



# NEWS & NOTES

SUNDAY 11 JANUARY 2026 - BAPTISM OF JESUS

## *The Meaning of Christmas: A Reflection by Rolf Prager*



While I have been a practicing Christian since the age of 17, the significance of the gifts given by the wise men really only hit me about 25 years ago when Margaret and I spent some weeks in Iran, known as Persia before 1970.

I was a university professor of chemistry and had hosted a number of Iranian academics over the years, and when they learned that I wanted to visit them before going to a conference in Vienna, they offered to accompany us wherever we wanted to go and hired a minibus and driver for the six of us. Their home base was in the extreme northwest corner in Azerbaijan, in a city nearly the size of Perth called Urmia. I researched our visit and was amazed to discover that of the state's population, 30% were Christians. In such a staunchly Islamic country, how could this be? My Muslim hosts had no idea, but one of their Christian colleagues took us to a church in Urmia, where I met the priest. On hearing of my interest, he took us to the entrance of a cave, which was blocked by a wooden door. On the door were the words "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground." We removed our shoes, went down some steps, and entered a room, roughly three times the size of a typical loungeroom. It had an earth floor, a cross on two walls,

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## OUR CHURCH LIFE

*To contact Rev Reuben Edmonds, Minister of All Saints Floreat Uniting Church, please email: minister@allsaintsfloreat.com.au or telephone: 0404 935 167.*

Sunday Service 9:30am Sunday, 11 January Baptism of Jesus Rev Reuben Edmonds	Sunday Service 9:30am Sunday, 18 January After Epiphany 2 Rev Brian Carey
* Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm 29 * Acts 10:34-43 * Matthew 3:13-17 * Included in Service	P.704 P.552 P.162 P.5 Isaiah 49:1-7 Psalm 40:1-11 * 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 * John 1:29-42 * Included in Service

### HYMNS SUNDAY 11 JANUARY

TiS 89	O Lord, You are My God
TiS 614	O God of Love
Overhead	Down by the Jordan
TiS 613	Lord of All Hopefulness
TiS 779	May the Feet of God

	SUNDAY 11 JANUARY	SUNDAY 18 JANUARY
Welcomer	Debbie Thornton	Rhondda Tilbrook
Door Steward	Jean Read	Coral Lalich
Church Council	Debbie Thornton	Els Mengler
Bible Reader	Lynn Coates	Anne van Drunen
Flowers	Pot Plants	Pot Plants
Morning Tea	Carol Brearley Margaret Oliver	Beth & John McKechnie Oli Raynor
Music	Anne van Drunen - Piano	Christine Ryan - Piano Joseph Lunardi - Violin
Multimedia	Michael van Drunen	Richard Smith
Media Clicker	Deborah Marshall	Michael van Drunen

## *Prayers*

**From The WA Synod:** Osborne Park and Wanneroo Crossways Uniting Churches. Assembly Circle of Interest: Seeking Common Ground

**Ecumenical Prayer will be for:** Iran, Iraq, Syria

**Our local prayers will be for:** Good Sammy's

## **All Saints Floreat UC Events This Week**

There are no local events this week but you are welcome to attend the Induction Service of Rev Sophia Lizares as Minister in placement at Mandurah Uniting Church on Saturday 17 January 2026 at 2.00pm.

## *Call for Volunteers to Join the Media Roster*

As many of you know, at All Saints Floreat we stream all our services. This is a wonderful way for people to attend our service from afar or while ill. However, this service requires volunteers to run the sound and adjust the camera. It is simpler than you think and the iPad is easy to use. I encourage you to answer this call and speak with our Media coordinator, Rhondda Tilbrook.

You would be welcome to sit alongside one of our volunteers during a service to see how it works.

Thank you.

*Rev Reuben*

## *Offerings*



Offerings to All Saints Floreat Uniting Church may be made by bank transfer to:

BSB – 036 063, Account Number – 122093.

Thank you.

## *The Meaning of Christmas: A Reflection by Rolf Prager cont...*

and a small fire burning at one end (it was 40 Celsius outside!). The priest explained that the fire had burned continuously since about 600 BC, (that is more than 2400 years) as this had been a meeting room of the followers of Zoroaster, an ancient poet and philosopher, and was run by a priestly tribe called Magi, whose job was to appoint the old Persian kings.

The Magi were experts in astronomy, and in 3 BC, the year Jesus was born, had sent a group to follow a “star” due west, which we know as the star of Bethlehem, a star they believed to signify the birth of a very important king. We now know the “star” was the result of a rare event when the orbits of the king planet, Jupiter, for a brief period coincided with that of the bright planet Venus, in addition to the king star Regulus, in the constellation of Leo. They desperately hoped this star signified the birth of a great king who would unite the countries in the region against the Romans. The Magi followed this star to find out who the new king was, and they had to travel about as far as from Perth to Melbourne, taking about 6 months to do it, crossing huge mountain ranges and deserts until the star stopped over a little town called Bethlehem, where they found the baby Jesus and his mother Mary, and Joseph. They had gifts ready for a king, gold and the spices frankincense and myrrh, and gave them to Joseph. After a few days, the Magi went back home by a circuitous route, as the local king, Herod, feared for the succession of his dynasty.

When the Magi returned to Urmia they were profoundly affected. In the book of Acts in the Bible, it tells us that 30 years later, after Jesus had died on the cross, a group of people from this area of Iran was among the 4000 disciples of Jesus who met in Jerusalem. According to the priest, after the wise men returned home, their meeting house became a Christian church,

## CHURCH NEWS & INFORMATION

possibly the oldest that we know of. He told us that a few years later on, around 40 AD, Thomas, one of the 12 disciples, stayed in Urmia for a while, on his way to build a church in India. A large number of villages in the area became Christian. We visited one other, and we, and our Muslim friends, were invited to lunch with the leaders of the congregation.

So, Christmas is, indeed, a time for giving. It began with God's gift of Jesus to enlighten all nations. The wise men gave a gift, not only to Jesus, but also to many people in their region. They gave me a gift, too, because I will never forget that I have been to the home of the wise men, people who had talked to, and touched, Jesus.

*Rolf Prager*

### *Act for Peace* *Christmas Bowl Appeal 2025*

We are pleased to advise that the receipts from the congregation of All Saints Floreat Uniting Church for the Christmas Bowl Appeal 2025 amounted to \$9,350.55 made up as follows:



Church Offerings:	\$6,550.55
Forwarded direct to Act for Peace	\$2,880.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,350.55</b>

Thank you everyone for your very generous contribution.

*Bob Sumner*

## *Vale Cecily Lois Hicks*

Cecily Hicks, a member of our congregation passed away peacefully on  
25 December 2025.

A Funeral Service will be held on Friday, 16 January at 10:00am  
at Karrakatta Brown Chapel.



### *A Prayer written by President Rev Charissa Suli for Venezuela and the Venezuelan People*

In this time of uncertainty and change,  
we hold before God the people of Venezuela –

those who are celebrating,

those who are fearful,

those who are grieving,

and those who long for peace, dignity, and a future shaped by hope.

We pray especially for Venezuelan communities here in Australia,  
for families living with distance, anxiety, and deep love for home.

May God's peace surround all who suffer.

May wisdom guide leaders.

May justice be pursued without violence.

And may the voices of ordinary people be heard and honoured.

We join our prayers with those offered across the global church, trusting in  
God's promise of peace, restoration and life.

Amen.

*Your Retiring Offering today,  
Sunday 11 January  
will go towards the  
All Saints Floreat  
Uniting Church Community Relief  
Fund*

From time to time members of the community approach the church seeking assistance. The congregation maintains a “Community Relief Fund” which is used to acquire \$50 vouchers that can be used to purchase food, fuel and other items (excluding alcohol and tobacco) from Woolworths, Big W, or EG fuel stations.

These vouchers are distributed by the minister, treasurer or our administrator to support those in need. Folk seeking assistance are required to have a Centrelink card and can only request assistance once every 3 months.

Thank you for your generous support. Donations can be made in cash on the day or via our EFTPOS machine after the service.

**Do you have an article, story, recipe or other item  
that may be of interest to the Church  
community?**

If so, we would be very interested in considering it for publication in future editions of the News & Notes.

Please submit your item to Marika Leonard,  
Office Administrator at [office@allsaintsfloreat.com.au](mailto:office@allsaintsfloreat.com.au).  
Thank you

## *Church Parking*



There are several people who find walking difficult, or use mobility walkers and wheelchairs so it is important that they are able to park close to the church entrances.

There are two possible accessible entrances.

1. The ramp at the Berkeley Crescent front door. We ask that people who can walk well do not park in the roadway in front of the church.

There is adequate parking in Kirkdale Ave and in Berkeley Crescent across the other side of the intersection.

2. The other level access to the church is from the grassed area at the back of the Page and Buttfield rooms with entry through the back door of the foyer. The gates to the grassed area will be left open on Sundays and the back door unlocked. There are no steps at this entrance and car parking is easy in this area.

Thank you all for your consideration and help with ensuring our church is accessible and inclusive of everyone.

**Sunday Services at All Saints are Live Streamed**  
**and may be viewed via YouTube at 9:30am each Sunday.**

<https://www.youtube.com/@floreacunitingchurch4997streams>