



Uniting Church in Australia



Portarlington



Drysdale

## News sheet for Sunday, 21 December 2025

### THIS WEEK IN OUR CONGREGATIONS

#### Sunday, 21 December

##### Portarlington

9.00am Rev. Karen Eller, Christmas Story in music and drama, *loose change and Foodbank*

##### Drysdale

10.30am Rev. Karen Eller

#### Wednesday, 24 December, Christmas Eve

11.30pm Combined Linked Congregations Service at Drysdale, Rev. Karen Eller

#### Thursday, 25 December, Christmas Day

8.00am Combined Linked Congregations Service at Drysdale, Rev. Karen Eller

#### Sunday, 28 December

##### Portarlington

9.00am Portarlington Lay Team, Glenda

##### Drysdale

10.30am Rev. Karen Eller, Café Church

#### PRAYER (Matthew 1, Isaiah 7, Romans 1, Psalm 80)

In this season of love, hope and family,  
grant us joy and peace this day.  
You offered signs to Joseph and Mary long ago—  
signs that their son would be the Messiah,  
Emmanuel.

May your light shine on us here,  
that we might understand the signs in our lives.  
We come with open hearts and minds  
to hear of your love coming into the world.  
We come to hear of a young woman with child,  
a foster father with trust in God,  
a match you made in heaven  
to shepherd a tiny boy to his destiny.  
Holy God, show us your peace  
as we make ready for your light in the world!  
Amen

### LECTIONARY READINGS

#### 21 December 2025

**Advent 4**      Isaiah 7:10-16  
                  Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
                  Romans 1:1-7  
                  Matthew 1:18-25

**CHRISTMAS** The Christmas season includes Christmas Eve/Day and the twelve days of Christmas. It recalls the stories of the birth and infancy of Christ. The Church in this time celebrates the wonder of the incarnation.

#### 24/25 December 2025

**Nativity 1**      Isaiah 9:2-7  
                  Psalm 96  
                  Titus 2:11-14  
                  Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

**Nativity 2**      Isaiah 62:6-12  
                  Psalm 97  
                  Titus 3:4-7  
                  Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20

**Nativity 3**      Isaiah 52:7-10  
                  Psalm 98  
                  Hebrew 1:1-4, (5-12)  
                  John 1:1-14

#### 28 December 2025

**Christmas 1**      Isaiah 63:7-9  
                  Psalm 148  
                  Hebrew 2:10-18  
                  Matthew 2:13-23



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Saturday (10.00am – 12.30pm)  
0490 452 325

## JANUARY ACTIVITIES

### Sunday, 4 January 2026

#### **Portarlington**

9.00am Rev. Karen Eller

#### **Drysdale**

10.30am Rev. Karen Eller, *Holy Communion, Food bank and Loose Change*

### Thursday, 8 January

10.00am Coffee and Chat, Café Zoo

### Sunday, 11 January

#### **Portarlington**

9.00am Rev. Karen Eller, *Holy Communion*

#### **Drysdale**

10.30am Denise's Lay Team

### Thursday, 15 January

10.00am Coffee and Chat, Café Zoo

### Sunday, 18 January

#### **Portarlington**

9.00am Rev. Karen Eller, *Loose Change and Foodbank*

#### **Drysdale**

10.30am Rev. Karen Eller

### Thursday, 22 January

10.00am Coffee and Chat, Café Zoo

### Sunday, 25 January

#### **Portarlington**

9.00am Manning Lay Team

#### **Drysdale**

10.30am Rev. Karen Eller

### Thursday, 29 January

10.00am Coffee and Chat, Café Zoo

## LECTIONARY READINGS JANUARY

### **1 January 2026**

#### **New Year's Day**

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-13

Psalm 8

Revelation 21: 1-6a

Matthew 25: 31-46

### **1 January 2026**

#### **Holy Name of Jesus**

Numbers 6: 22-27

Psalm 8

Galatians 4: 4-7 or Philippians 2: 5-11

Luke 2:15-21

### **4 January 2026**

#### **Christmas 2**

Jeremiah 31:7-14

Psalm 147:12-20

Ephesians 1:3-14

John 1 :(1-9), 10-18

### **EPIPHANY**

An 'Epiphany' is a revealing, appearing or manifesting of something or someone, and in this season the Church reflects on the manifestation of Christ to all people. The length of this period varies depending on the date of Easter.

### **6 January 2026**

#### **Epiphany of the Lord**

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

### **11 Jan 2026**

#### **Baptism of Jesus**

Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalm 29

Acts 10:34-43

Matthew 3:13-17

### **18 January 2026**

#### **Epiphany 2**

Isaiah 49:1-7

Psalm 40:1-11

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

John 1:29-42

### **25 January 2026**

#### **Epiphany 3 Day of Mourning**

Isaiah 9:1-4

Psalm 27:1, 4-9

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Matthew 4:12-23

### **1 February 2026**

#### **Epiphany 4**

Micah 6:1-8

Psalm 15

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Matthew 5:1-12

### **News sheet**

A sincere thank you to Marie and her team; Denise, Norm, Val, Joan, Janet and Jonnie, for all their work in preparing the newssheet each week in 2025. And to Wayne and Joy for their weekly emails.

The Joint Coordinating Committee have reviewed our communication methods and have decided to trial in 2026 a monthly newssheet, mainly online.

The next news sheet for February, will require content to be emailed to [drysdaleuc@yahoo.com.au](mailto:drysdaleuc@yahoo.com.au) by Wednesday, 28 January, for inclusion. Any other announcements/notices will be distributed via email when needed.

To place a church-related notice in this news sheet, email the wording to the church office, [drysdaleuc@yahoo.com.au](mailto:drysdaleuc@yahoo.com.au), by Tuesday evening. Notices are generally repeated once, or twice if there is sufficient space. Please send them in ahead of the event or desired date and indicate in which section you would like your notice to appear.

## Christmas Bowl Advent 4

Our Christmas Bowl focus this week is Pakistan, particularly the region of Umerkot, where drought, poverty, and gender inequality have created enormous barriers for girls seeking an education.

Today we meet *Anaya* and her mother. For much of her life, the chance to attend school was out of reach for Anaya. Many girls in her village faced the same challenge, long distances, limited resources, and social expectations often kept them at home.

Through the Christmas Bowl and our local partner, Community World Service Asia, Anaya was able to enroll in a community-run school supported by the program. She received school supplies, a safe learning environment, and teachers who encouraged her dreams.

Now she hopes to become a doctor, not only for herself but for her community.

Her mother shared that once Anaya began attending school, other girls in the village followed her example. Her participation opened a door of possibility for others. Anaya's story reminds us that when girls are empowered to learn, entire communities are strengthened with hope, opportunity, and dignity.

*This is the difference our support makes: opportunity, dignity, and the kind of love that transforms not just one life, but whole communities.*

## Minister's Christmas Message, December 2025

### 'Beyond the Cuteness of the Nativity'



Angels and shepherds, perhaps a donkey and a few sheep, some people dressed up as Mary and Joseph, and on rare occasions, a real live baby is placed in a feed stall. It is all rather cute, especially when children get involved and the cameras can go

into overdrive. We love a dramatic mish-mash telling of Matthew's and Luke's infancy narratives.

Each year I remember my daughter dressed as an angel, standing on a bench with several other kinder 'angels' when one child lost balance, and like dominos, one after another of the darling cherubs lost their balance and tilted sideways into the next 'angel' until they were all off balance and then off their bench. It all happened in slow motion, to much hilarity. Blessedly despite the bent haloes, no-one was injured.

For many people, Christmas has meaning because we gather as family and share traditions such as a roast turkey at Gran's or a family picnic in the botanic gardens. My sister and I used to have a pudding making day in the lead-up to Christmas, a time of fostering relationship and contributing toward the family Christmas Dinner event.

But without the centrality of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, our celebrations remain rather shallow, and we might puzzle over the point of the nativity and the exchange of gifts and the feasting. Especially when family relationships are strained or fractured or when beloved members are no longer with us. What then?

Christmas matters because we celebrate far more than an historical human birth in Palestine close to two thousand years ago. What we celebrate is most clearly articulated in John's Gospel, where there is no birth narrative at all! In the vulnerable baby boy child, born of a young Mary, the word (*logos*, meaning wisdom, discourse, reason, logic and more), the word became flesh and pitched tent among us. The Divine One, the light of life, lived among us and healed, preached, taught and confronted evil. And while initially it looked like evil had won out in the crucifixion of Jesus, ultimately, through the resurrection, the power of God's love defeated evil once and for all.

While it might seem that darkness is stirring violence and hatred in our world, we can take heart that God's love is a power beyond human capability and comprehension. John reminds us that darkness can never overtake the light of life that God infuses into all our lives.

In our Christmas celebrations this year, it is essential that we remember that the baby Jesus grew up and is remembered by various communities as the One sent by God, indeed, One with God, drawing people into closer relationship with God, and with one another in community together, seeking justice and righteousness for all. The enormity of this event has reverberated through history ever since. May the light of God's grace shine in whatever darkness we witness, and may our lives bear light and testimony to John's analysis, that the darkness did not and will not overtake it.



Have a blessed Christmas!

*Karen Eller*

### Christmas Gifts

Uniting Barwon were very pleased to receive the Christmas gifts from the Linked Congregations. Overall it weighed 58 kg. Thank you to all who contributed to this important outreach activity.

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## Bondi tragedy

**President of the Uniting Church in Australia, Rev Charissa Suli offers this pastoral message and prayer following the tragic events at Bondi Beach**

As the Uniting Church in Australia, we hold in prayer all who have been affected — those who have lost loved ones, those who are injured and recovering, the first responders and health workers, and the wider community carrying shock and grief.

We stand in solidarity with the Jewish community and with all who were gathered in peace. Violence has no place in our shared life, and fear must not have the final word. In the light of Christ, we commit ourselves again to compassion, care for one another, and the work of peace. May God's love hold all who are hurting today.

### Prayer

God of mercy and peace,  
we come to you with hearts that are tired and grieving.

We entrust to you the lives lost,  
the wounded, and all who are holding sorrow this day.

Surround the Jewish community and all who have been affected with comfort, safety, and hope.

Strengthen those who serve and protect, and grant wisdom and gentleness to all who lead and respond.

In a world shaken by violence,  
teach us again the way of Christ —  
the way of love, courage, and peace.  
Hold us, heal us, and lead us forward.  
Amen.

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And looking ahead to February -

### Sunday, 1 February, 2026

#### Portarlington

9.00am      Rev. Karen Eller

#### Drysdale

10.30am

Rev. Karen Eller

*Holy Communion, loose change and Food bank*

## DRYSDALE

### Coffee and Chat

There will be a short break with Coffee and Chat recommencing on Thursday 8 January 2026. Coffee and Chat is held every Thursday at the Zoo Café Drysdale and everyone is welcome to join us when you can next year.

*Claire*

### Congregation Annual Meeting

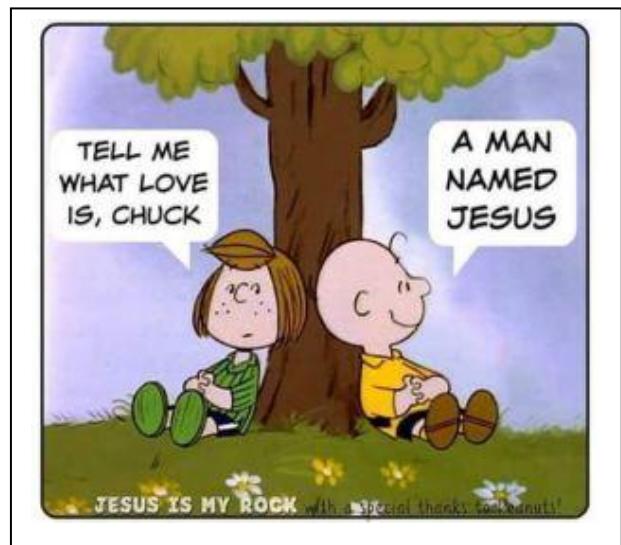
The Congregation annual meeting will be held following the service on Sunday 1 February and be followed by a shared lunch. All being well the annual report will be distributed prior to the day.

Apart from hearing reports of the 2025 year, there will also be the election of office bearers, with Chair Joan Cook and Secretary Colleen Diamond eligible for re-election, and elders/councillors, with Wayne Myers and Marie Harris eligible for re-election.

### Loose Change Offering

As we come to the end of our offering for The Orange Door we now seek suggestions for recipient organisations for 2026. Please give any suggestions to Wayne Myers by 4 January.

*Wayne*



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