of the people who have taken their part in the replacement of our church roof.

The project scope of works, a new slate tile, the copper nails, a piece of lead, a hammer and a harness. Each of these items represent a person or a team of people whose commitment has helped to move this project from planning to completion. Parishioners, Diocesan Staff, Contractors and Community Members working collaboratively for a common purpose.

This plaque and these photographs will stand as a reminder of where we have come from, where we are now, and will help us to look forward to where God is leading us".



Jamie McCulloch and family of East Coast Slate Roofing

The Bishop Peter Stuart

"I am grateful for the collaboration which has been evident throughout the life of this project. I am grateful for the skill and attention to detail of all who have worked on this roof. I give thanks to God for the people and teams whose commitment has seen this project move from concept stage to what we see before us today.

On behalf of the Diocese I offer my congratulations and best wishes to you all".





During this period of Advent as we prepare for the birth of Jesus, I thought I would share with you an article on Prayerful Listening, listening to God, Jesus and/or the Holy Spirit. For most of us, we find this difficult to do, trying to discern the source of the thoughts we hear in our heads. Here are some guidelines that you might find helpful.

- If they are from God:** they are usually, peaceful, loving, uplifting, comforting, kind, consistent, patient, instructive, clear, forgiving and seldom needed to be act upon in a hurry.
- If they are from ourselves:** they are logical, appeal to our ego, can be changeable, and make us look good in front of others.
- If they are from other sources, the devil included:** they promote fear, guilt, panic, confusion, are deceitful, unclear, pushy, urgent, needing to act upon in a hurry.

The art of Prayerful Listening takes time to master. In fact, most of us don't master it at all. We still ask ourselves questions like, am I hearing right or did I make it up, or do I just want to please myself. But the more we listen to the thoughts in our head we soon start to discern where these thoughts come from, especially if we use the checklist above.

God is there to love and guide us through life. God only wants the best for us. So, it is up to us to invite God into our daily lives, not only to talk to God but also to listen to him as well.

Here is an exercise you might like to try. Choose a quiet spot preferable with nature, stand or sit still there and listen with your heart. Ask God to tell you where to go, what to see, or what to do. Try to be fully present to God's mystery within and around you. If you hear nothing, do nothing, just wait for God's small voice. Or alternatively have a conversation with God about what is on your mind as you would with you best friend. Tell him everything. And as you go see where your thoughts lead you.

Happy listening.
Rev Wendy



In November we were very honoured to host Joanne Fellows, the Founder of Collaborate, an organisation committed to improving the care provided to our communities.

Joanne and her team revolutionise the lives of those affected by mental health issues through person-centred, strengths-based service delivery.

Some of Joanne's clients, family and friends joined together for a BBQ get together in the Parish Hall.

Word has it that it went so well we are likely to see everyone back next year on a regular basis. Well done Jo!





If you are the superstitious type, Friday 13th December might not be the best evening to host an event, however for the St Peter's volunteers, performers and the local community it all added to the excitement and anticipation. We were back again this year with of course another VERY hot summer evening but that didn't stop anyone enjoying themselves and getting into the Christmas spirit.

The Maitland Pipes and Drums kicked off the evening again with a big opening. Crowd favourites and headline artists the Three Tenors were sublime as always, it is funny to see people with their mouths agast at hearing their voices for the first time. Even their sound check drew gasps! They are just amazing. Supporting them of course were our own Maitland Brass Band and Maitland City Choir. The Tenors were very impressed with our local talent and were very grateful to have them both with us. The lineup is top notch, especially to get us in the festive mood.

With our volunteers sizzling, not only in the heat but like sausages on the BBQ too, they ensured everyone was well fed and watered before a visit from Santa had the children running with glee to catch some chocolate and candy.

Bishop Sonia was our guest host for the night and she did a wonderful job. A very special shout out to her, we hope she enjoyed it as much as we enjoyed having her with us.





There are many people who work really hard to help with this event. From the St Peters Volunteers, the stage and sound crew, the artists and St John's Ambulance, however none of it would be possible without our wonderful sponsors. This year we would like to thank **Hunter ReadyMix Concrete, Maitland Council and The Mutual Bank** for their continued support.

It is such a loved community event and St Peter's are honoured to host it. We said goodnight with a beautiful sunset and look forward to seeing you all again in 2025!

@Adam Draper



2024 Pantry Wrap!

Our St Peters Pantry Christmas Elf's were at it again this year gathering, storing and wrapping hampers for **75** lucky clients. These have been put together with much thought and care and are beautifully presented. We hope this small gesture of kindness brings some smiles to families and children in need of a little help this year. The wonderful team of volunteers managed to take some time out to enjoy a Christmas celebration lunch together too. *Merry Christmas Team!*



Hall Hire

Our Parish Hall is available to hire for community or family events and functions. We currently host a number of local groups running weekly Yoga, Belly Dancing and Tai Chi classes. If you would like to hire the Hall, please contact the Parish Office.



Saint Peter's Columbarium

Many of our friends and loved ones rest in the columbarium niches and memorial garden.



We invite all members of our local community to consider our columbarium as the final resting place for their cremated remains, where family members and descendants can visit.

For further details about purchasing a columbarium niche please contact the Parish Office.

Please pray for the souls of all those who have died since our last edition and their lives celebrated.



Deborah TAYLOR
Margaret HANKS
David WATTERS
Kyle MATE
Jannette HALLIDAY
Naomi GRESHAM
Fay GOLDFINCH

Regular Giving

The preferred way of receiving peoples offering to support the ministry and mission of the Parish is by electronic bank transfer.

Would you be willing to give your regular offering electronically?



The Parish Council is asking all those who regularly give to the life of the Parish to consider doing so electronically. Giving regularly by bank transfer is simple to set up and saves having to remember your giving envelopes each week. It also reduces security risks on the church site.

There are two ways to set this up:

- ★ If you have access to the internet and already use electronic banking for other payments you can set this up from within your bank's website;
- ★ If not, you can visit your local bank branch and ask the staff to arrange it for you.

The Parish's bank details are:
Saint Peter's Anglican Church
BSB: 705-077,

Account Number: 00040464 Reference: St Peter's Giving.

It is important for you to know that your giving will remain confidential. Christine Simpson-Morgan our Treasurer is available to help you. Please contact Christine at office@eastmaitlandanglican.org or on 4934 5303 if you would like to discuss this confidentially.

Memorial Flowers

Throughout the year we remember our loved ones on the anniversary of their death. Each year families remember loved ones who have died by dedicating memorial flowers in the church on the weekend in which they are included in our prayers.

This is a lovely way to remember loved ones and to help Saint Peter's maintain a supply of fresh flowers throughout the church.

The cost of flowers is determined by the family making the donation, however as an indication this is usually in the order of \$150 - \$200.

If you would like to organise memorial flowers for a loved one, please contact the Parish Office on 4934 5303



If you are a user of Facebook please like and share our pages:

East Maitland Anglican
Op Shop St Peter's East Maitland



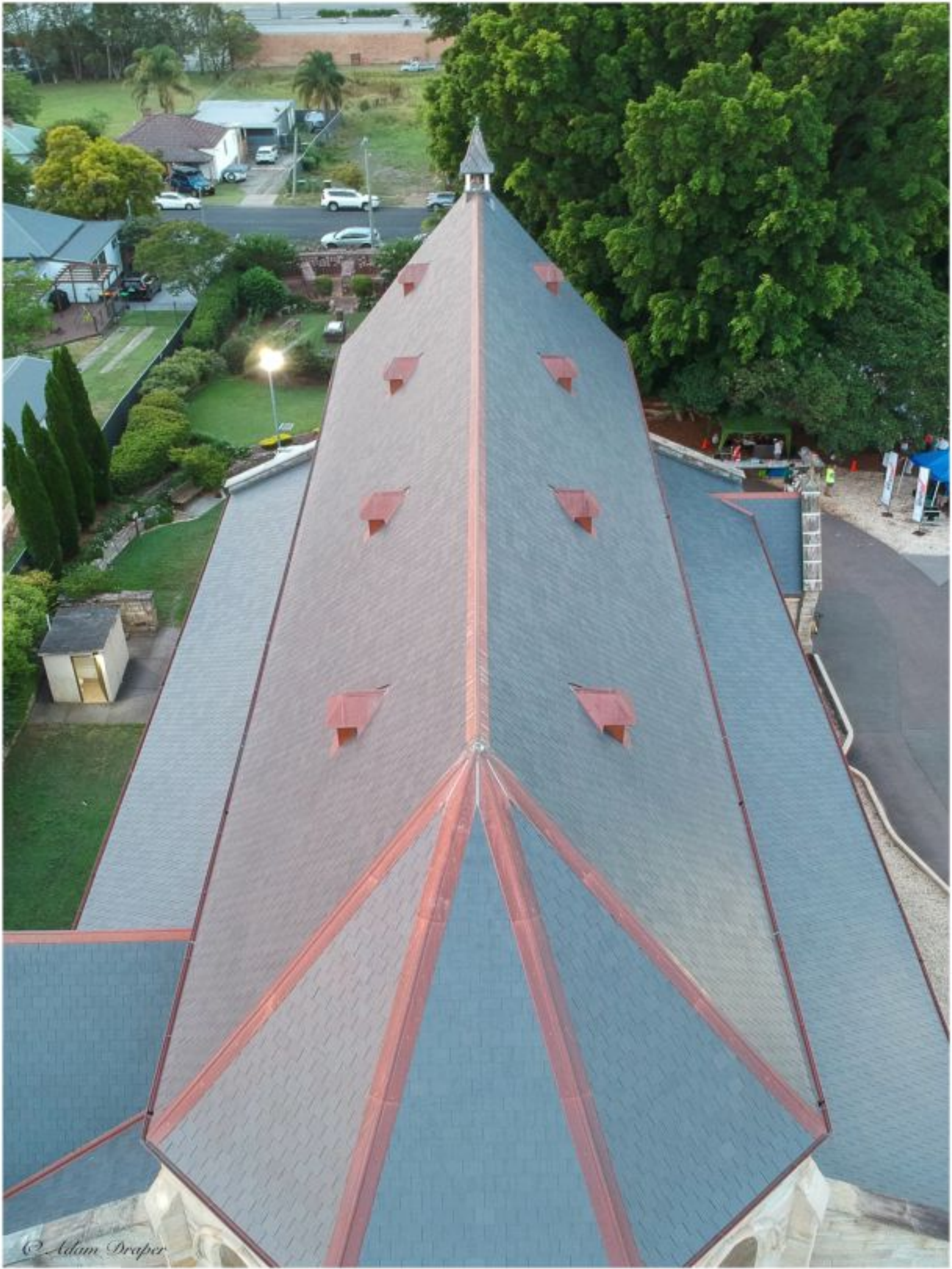
Parish Office hours are as follows;
Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am – 1pm

Outside of these hours messages can be left phone (4934 5303) and will be responded to as promptly as possible during opening hours.



WEEKLY SERVICES

Saturday 6:00pm - Vigil Eucharist
Sunday 8:30am - Parish Eucharist and Morning Tea
Sunday 5.00pm - Petrus (1st and 3rd Sunday only)
Wednesday 8:00am – Eucharist
1st Friday 10:30am – Eucharist



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