



Geebung Wavell Heights Uniting Church

15th December 2024
Our Mission Statement

*“Sharing the love of Jesus together
in welcoming all people into the
fellowship of the church as well as
ministering to the community”*

When the Loneliness of Relational Distance Steals Your Christmas Joy

Disappointment flooded me as my son, whose job takes him far away from our home in Colorado, told my husband and me that he couldn't join us for Christmas. While we'd expected that to a certain degree, we'd previously been given a spark of hope that he could pull off Christmas with the family this year. Alas, it's not meant to be.

Physical distance from our loved ones feels terribly lonely during the holidays. As the wife of a USAF veteran for twenty years, I've certainly spent holidays away from my fella and other loved ones. When you can't see, hug, and talk to your favorite people at that time of year, it takes a measure of your festive joy, no two ways about it.

While this is true, it's also true that experiencing relational distance is even lonelier, especially during the Christmas season.

After all, two people can have many miles, even an ocean between them, and yet their hearts remain close. But when two people's hearts are far apart, even as they sit side by side at Christmas brunch, that is doubly lonely.

And if your relational distance with someone exists because of circumstances beyond your control, that only levels up your loneliness. For example, perhaps a loved one of yours insists on believing the worst about you. All your time and energy spent trying to bridge that relational gap with explanations gets you nowhere. To make matters worse, perhaps this person is doing her level best to “poison the well” by spreading faulty assumptions or outright falsehoods about you to anyone who'll listen.

I'm familiar with this kind of behavior as well as the unique loneliness it brings. If your currency runs on relationships, as mine does, it's hard to enjoy those chestnuts roasting on an open fire while you sit in the cold reality of relational distance that you can't fix.

If we could converse with Mary and Joseph today, I believe they'd share their personal experience with this same kind of loneliness, the kind that comes from relational distance that is beyond your control.

Recently, I read through the portion of Luke 2 that describes Mary and Joseph's return to Joseph's hometown of Bethlehem to register for the census as commanded by the Roman emperor, Augustus.

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For your Diary

Weekly Activities -

Tuesday Indoor Bowls 1:30pm @ Wavell
Saturday Youth Alive
Sunday Worship Service 9am
See below for locations

Special Events & Services — December

Sunday December 15th Combined 9am Service
@ Geebung

Sunday December 22nd Combined 9am Service
@ Wavell

Wednesday December 25th Christmas Day
7:30am @ Geebung
8:30am @ Wavell

Sunday December 29th Combined 9am Service
@ Geebung

2025

Special Events & Services — January

Sunday January 5th Combined 9am Service
@ Wavell

Sunday January 12th Combined 9am Service
@ Geebung

Sunday January 19th Combined 9am Service
@ Wavell

Sunday January 26th Combined 9am Service
@ Geebung

For your Diary

Sunday March 23rd AGM after the
Sunday Service.

For your attention

THANK YOU



To everyone who put so much effort into the Carpark Carols. What a beautiful evening and well organized. Thank you

Sunday & Christmas Services Places and Times

2024

December 8th Combined 9am @ Wavell
Carols at Night 7pm @ Geebung
With the Tongan Brass Band

December 15th Combined 9am @ Geebung

December 22nd Combined 9am @ Wavell

December 25th Christmas Day Wednesday



7:30am @ Geebung

8:30am @ Wavell

December 29th Combined 9am @ Geebung

2025

Blessings for the New Year

January 5th Combined 9am @ Wavell

Staff leave

The office will be closed from 3pm Thursday Dec 19th and reopening Thursday 9am January 16th 2025 as Debbie is will be on leave.

The last Notices for 2024 will be printed for next Sunday Dec 22nd.

Tevita will be on leave from Thursday Dec 26th to 16th March 2025.

The People Who Need Our Prayers

Ann Bain	Maree Massey	Dell Merchant
Graham Power	Bert Wilton	Edna Street
Norma Jenkins	Lian Tan	Margaret Ferris
Marj & Bruce McKenzie	Sylvia Marson	Len Ferris
Malcolm & Judy McMillian	Beris Urquhart	Nev Bryans



From Front Page

The passage reads

And while they were there, the time came for her Baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn Son. She wrapped Him snugly in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them. — Luke 2: 5-7

After a long, arduous ride on a donkey, Mary must settle for giving birth to Jesus in a stable because there was no hotel of sorts to be found. The ESV translation of the same verses reads, "... there was no place for them in the inn" (v. 7). Interestingly enough, the word "inn" has a footnote that reads, "or guest room."

As my pastor, Chris Hodge, pointed out, if Bethlehem was Joseph's hometown, it's quite possible he had family there at the time of the census. If so, why didn't they offer their own guest room to Mary and Joseph?

Why didn't they have compassion on a young girl who arrived in town at best looking mighty haggard and at worst laid low with labour pains?

Could it be because word got around that Mary was pregnant before becoming a wife? Did Joseph's family have no interest in tainting their own reputation by proximity to these young people of "questionable life choices"?

Of course, we don't know how things went down with Joseph's family because Scripture doesn't tell us. But we humans are mighty talented at knowing parts of a story and assuming we know the whole thing. The gospel truth that Mary's pregnancy was a work of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35) may have seemed too far-fetched for family and friends to believe. If so, it's possible they took their own false assumptions as truth and lost all compassion in the process.

And yet, Mary and Joseph walked in the will of God at the cost of loneliness and their own reputations. When Mary found out she was pregnant in the first place, she replied,

I am the Lord's servant. May everything you've said about me come true. — Luke 1:38

When an angel filled Joseph in on how his fiancée became pregnant, he followed God's will and married her (Matthew 1: 24). Their actions carried an unspoken, "*Lord, accepting Your good plans for my life means accepting the lonelier consequences that might temporarily come with Your plans.*"

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From Front & Centre Page

That is where I find my peace in my own relational distance that tries to steal my Christmas joy. Mary and Joseph accepted the consequences of being misunderstood because being a part of God's redemptive plans was worth the cost. They knew that God knew the truth of their story and walked with them. So, not only were their reputations safe in the hands of the only One that mattered, they knew they mattered to Him, and this eased their loneliness.

God knows the truth of your story and He holds your reputation, too.

There may be a purpose at play in the relational dynamics that you'll never know about until Heaven. Of course, it's good and right to apologize to others when needed. But if you've done your level best to live at peace with those involved (Romans 12:18), then release the sadness by saying, “

Lord, accepting Your good plans for my life means accepting the lonelier consequences that might temporarily come with Your plans.”

I'd love an idyllic Christmas chock-full of nothing but Bing Crosby, sugar plum fairies, and pine-scented environs. But the Christmas season isn't exempt from the heartache of loneliness caused by a variety of circumstances, including relational distance. That doesn't mean we're helpless: we can *create* joy this Christmas by compassionately helping someone feel loved rather than lonely. We can *receive* joy in the fact that Jesus, whose very birth bridges our own relational distance with God, will one day come again to right every wrong.

In the meantime, we have His presence with us this Christmas and always... our Saviour, Emmanuel, *God with us*.

We're never alone.

Excerpted with permission from *Praying Through Loneliness* compiled by Kristen Strong, copyright Kristen Strong

Dec 15

3rd Advent

Zep 3: 14-20

Isaiah 12: 2-6

Phil 4: 4-7

Luke 3: 7-18

Dec 22

4th Advent

Micah 5: 2-5a

Ps 80: 1-7

Heb 10: 5-10

Luke 1: 39-45 (46-55)

Dec 25

Nativity of the Lord

Is 9: 2-7

Ps 96

Titus 2: 11-14

Luke 2: 1-14, (15-20)

Dec 29

Last Sunday of 2024

1 Sam 2: 18-20 & 26

Ps 148

Col 3: 12-17

Lk 2: 41-52

GEEBUNG

Alternating

59 Simla Ave

Sunday Worship 9.00am

Holy Communion 1st Sun.



Visit us at:

Geebung Uniting Church

WAVELL HEIGHTS

Alternating

147 Rode Road

Sunday Worship 9.00am

Holy Communion 1st Sun.



Visit us at:

Wavell Heights Uniting Church

G/W CHURCH COUNCIL

Chairperson—*Len Ferris*
M.0438 852 676

Secretary—

CHURCH OFFICE

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Wavell Heights 4012
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Normal Office Hours

Thurs 9am—3pm

Friday 9am—1pm