



# Peel Valley Congregation

Gowrie, Hallsville & West Tamworth

14 December 2025

Rev Geoff Flynn

Rev Sam Sadrata

Meg Mangan (Pastoral Care)

## Isaiah 35:1-10 (NLT)

### Hope for Restoration

- <sup>1</sup> Even the wilderness and desert will be glad in those days.  
The wasteland will rejoice and blossom with spring crocuses.
- <sup>2</sup> Yes, there will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy!  
The deserts will become as green as the mountains of Lebanon,  
as lovely as Mount Carmel or the plain of Sharon.  
There the LORD will display his glory, the splendor of our God.
- <sup>3</sup> With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands,  
and encourage those who have weak knees.
- <sup>4</sup> Say to those with fearful hearts,  
“Be strong, and do not fear,  
for your God is coming to destroy your enemies.  
He is coming to save you.”
- <sup>5</sup> And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind  
and unplug the ears of the deaf.
- <sup>6</sup> The lame will leap like a deer,  
and those who cannot speak will sing for joy!  
Springs will gush forth in the wilderness,  
and streams will water the wasteland.
- <sup>7</sup> The parched ground will become a pool,  
and springs of water will satisfy the thirsty land.  
Marsh grass and reeds and rushes will flourish  
where desert jackals once lived.
- <sup>8</sup> And a great road will go through that once deserted land.  
It will be named the Highway of Holiness.  
Evil-minded people will never travel on it.  
It will be only for those who walk in God’s ways;  
fools will never walk there.
- <sup>9</sup> Lions will not lurk along its course, nor any other ferocious beasts. ....continued

There will be no other dangers.

Only the redeemed will walk on it.

<sup>10</sup> Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return.

They will enter Jerusalem singing,  
crowned with everlasting joy.

Sorrow and mourning will disappear,  
and they will be filled with joy and gladness.

## Matthew 11:2-11 (NLT)

- <sup>2</sup> John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing.  
So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus,
- <sup>3</sup> “Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?”
- <sup>4</sup> Jesus told them, “Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen - <sup>5</sup> the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.”
- <sup>6</sup> And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me.”
- <sup>7</sup> As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds. “What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to see? Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind?  
<sup>8</sup> Or were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No, people with expensive clothes live in palaces.  
<sup>9</sup> Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet.  
<sup>10</sup> John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when they say, ‘Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way before you.’  
<sup>11</sup> “I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is!

### Other Lectionary Readings:

Psalms 146:5-10 James 5:7-10 Luke 1:46b-55





### IN OUR PRAYERS

- We pray for the families whose celebration of Christmas will include a baby born this year.
- We pray for old friends who come to mind as we prepare for Christmas.
- And we thank God for new friendships formed over the past year.
- We pray for people unable to celebrate this Christmas with their families.
- We pray for peace on earth - God's peace.

### Meg's Musings

What does Christmas mean to you?

Does it mean heat and fires, or the snowy scenes of some Christmas cards?

Does it mean a huge traditional meal with all the trimmings, or perhaps a relaxed BBQ?

Is it filled with rush and to-do lists, or peace and goodwill?

Does it mean enjoying carols, or trying to turn your mind off the "Christmas music" of the shops?

Does it mean the hope of peace on earth, or the knowledge that people will be impacted by war this Christmas?

Perhaps Christmas holds each of these very human tensions - because, after, all, we are celebrating the arrival of Jesus, who came to help us to make sense of human turmoil, and to point us towards our loving heavenly Father.

It can only be when humanity turns to God, through Jesus, that our world can come to terms with its' many mysteries and differences.

*Blessing from Meg*



### CHURCH SERVICES 11am West Tamworth

21 December ~ Meg Mangan  
Baptism followed by lunch:

The Courts Restaurant



### Blue Christmas Service

18 December 5.30pm City Church

### Christmas Eve Worship

24 December 7.30pm City Church

24 December 11pm Southside Church

### Christmas Day Service

25 December 9am Southside Church

25 December 11am City Church



### Ministers' Reflection Tamworth Regional Uniting Churches – Advent 3 (Joy)

This week's readings invite us to sit with a kind of joy that is deeper than festive cheer or seasonal sentiment. Advent joy is not something we whip up by trying to be positive, nor is it the kind of happiness that depends on everything going well. It is something quieter, sturdier,

and more surprising: the blossoming of God's life in places that have felt barren or worn thin.

Isaiah dares to speak this joy into a weary landscape. His people knew exile, displacement, and disappointment. They knew what it was to feel spiritually dry and emotionally exhausted. And into that landscape, Isaiah imagines a desert bursting into bloom. Strength where there was weakness. Singing where there was sighing. Life returning to places long thought lifeless. The prophet does not ask the people to manufacture joy; he proclaims that God will cause it to blossom. Joy is God's doing before it is our feeling.

Matthew brings the same theme into the intimate vulnerability of John the Baptist. John, once fiery, certain, courageous now sits in a prison cell with questions pressing on his heart: "Are you the one who is to come?" There is no shame in his question. Jesus does not scold him, nor does he demand a stronger faith. Instead, Jesus offers signs of quiet, stubborn life: he blind see, the lame walk, the poor receive good news. In other words, "Look where life is breaking through that's where you'll find me."

For us in this Advent season, these passages turn our attention to our own dry places:

- the tiredness that accumulates over another long year,
- the questions of faith we've kept to ourselves,
- the prayers that feel unanswered,
- the parts of us that sit in a kind of inner prison - stuck, waiting, unsure.

Advent does not ask us to deny these realities. It does not ask us to put on a cheerful face. Instead, Advent 3 whispers the promise that God's joy grows precisely there. Joy does not bypass the wilderness; it blossoms in it. It arrives not because we have everything sorted,

but because Christ is near working quietly, persistently, often beneath the surface of our noticing.

We speak often of "hope and reconciliation," of God continually calling us into renewal. Today we remember that renewal sometimes begins as a small shoot in a dry land, a tender blossom in a desert. We are invited, like John, to bring our honest questions. We are invited, like the exiles, to imagine that God can create life where none seemed possible. And we are invited, as Christ's people, to bear joy into the world through trust. Trust that God is at work in the stumps, in the sand, in the prison walls, in the places we least expect.

May this Advent joy take root in us, and through us, become a sign for others that God's life is blooming even now. **Amen** *Rev Sam*



## A Christmas Prayer

Loving Father,  
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,  
that we may share in the song of the  
angels,  
the gladness of the shepherds,  
and worship of the wise men.  
Close the door of hate  
and open the door of love all over the  
world.



Let kindness come with every gift  
and good desires with every greeting.  
Deliver us from evil by the blessing  
which Christ brings,  
and teach us to be merry with clear  
hearts.

May the Christmas morning  
make us happy to be thy children,  
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds  
with grateful thoughts,  
forgiving and forgiven,  
for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

**Peel Valley Congregation .....**  
**18 January, 2026 Country Gospel**  
**Breakfast at Hallsville.**



**Fabulous Finds Op Shop @ Hallsville**  
**9:30 to 1:00pm Thursday, Friday &**  
**Saturday** *Cuppa and a chat always available.*

**4th Sunday Monthly Hallsville Markets**  
Big breakfast served 8:00 - 10:00 am  
Next Market **25 January**



## PEEL VALLEY CONGREGATION

Our goal:

**"To be transformed communities, experiencing,  
enjoying & sharing the gift of the friendship of Jesus."**

Mission: **"Called to be Free, Gifted to Serve."**

Minister: **Rev Geoff Flynn 0421 338 202**

**Rev Sam Sadrata 0431 216 188**

Pastoral Care: **Meg Mangan 0476 375 989**

Elder: **Margaret Crowell**

**P.O. BOX 3315 WEST TAMWORTH**



"When you wake up in  
the morning, Pooh,"  
said Piglet, "what's  
the very first thing  
you think about?"

Pooh thought for a long moment.

"Well," he said slowly, "sometimes I think  
about honey. But other times... I think  
about the day itself, and how it hasn't been  
lived yet. It's all brand new, like the sky  
before the sun finishes painting it. And  
that makes me feel rather hopeful."

Piglet nodded.

"I think," said Piglet, "that the morning  
reminds us there are always new chances.  
Even if yesterday was heavy, today is  
lighter. Even if the night felt long, the  
morning comes anyway, bringing colors with  
it."

So they stood together on the hill,  
watching the pastel glow stretch across  
the Forest.

And Pooh, who often said very simple  
things that turned out to be quite wise,  
whispered:

**"Hope is a bit like the sunrise. You can't  
always see it right away, but it's always  
there—waiting to brighten the day, one  
soft color at a time."**

And with that thought, the Hundred Acre  
Wood seemed a little warmer, the air a  
little sweeter, and the friends a little  
braver—because dawn had reminded them  
that every day begins with hope. ~ A A Milne

**A rushed life is a wasteful life - slow  
down and see clearly.**

**True wealth is a calm mind.** ~ Japanese monk

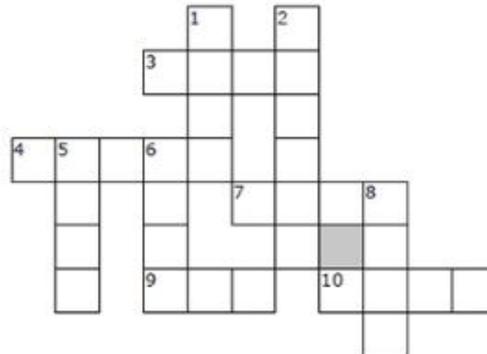
**4th Sunday Monthly Hallsville Markets**  
Big breakfast served 8:00 - 10:00 am



..... enjoy & share the gift of the friendship of Jesus

# The Gifts that Jesus Brings

The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Matthew 11:5 (NIV)



## ACROSS

- 3. To receive sound using your ears
- 4. Unable to see
- 7. Something that is pleasant or enjoyable
- 9. To be aware of what is around you by using your eyes
- 10. To move along by putting one foot in front of the other

## DOWN

- 1. Not living
- 2. A place where criminals are forced to live as a punishment
- 5. Unable to walk correctly because of injury to or weakness in the legs or feet
- 6. Information or reports about recent events
- 8. Unable to hear

DEAF	SEE	NEWS	GOOD	WALK
HEAR	DEAD	BLIND	PRISON	LAME

P F R A I S E D X P X G W O B  
 R K P R I S O N T T U P O X O  
 E S J E F N I B S U Q D O O A  
 A D O F K O I I S B C N E O D  
 C U H N G I R H E Y U L U A R  
 H W N S R H M E F D R Z N F D  
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 V K J A S D F L L C S W S Q S  
 H B E S B B I E E D H E A R T  
 E H L U I L A M E P H O N N I  
 A Y Z I P G W H I P R B P X N  
 R O N C N H H M I M G O Q A E  
 D Y D X Q D I T A H I Y S M J  
 A O Y K B B P H F L F E H Y E

BLIND	LAME	HEARD	DEAF	HEAR
GOOD	PREACHED	POOR	CHRIST	DEAD
RAISED	SEE	LEPROSY	PRISON	JOHN
NEWS	CURED	SIGHT	WALK	HEAR

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