

# Coming into Advent and New Expressions of Hope

November 2021



## An Opportunity for New Ways forward

As we Open Anew, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be really fresh in our thinking. With this in mind, Church Council invite you to consider:

- a) What is an alternative story of church (i.e. challenging stereotypes) that we could tell (beyond ourselves)?
- b) What does the above conversation-starter prompt in your mind?
- c) Are there hopes or dreams that are emerging?

In November-January, we will pursue conversations about our dreams and visions. Please pray!

## God's Incarnate Presence

After isolation and separation, how do we enter into caring and respectful presence? For some in our community, it remains an anxious and confronting time. We want to gather, but we know we can never go back to 'the way it used to be'. The world has changed. We have changed. We have been through a traumatic period. The world is emerging from crisis into a period of adjustment. We will learn to live with a range of 'new normals'.

The message of incarnation in the coming of Christ Jesus as a baby is that this was an incredibly vulnerable decision. The Advent and Christmas stories of the voice in the wilderness, the systems of tax and census, the experiences of political oppression, poverty and infanticide, all point to the risks that needed to be faced and managed in order for the Saviour of all to simply have the opportunity to grow up!

As we begin to gather, we will start outside in limited number groups, being careful and gentle with one another. We will avoid careless and reckless behaviours, remembering that some of our community will be vulnerable due to underlying health conditions, even if they are double-vaccinated. We will recognize the caution and anxiety and tread carefully... as if each of our community is as potentially vulnerable as a new-born babe.

We will also celebrate our new birth! We are alive and we can be grateful for living where we live and for researchers and vaccinations and technology. As we lament the costs of the pandemic, we can also be joyful that our community is strong and loving.

Continued on page 2...

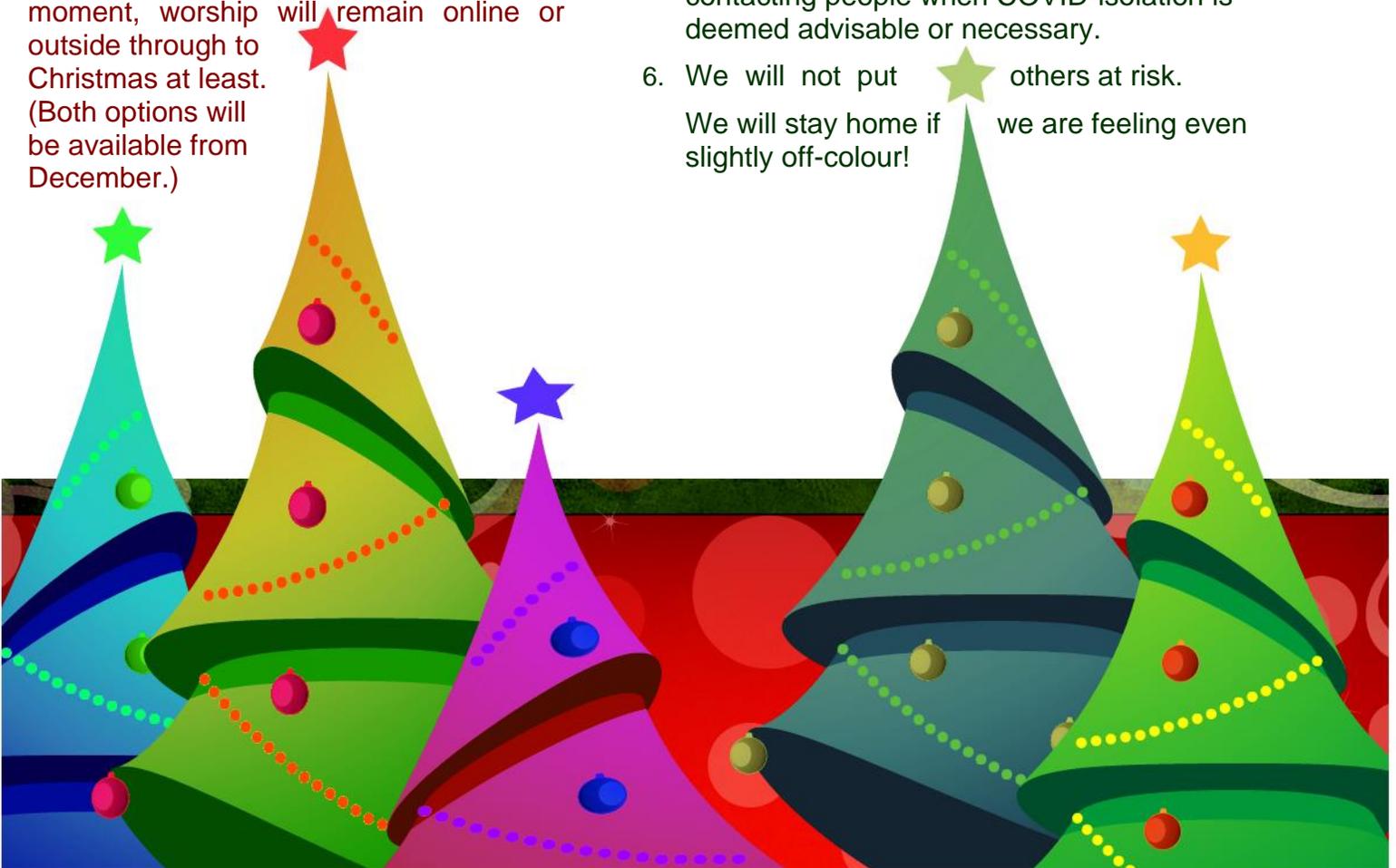


### God's Incarnate Presence *Continued* ...

Over the next few weeks, we are assessing how individuals and groups can connect with the congregational community. Some may feel comfortable online, others may be prepared to meet in the Church grounds or at other venues. When we know the ventilation, air-conditioning and air-flow is assessed as being safe, we will start to use the inside spaces. In the meantime, we are making arrangements for small gatherings of 6-10-25-35 people to be able to use outdoor areas. As we cannot sing inside for the moment, worship will remain online or outside through to Christmas at least. (Both options will be available from December.)

## Living with COVID\_Delta - How we care for one another

1. We will care for the most vulnerable by being best practice around issues of health and safety.
2. We will meet outdoors and online and use indoor venues that have good air ventilation/filtration/sanitization systems.
3. We will focus on developing meaningful relationships for spiritual support with a range of small group options (online and in shared physical spaces), considering the needs of those who have been most marginalized during the pandemic.
4. We will commit to developing community behaviours to protect the health of both the vaccinated and those who are unable to be vaccinated due to age or medical exemption (hygiene, hand-washing, sanitising, maintaining distance, inside mask-wearing and limiting singing).
5. We will keep and monitor a register of people onsite at Eastwood, to maximize efficiency in contacting people when COVID-isolation is deemed advisable or necessary.
6. We will not put others at risk. We will stay home if we are feeling even slightly off-colour!



# Understanding Pastoral Relationships and Responsibilities in a Uniting Church Community

## *What can we expect and what is expected of us?*

At EUC we want to make sure you have opportunities for connection and spiritual companionship for the journey of life. A key strategy for 2022-2023 will be joining a Small Group.

## Community for the common good

– where do I fit?

*“EUC supports me with opportunities and encouragement to live Christian discipleship in the world. As part of my membership, I support the work and ministry of this church.”*

Membership in the Uniting Church is open to all who are baptized into the Holy Catholic Church in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We baptize those who confess the faith and we also baptize children for whom we take pastoral/spiritual responsibility. If you were baptized in another denomination, that's fine, because it is all about being a follower of the Way of Jesus and finding a community to journey with. You are welcome here!

We recognize different kinds of ways of connecting with this community:

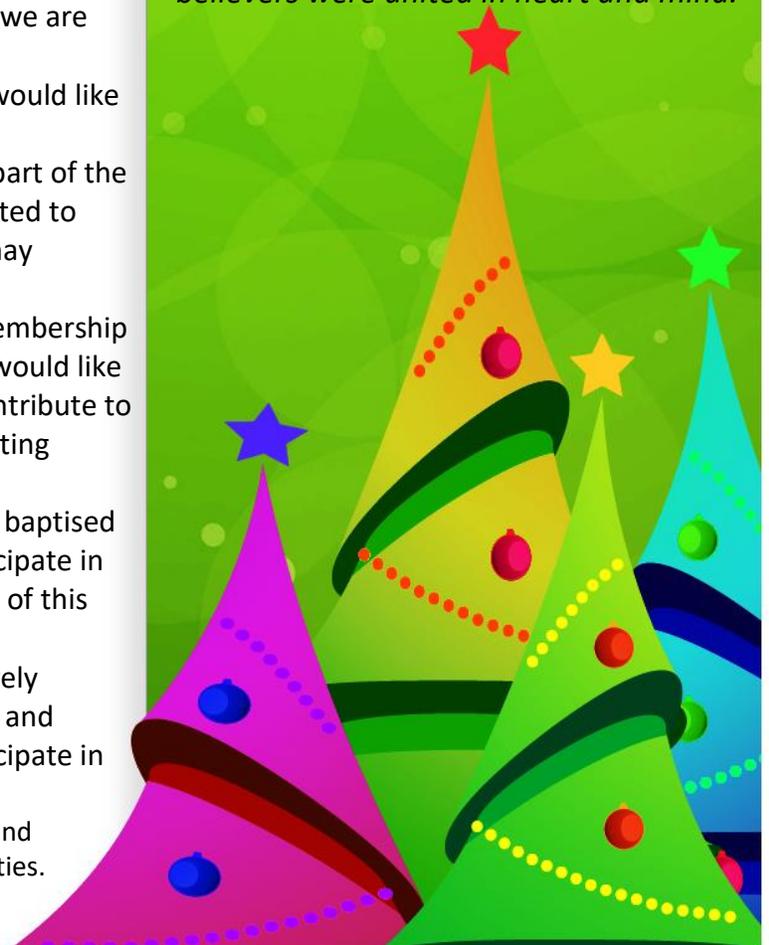
- **Guest** – ‘just visiting’, belong somewhere else, but we are glad you popped in to experience our hospitality!
- **Regular Visitor** – you come here occasionally and would like to know when there are special events on.
- **Adherent** – you are not-yet-baptised, but you are part of the community. You participate, but you are not expected to carry the responsibilities of being a member, but may explore faithful service with us.
- **Member-in-Association** – you hold your church membership elsewhere but have regular connections here and would like to stay on our Roll of Members. You are able to contribute to discernment and discussions, but remain a ‘non-voting member’.
- **Baptized Member** – this is where you ‘belong’ as a baptised member of the congregation. You are able to participate in discernment and decision-making about the future of this community.
- **Confirmed or Covenanted Member** – you are actively committed to this community, and share your gifts and graces for the common good. You are able to participate in leadership and mentoring of others.

Note: lay and ordained leaders confirm their faith publicly and covenant with the community before taking up responsibilities.

*Acts 4:32 The multitude of believers was one in heart and soul.*

*No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they owned. All the believers were one in heart and mind.*

*No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. All the believers were united in heart and mind.*



# Eastwood UC

## A Roadmap for Pilgrims!

26 October – air-con assessment

### NOVEMBER

- ALL services remain online on zoom
- Home Communion can be booked with Rev Amelia through the Office
- Back Courtyard umbrellas installed
- Piazza seating installed
- Double-vacc Staff to regather for COVID-safe training onsite 9 Nov
- 17-18 November – small groups of 6-10 people may register interest to gather onsite outside. Please contact the office or Amelia if interested. We will provide a COVID plan and guidelines.
- **ADVENT 1 – Sunday November 28**  
**Blessing of Wreaths and Candles service**  
Why not have a Home wreath this year?  
We will share in a special blessing online.
- Wednesday December 1  
All Saints' Day Prayers of Remembrance

### DECEMBER 5

- 8am Zoom service (60 mins)
- 9.30-10.10 Zoom (40 mins)
- 10.30-11am Short (20 min) Onsite Piazza or Garden/Courtyard Communion (small groups staggered start – pre-registered people)
- 2pm Chinese-speaking services to be confirmed (online and possibly live lunch at 1pm)

### Saturday DECEMBER 11

- 2 x 40 min Carol Services Outside (up to 80 people in each)
- 5.30pm and 7pm

### Sunday DECEMBER 12

- 8am and 11am Zoom services
- Short Communion Services 9.30am and 10.15am (30 mins outdoors)

### Thursday DECEMBER 16 - Blue Christmas

### Sunday DECEMBER 19 – Aussie Carols

### Friday DECEMBER 24

- Family Service
- Watchnight Communion

### Saturday DECEMBER 25

- 8am Christmas Morning
- 9.30am Christmas Morning

Sunday DECEMBER 26 – pre-recorded only (available on website or via link)



We are hoping to be able to offer both outside and inside options during January, but will keep you updated as we receive advice on best practice.

*Reminder:  
News, services, groups can be found at*

<https://www.eastwooduca.org/>