



# CLOSE to HOME

「come home...  
- to live fully with joy,  
hope and courage」

What does the word 'home' mean for you? It is much more than a place where we live. Home can be associated with significant relationships. It can be a place of significant connection, maybe where we spent our early years or where our children grew up. The place where our pet warmly welcomes us when we walk in the door. The smell of home cooking might mean home for you. Our favourite chair might make us feel at home, or our comfy bed. Home might be expressed through the photos or paintings on display, or the books on our book shelf, or the ornaments we gathered from trips. But ultimately, home should be a place where we are comfortable, safe, feel like we belong, and where we can be ourselves – no pretending, masks removed, comfortable in our own skin.

**Close to home** – within five kilometres. With all the lockdowns and restrictions due to covid-19 we might feel that we have had enough of being home. However, we might also feel that with the virus still circulating, home is our safe place to be and we will only go out if we have a need. During lockdown, home, instead of being a place of safety and comfort, may have turned into a place of isolation and loneliness.

For some, home might be the place where they don't feel safe due to complex and difficult relationships. Home could even be the place of temptation for some. Home might be the place where we hide. For others, spending time at home might be a reminder of a loved one no longer with us, and so there may be issues of grief associated with being at home.

*continued...*



**Glen Waverley Uniting Church**

Corner of Bogong Avenue & Kingsway, Glen Waverley

[www.gwuc.org.au](http://www.gwuc.org.au) p. 9560 3580 e. [office@gwuc.org.au](mailto:office@gwuc.org.au)

'Close to Home' is the theme that the ministry team have chosen for the seasons of Advent and Christmas. Mary visited Elizabeth in her home for a time of connection and reassurance. The visit lasted three months. It was also the time when Elizabeth blessed Mary and the child she was carrying. Mary then proclaimed God's faithfulness from one generation to another.

Jesus was born in the midst of a journey home due to the taking of a census. Mary gave birth to Jesus in the midst of a stable, a home for animals, and a place where shepherds visited following the birth. It was into this most unlikely home that Jesus Christ was born.

The Magi left their home to travel afar to pay homage to Jesus, and after being warned in a dream, they travelled home by another route. The travelling Magi remind us there are many in our world today who are travelling, who are displaced from their homes and their homeland, and who are seeking a home and safety, and a future.

In John's gospel we read that Jesus came among us as "Emmanuel". 'Emmanuel' means 'God with us'. God came and dwelt with people like us through the birth of Jesus. God entered the chaos and pain of our world through the birth of this promised child. God, in Jesus Christ, dwells with – is at home with – people like you and me. God continues to dwell, to make a home with us, through the work of the Holy Spirit.



CLOSE to  
HOME

This Advent and Christmas, may we be both comforted and challenged by the One who dwells intimately with us. As we encounter the Christ child anew this Christmas, may we know hope, peace, joy and love in our hearts and lives.

This Christmas season, may God be our home and resting place, and Christ our constant companion.

*Neil, Alanee, Di,  
Jemma & Joanne.*

Join us here  
this Christmas  
or online at  
[www.gwuc.org.au/live](http://www.gwuc.org.au/live)

Services in  
December & January  
10am each Sunday

7 December  
8pm Remembrance Service

12 December  
2.30pm Carol Service

19 December  
10am Live Nativity

24 December  
Christmas Eve  
7pm Worship

25 December  
Christmas Day  
10am Worship

31 December  
New Year's Eve  
11.15pm Worship

30 January  
10am Backpack Blessing

Usual worship times will resume from  
**February 2022**  
8am, 9.15am, 11am, 1pm & 5.30pm