

## **“God Is Already at Work Among Us”**

*Second Sunday of Christmas / First Sunday of the Year – 4 January 2026*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

As we begin this new year, and as we continue to dwell in the season of Christmas, the readings today invite us to pause—not to rush ahead, but to **notice where God already is**.

This year also marks something personal and communal for me: it is now my **third year walking with you in this chaplaincy**. Enough time has passed to know one another better, to recognise our strengths, our habits, and also our limits. Enough time to see what endures, what has been disrupted, and what is slowly finding new life again.

And that, in many ways, is exactly the world Jeremiah speaks into.

Jeremiah addresses a people who have known loss and interruption. They are not starting from nothing—but they are not simply returning to what once was. And God’s promise to them is not frantic or unrealistic. God says, *“I will gather them... their life shall become like a watered garden.”*

This is restoration that unfolds patiently. God brings home not only the strong and confident, but also the weary, the hesitant, and those who need time.

That is a word for us.

At St. Catherine’s, there are things we do every year—faithfully, almost instinctively. There are things that have not happened since the upheaval of Covid. And there are new ideas, new hopes, and new experiments we are only beginning to imagine. None of this is failure. It is simply the shape of a living community.

The Letter to the Ephesians helps us understand this moment more deeply. We are reminded that before we organise, before we decide, before we worry whether we are doing enough, **God has already blessed us in Christ**. We are already claimed, already included, already held within God’s purpose. Our work does not earn grace; it **responds** to grace.

And then the Gospel takes us to the heart of it all: *“The Word became flesh and lived among us.”*

God does not work only in ideals or intentions. God dwells in real communities, with real histories, real limitations, and real responsibilities. God enters both light and darkness—welcome and resistance, clarity and uncertainty—and chooses to remain present.

This matters as we think about how we live our life together in the year ahead.

Some are naturally happy to be led by the Spirit, trusting that God will provide and that things will simply unfold. That trust is a gift, and we honour it. At the same time, we live in the world, and in this moment the Council has discerned that **a more organised, shared approach** will help us steward our life together more faithfully.

That is not a lack of faith. It is an expression of it.

For this year, we begin with a clearer sense of the activities and events we hope to hold. Dates have been spread across the year. Venues have been reserved. A draft calendar has been prepared—not to control the Spirit, but to **make space for participation**.

Now comes the quieter, more important work: inviting each person to see where they might contribute. Some may wish to continue roles they have carried faithfully for years. Others may be ready to hand something over and support someone new stepping in. Both are acts of generosity.

The aim of every activity at St. Catherine's is not simply to be busy, but to **build up the life of the Church**—this small but precious part of it that we share. Whatever their focus—whether teaching, outreach, or fundraising—our activities are meant to draw people into fellowship with one another and into a deeper relationship with God. Faith and fellowship are not optional extras; they are the heart of what we do.

And through all of this, today's Gospel reassures us:

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

We are not beginning from emptiness. We are continuing a story God is already telling among us.

So as we step into this new year, may we do so with confidence that is gentle, not anxious; with organisation that serves love, not replaces it; and with trust that the Word who became flesh continues to dwell among us—in our planning, our conversations, our shared work, and our care for one another. Amen.