

Around our churches

Advent and Lent touch the memories and soul hunger of Australians. The nation needs and some are showing they want to know about Jesus. Jesus is



the legitimate ruler of the world now through His great act of obedience unto death and His resurrection and ascension to the throne of authority over the earth. He rules now principally in terms of the great three-fold categories of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8.10)

Many of our churches offered all kinds of Gospel presentations this Christmas into their local communities. Widespread

reports of increased attendances.

Here are some:

Bordertown held a 'Christmas blue service' well attended over half from families for whom Pstr. Bob had conducted funeral services during the year. People came and left knowing God had blessed them, giving over loss and finding hope in the Scripture readings. 'It was unique.'

Ardrossan also conducted a blue service.

Whyalla. Participated in well attended and presented ecumenical services, nursing home Christmas presentations, children's services in the week before.

Rev Kaye Colliver noted that the Christmas day congregation was hardly known to her with many away to be with family elsewhere but others visiting to be with family. Did others find this?



Minlaton put on their annual Christmas luncheon for the community following the morning service the Sunday before, packing the large hall. This plus hosting a community wide carols service and music brought the country town out.

Coro held a Christmas eve service candle light of readings and music concluding with holy communion

Walkerville advertised a childrens Christmas eve service through the various groups that used their church property and in the light of the local school rejecting nativity scenes or carols offered something for the children at the church. Over 100 extra people turned up plus about 60 children.

Clare Gladly shared the news of Jesus birth with local community. 46 youth joined under Nikki (Clare's families worker) and Kevin Rimmers leadership who together with their Spakz team presented twice to a packed house a fresh annual Christmas production blessing the community.

Branches combined with **Windsor Gardens** Christmas morning to sing-up and preach-up the joyous truth that Christ is the eternal ruler of the earth.

Keith, like many others, noted increased attendance underlining again the importance of preparing well for this advent season to speak up the great Gospel of Christ.

There's more;

News Eve. Gospel party at Joyce's shed, Mallee Rd., Wandearah East 0407536028 for directions and details. For all mid-Northerners and beyond. From 8pm till 2018 Feast, worship prayer and ministry with Mark Johnston (Qld)

Jonathan's reflection Tohu Wa Bohu!...It's a Hebrew phrase. Say it!... it feels nice in your mouth – "Tow – who – wah – bow – who" ... See, wasn't that good?



It's a phrase from Genesis 1:2 which we translate "formless and void", or "chaos", referring to the chaotic mess before God formed it into a beautiful world. The most accurate translation is "howling waste". During times in its history – because of the assaults of evil, and their own rebellion and sin - God's people in the OT were said to be in "tohu wa bohu" (Jer 4:23) – *chaos, the howling waste!*

The thing is, in the very middle of the howling waste, *God's Spirit was there* (Gen 1:2), giving Himself to the world in the midst of dark chaos, overcoming it, and lovingly carrying and shaping the world into wholeness, life, and richness. The Holy Spirit did exactly the same with God's people when they fell into the *howling waste!* – i.e., drew near to them in merciful love, overcame the turmoil, and drew them through it into healing, life, hope and joy. This blessing broke over them as they turned to Him in faith, love, repentance, and thanksgiving.

As God's people we all may, *and need*, to discover and receive this blessing again and again through our times of devastation. The Holy Spirit – the love gift of God our Father (Ro 5:5) – is always drawing near!

Our Lord rules. Be ready: "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.(Rev. 22:12-14 NIV)

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