

2025 Christmas Messages from Leaders of Christian Churches in Australia

There are competing narratives that call for our attention. Some are political, others negative, frightening and discouraging. Others are debates about the reality of climate change and what is to be done. In general, they do not exist to encourage or affirm. At times they are media driven and are presented in the contrast of good and bad and rarely build hope and assurance.

The realities of conflict, be it Gaza, Israel, Lebanon, Sudan, Myanmar, Ukraine, Nigeria and other settings also disturb us and disempower us as we seek peace. The lack of progress in finding lasting peace with Justice is deeply disappointing.

The continued lack of deep reconciliation with Australia's first peoples is difficult to comprehend. Similarly, the violence directed against women in the settings of family and the abuse of children also undermines our sense of home and confidence.

The Christmas narrative is strong, contrasting and builds hope and life for all. Its message remains strong and clear.

God enters into our world as a baby, flesh and blood. Jesus is born in a setting of occupation and fear. Angels, shepherds, the Magi, Mary and Joseph all celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus.

This is a new narrative that proclaims, 'God is with us – Emmanuel'. We are in Jesus released from our sins and find life and peace. This is a new kingdom without end, one where justice and compassion are signs of its existence.

This is our Christmas celebration, God is with us, in our journey in life. We pray that peace, justice and joy will be real and remain with us.

On behalf of the National Council of Churches, our Board, members and staff we pray that this Christmas will bring hope to us all.

*Reverend John Gilmore, President
National Council of Churches in Australia*

(NB. In the Western Church, Christmas is celebrated on 25 December 2025.
Most Orthodox Churches will celebrate the Feast of the Nativity on 7 January 2026.)

14 messages from National Church Leaders follow.

For more information, contact the NCCA Secretariat on 02 9299 2215 (secretariat@ncca.org.au)

Anglican Church of Australia

From Easter to Pentecost this year Australian Anglicans from every Diocese and across different traditions shared in a campaign called Hope25. We aimed to share the good news about Jesus with our local communities in creative, loving and meaningful ways.

Hope is more than mere wishful thinking; when we hope we expect something good is going to happen. Hope is different to a mere optimistic fantasy because those who hope in something, or someone, live in the light of that hope. Those hoping for rain will carry an umbrella. Those hoping a friend will visit may have their house ready and set an extra place at the table.

The concept of hope lies at the core the human condition. We may hope for love. For connection. For employment. We may have hopes that are larger than our own personal needs and well-being: we may hope to see lasting peace come in the Middle East, or for a just peace in the Ukraine-Russia conflict. We may hope for economic inequality to be addressed here and abroad. We may hope to see action on the environment. We may hope to see gender inequality and domestic violence addressed.

Phillips Brook's 1868 carol "*O Little Town of Bethlehem*" reminds us of what took place in that Middle Eastern village more than 2000 years ago 'the hopes and hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight'. This hope is that God entered our world as one of us, for us: 'our Lord Emmanuel'. The Creator took on flesh as part of the creation in the person of Jesus. Jesus' life would lead ultimately to the cross, the empty tomb, to rule at his Father's side. The Christian hope is both a now/and not-yet hope. We celebrate each year the birth of Jesus, but we are awaiting what his birth points to; the completed reign of God, with all the creation under Jesus' just and gracious rule. Our hope is that as Christ has come, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again.

As we wait that hope comforts us in distress. Hope gives light in dark times. Hope is generous. Hope encourages us to keep going when the way is hard. Hope opens us to new possibilities. Hope looks to the horizon. Hope leads us to connect.

There are many ways we can express this hope. We can invite people to worship with us. We can advocate for justice and seek the common good. We can be generous with our time, love, and resources. We can show hospitality and kindness as individuals and as communities.

Wishing you a very merry and hope-filled Christmas and a blessed New Year.

*The Right Reverend Mark Short, Anglican Archbishop of Canberra, and
Primate, Anglican Church of Australia*

Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men” (Luke 2: 14)

On this radiant feast of the Nativity, we stand before the most wondrous mystery in all of history — the Infinite choosing to become finite, the Creator stepping into His creation, the King of Heaven arriving not with armies, but in the quiet humility of a manger. This is the Incarnation: God with us, not as a distant ruler, but as one who shares our breath, our tears, and our joys.

In this divine act, heaven and earth are forever joined. The angels’ song is not just for shepherds long ago — it is for us today, proclaiming that peace and goodwill are now our inheritance. The birth of Christ is not merely a past event; it is an open invitation to share in the life of heaven even while we walk on earth.

May this season remind you that no heart is too humble for the King to enter, no life too ordinary for His glory to shine through. As we celebrate, let us carry the joy of this holy mystery into our days — living with the courage, hope, and love that come from knowing Emmanuel, God with us, has made us heirs of His eternal kingdom.

His Eminence Metropolitan Basilios, Archbishop

Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines

Armenian Church of Australia and New Zealand

Greetings to my brothers and sisters in Christ,

Over the past six months, I have been blessed to serve in Australia as the Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Australia and New Zealand. From the very first day, I have been warmly embraced by my ecumenical and interfaith brothers and sisters, who welcomed me not only as a guest but also as a family member. For this, I offer my heartfelt gratitude.

This year, we celebrate Christmas at a moment when humanity stands at the threshold of extraordinary possibility. Even though our world is facing challenges, we simultaneously are witnessing remarkable advances that offer new opportunities for progress, understanding, and cooperation. A century ago, the Industrial Revolution transformed the course of human life; today, we are entering a new chapter - the era of Artificial Intelligence. This new revolution holds the potential to improve lives, expand knowledge, and strengthen our ability to serve one another. It is a moment that invites us to approach the future not with fear, but with wisdom, responsibility, and hope.

It is therefore our shared responsibility, as spiritual leaders of churches and ministers of the Gospel, to explore how these emerging opportunities can enrich the Church's mission. We are called not merely to respond, but to shape the future - to ensure that innovation becomes an instrument of compassion, justice, and spiritual growth.

This year, as we mark the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed, we are reminded that true unity is found in one and only Christ--strengthened through His Church and upheld in prayer.

As we gather to celebrate the Birth and Revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, may this sacred season fill us with hope, unity, and renewed purpose. Let us embrace the coming years with confidence, strengthened by our faith, our fellowship, and our commitment to serve God's people with love. The future is full of promise; may we step into it together, guided by the light of Christ.

On behalf of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Australia and New Zealand and all our faithful, I extend my warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year to all.

Christ is born and revealed; blessed is the revelation of Christ.

His Grace, Bishop Vardan Navasardyan, Primate

The Diocese of the Armenian Church of Australia and New Zealand

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

In the quiet of a stable in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, God entered human history in a most humble way. God became a vulnerable infant, lying in a manger, announcing to all generations that no circumstance is too small, no person too forgotten, and no darkness too deep for God's love to penetrate.

We live in times of uncertainty, division, and rapid change. Yet the message of Christmas remains eternally relevant: Emmanuel, God is with us. God has not abandoned us to navigate life's storms alone. In the Christ child, we find a companion who walks with us and who understands our struggles because He chose to share in our humanity.

The hope we celebrate at Christmas is not naive optimism or wishful thinking. It is anchored in the reality of the Incarnation—that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. This hope assures us that light overcomes darkness, that love is stronger than hate, and that life triumphs over death. The manger points toward the empty tomb, reminding us that this infant came to redeem, restore, and make all things new.

As we exchange gifts and gather with loved ones, let us also remember those who feel alone, forgotten, or burdened by grief. May we be bearers of Christ's light to them, extending the hospitality that Mary and Joseph longed for but did not find. In serving the least among us, we serve Christ.

May the peace that the angels proclaimed fill your hearts and homes.

The Most Reverend Timothy Costelloe SDB, Catholic Archbishop of Perth, and President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Chinese Methodist Church in Australia

The Faith of Mary

Mary believed the angel's message: ***"You will conceive and give birth to a son... the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."*** (Luke 1:31–35)

The Faith of Joseph

Joseph trusted the angel's word in a dream: ***"Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife... She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*** (Matthew 1:20–21)

The Faith of the Shepherds

The shepherds heard the angels announce: ***"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."*** (Luke 2:10–11) They believed, went to Bethlehem, and shared the good news with others.

The Faith of the Wise Men

Guided by the star, the wise men sought the newborn King and offered Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:1–11)

A Celebration for All Peoples

At Christmas, we rejoice that Jesus is the Son of God, the Saviour, and the Christ. Let us lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving to God for the one and only Saviour, He has given us—our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bishop Milton Nee
Chinese Methodist Church in Australia

Congregational Federation of Australia and New Zealand

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" is a popular Christmas hymn, written in 1868 by Phillips Brooks an Episcopal Pastor, then rector of Church of the Holy Trinity, Philadelphia, and later of Trinity Church, Boston.

He had never forgotten his visit to Bethlehem. three years earlier, in 1865, when on Christmas Eve he took himself on an excursion from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, about 10 kilometres away. He rode his horse through the fields where tradition had it that the shepherds were visited by an angel and through the quiet streets of the town - then with a population of about 4,000.

The sense of timelessness he felt is reflected in the first words of the hymn:

*O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie:
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.*

Yet Bethlehem was not frozen in time. It lay on the edge of great events in the region – the rise and fall of empires, of rebellion, of revolution, of invasion. As such a tiny town, it did not contribute to any of these events, but it was affected by them. Over the next 2000 years the Church of the Nativity was built, destroyed, and rebuilt. The whole town was sacked during the Samaritan uprising. A succession of Muslim ruling dynasties came and went. The population balance of Jews, Christians and Muslims changed over time.

And so it has been across the globe from thereon in. While the eyes of the world were focussed on great political global upheavals, one constant came from Bethlehem and remained. Phillips Brooks said it in his very next lines:

Yet in thy dark streets shineth

The Everlasting Light

As John wrote in the opening of his Gospel: **The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.** God as the son had come down to live among us, as one of us, starting as a helpless baby in a remote town. **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.**

The tiny light that shined in the dark streets of Bethlehem has continued and grown until eventually it has shone throughout the world.

At Christmas we remember that the light which has come from the birth of our saviour in the remote corner of Bethlehem and now floods the world, and we celebrate the gift that was given us so long ago: the assurance of joy and peace, of belonging and fulfilment.

May your Christmas be joyful and blessed.

Dr Joe Goodall, Moderator

Congregational Federation of Australia and New Zealand

Coptic Orthodox Church

Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions

Message for the Glorious Feast of the Nativity 2025

Christ has come as a Light into the world, as Scripture testifies: ***“That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.” (John 1:9–10) and “I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.” (John 12:46).***

The world was abiding in darkness, the darkness of death, sin, and corruption. Man, who inherited sin, was unable to attain the life of holiness and righteousness, for he lost the divine grace that was given to him when God created him in His image.

The image was distorted and man lost his light, because he separated himself from God Who is the source of light, life and righteousness. He became like a lamp that was extinguished, because it was disconnected from electricity.

St. Paul explained the situation saying, ***“They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one” (Romans 3:12) and “[For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).***

Man was unable to be justified, neither by good deeds nor by the works of the Law.

He needed the righteousness of Christ, as St. Paul explained, ***“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed” (Romans 3:24–25).*** Christ was born to enlighten a dark and dim humanity.

The light of Christ enlightens the heart, mind, soul and the conscience of every person transforming them from ordinary to temples of His Holy Spirit.

May the light of Christ born in Bethlehem, fill our lives, nature, families, homes and our beloved country Australia.

Merry Christmas and Happy new year

In Christ

His Grace, Bishop Daniel

Coptic Orthodox Church, Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions

Greek Orthodox Church of Australia

Protocol No: 3164

“Χριστὸς γεννᾶται, δοξάσατε! Christ is born; glorify Him!”

Today, the Church joyfully sings in praise "Your nativity, O Christ our God, has caused the light of knowledge to rise upon the world. For therein the worshippers of the stars were by a star instructed to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know You as Orient from on high. Glory to You, O Lord." Indeed, the mystery of Christmas is the mystery of salvation proclaimed to all the world, which calls every human person to spiritual regeneration and to the attainment of eternal life.

This mystery of salvation is profoundly expressed by the following hymn: "He whom nothing can contain has been contained in a womb. He is in the Father's bosom and His Mother's embrace. How can this be, but as He knows and willed and was well pleased. Fleshless as He was, He willingly took flesh. And He Who Is became

what He was not, for us. And while departing not from His own nature, He shared in our nature's substance. So Christ was born with dual natures, wishing to replenish the world on high."

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is true and perfect God, becomes true and perfect man, and by His incarnation establishes a new mode of existence which He bestows upon us, that is, to become "**partakers of the divine nature**" (2 Peter 1:4). This signifies that we must strive towards attaining "**the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**" (Eph. 4:13), where we will be bestowed with the fruits of the Spirit, which is "**love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control**" (Gal. 5:22-23). Christ grants us these divine attributes which recreate and refashion us, therefore, allowing us to become truly human by participating in His divine-human reality.

May the celebration of Christmas inspire in us true faith and genuine love. For when, in faith and love, we strive to acquire the love of God, we are embraced by divine grace, which, in and through Christ, we share with each other, and which becomes a radiant beacon of light that draws all humanity and creation to Christ, the "Sun of Righteousness".

Wishing all a blessed and joyous Christmas, I remain,

With fervent prayers

*Archbishop Makarios, Primate and Exarch of All Oceania
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia*

Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand

Advent Calendars have been a traditional way of counting down the days to Christmas. In recent times, Advent Calendars have gained such popularity that you have so many options. You can buy Advent Calendars with chocolates for each day or tea bag varieties or even with your favourite movie characters. As we use Advent Calendars to count through the days of December, we are also saved from the seemingly endless announcements of 'how many shopping days' are left before Christmas!

Some people get swamped at this time of the year. With all the sales and promotions and the preparations for family gatherings and feasting with friends, Christmas has become a very frenzied time of the year.

At the heart of Christmas is God's message of simplicity and hope. A baby is born in a manger in the little town of Bethlehem - with the oxen and the shepherds. This baby is born to be the Saviour of the world. We sing in one carol, 'how silently, how silently this wondrous gift is given, how God imparts to human hearts, the blessings of his heaven.'

With uncertainly and rumours of international troubles in the news day by day, the message of Jesus in the manger is something that gives hope and purpose to life. This message sets a marker for all time, that God is with us and God is for us. There is more to who we are than what we own or what we can gain. We are beloved by God who has shown us this love in the person of work of Jesus Christ.

On behalf of the people of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand I wish you and your loved ones a beautiful and blessed hope-filled Christmas time.

*Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the babe is Lord of all;
swift are winging, angels singing,
nowells ringing, tidings bringing,
Christ the babe is Lord of all.*

W Zlobe Lezy - Polish carol - Tr. Edith Margaret Gellibrand Reed 1885-1933

*Reverend Paul Smith, Bishop
Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand*

Religious Society of Friends in Australia (Quakers)

For Quakers, Christmas Day is mostly just another day – no day is special, but every day is a day to hear God’s voice in our hearts. Yet the message of peace and love shown in gift giving at Christmas moves us every year.

In this year of people made homeless by war, marginalisation and climate change, in Gaza, on Pacific islands, in central Africa and in our own country, we remember that Jesus was himself born homeless. The Christmas story has been for many of us a call to honour the marginalised, the dispossessed, the persecuted and the hungry of this world.

As Jesus taught, when we have seen the hungry and fed them, when we have seen the foreigner and invited them in, or given clothes to someone in need of clothing, or when we have visited the sick or those in prison, we have done it for God. This is holy love in action. We wish for peace and security to all of God’s people.

*Duncan Frewin, Presiding Clerk,
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia*

The Salvation Army Australia

THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS

In a world where hope dwindles, we gather as people of hope.... hope-givers and hope-bringers in a world that needs it in abundance right now.

As we approach this special time of year, we’re reminded once again of the heart of Christmas—God drawing near to us in love. The miracle of Jesus’ birth tells the story of a God who didn’t remain distant, but stepped into our world so we could know Him personally.

In this small, humble beginning—a baby laid in a manger—we find **hope**. Jesus’ arrival brings the promise of a future held securely in God’s hands, a future shaped not by fear, but by His peace, Prince of Peace, connecting us with God, and offering salvation to all who trust Him.

This beautiful story is wrapped in **humility**, as the Saviour of the world entered not as a king in a palace but as a child in a stable. It’s a reminder that God often works in quiet places and unexpected ways.

We also see the steady **faith** of Mary and Joseph—ordinary people who said “yes” to God even when the path was uncertain. Their trust encourages us to lean into God’s plan for our own lives with courage and obedience.

And as we celebrate, we’re called to reflect the **goodwill** woven throughout the Christmas story—to show kindness, compassion, and selfless love to those around us, just as Christ has shown to us.

The world right now needs a whole lot of Christmas..... love, hope, humility, courage, goodwill, faith, salvation.... a whole lot of Jesus.

May you both know Him and make Him known.

The world desperately needs Him. May we show the way.

Bless you. Have a wonderful, meaningful and sacred Christmas.

*Commissioner Miriam Gluyas, Territorial Commander, Chair of the Board
The Salvation Army, Australia Territory*

Uniting Church in Australia

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

As Christmas comes around, many of us are carrying mixed emotions – moments of joy and moments that feel heavy.

This year has stretched us with fires, floods, rising costs, conflicts overseas, and grief that has touched many homes.

And into all of this, the Christmas story speaks again: “Do not be afraid. For today, a Saviour is born”.

Christmas is the story of God choosing to come close, born as a child into the world we know too well.

As John’s Gospel says, “The Word became flesh and lived among us” and “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it”.

That is why Christmas still matters.

And I’ve seen that light across Australia and across this region, in the red dust of Oodnadatta, when an Aboriginal community opened a church 40 years in the making – faith and promise fulfilled.

In the celebration that wove together Australia and Tonga – strengthening our diplomatic ties and our Pacific family bonds.

In Johannesburg, where churches from across the world stood together for climate justice.

And in people of all ages and backgrounds who even through struggle and loss, keep showing up for one another.

Different places, different stories – but the same light, Christ’s light.

That light doesn’t ignore the darkness, it transforms it, and it calls us to compassion, generosity and justice.

So, this Christmas, bring that light into your homes, your neighbourhoods, and the conversations that matter.

And sometimes the smallest light, a kind word, a shared meal, a moment of courage can change everything.

May the Christ child, the God with us, steady your heart, soften our world, and lead us into a new year of peace, courage and hope.

Every blessing for Christmas and for 2026.

*Reverend Charissa Suli, President
Uniting Church in Australia Assembly*

Australian Christian Churches - ACC

'A MIRACULOUS SEASON'

In the midst of one of the busiest seasons of the year, God has a message for every one of us. It reminds us that this indeed is a season of miracles.

Consider the very first Christmas. It began with the appearance of an angel who brought a message from God to a young woman named Mary. You can read about her encounter in Luke chapter one. The angel told her that the Lord was with her; that she was blessed and had found favour with God; and that she didn't need to be afraid.

The Angel Gabriel went on to tell her that she would conceive and give birth to Jesus, and His kingdom would have no end. Mary's surprised reaction was 'How can this be?' but the angel gave her these final words of assurance:

'For with God nothing will be impossible.' (Luke 1:37 NKJV)

These powerful words give us the same assurance today. No matter what we are facing in life – a serious health challenge, a financial crisis, a relationship breakdown or an uncertain future – God's message to us is the same, with Him, all things are possible.

'Behold, I am the Lord... is there anything too hard for Me?' (Jeremiah 32:27 NKJV)

The birth of our Saviour Jesus that first Christmas set in motion a miraculous season that continues to this day. It is about the impossible being made possible; of faith replacing fear; and despair making way to a hope filled future.

My prayer is that this Christmas, you will open your heart to Him afresh, invite him to be a special guest in your home and believe for Him to do the impossible. With God, all things are possible.

*Pastor Joel Chelliah, ACC National President
Australian Christian Churches - ACC*

Australian Baptist Ministries

This Christmas, we once again gather around the story that has changed the world—the story of Jesus, God with us. In a world that often feels unsettled and uncertain, the birth of Christ reminds us that God steps into our humanity with grace, hope, and redeeming love.

The message of Christmas is simple and yet profoundly powerful: light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. As Australian Baptists, we celebrate that this light is not distant or fragile. It is the light of Christ—steadfast, welcoming, and transformative.

This season invites us to slow down, to listen, and to wonder. In the cry of a newborn child, we hear God's promise of peace. In the humility of the manger, we see God's heart for the lowly, the overlooked, and the hurting. In the joy of the angels, we remember that the good news is for all people, in every place.

As we gather in our churches, homes, and communities, may we embody the generosity of Christ. May our hospitality reflect His welcome, and may our lives bear witness to His hope.

We pray that our neighbourhoods would experience the peace that only Jesus brings—peace that heals, restores, and draws us together.

This Christmas, may the love of Christ fill your homes, strengthen your families, and renew your faith. And as we enter a new year, may we continue to follow the One who is Immanuel—God with us, now and always.

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus.

*Reverend Mark Wilson, National Ministries Director
Australian Baptist Ministries*
