

01 January 2026

Hello Everyone!

Happy New Year!

I hope that it will be a healthy and wholesome year ahead for you and those you love, and trust that wherever you 'get your energy' - whether faith, hobby, adventure or otherwise - that it will be abundant in your daily life. We live in such a 'sheltered' part of the world - and I encourage you to be extravagant in sharing all the good things you 'possess' with family, friend and neighbour.



I ran out of room in the pew sheet this week focussing on Epiphany, and felt moved to share a couple of extra thoughts with you on the first day of a new year. First the 'bad news' and then some encouraging thoughts about the courageous endeavours of our sisters and brothers around the world who really do make a difference to the life of many in our 'global village.'

I am distressed by a number of issues facing our Global stability (if ever such a reality existed) - and the National leaders that seem to be creating more chaos - rather than peace.

I know that Venezuela is not an 'angelic state' - probably far from it! However, while Mr Trump is prancing about the 'place' proclaiming his '*prince of peace*' rhetoric - his violent behaviour and seeming broach of International Law toward Venezuelan citizens is appalling.

I am glad that I am not a citizen of Taiwan at the moment. Since 1949, Taiwan has evolved into a liberal democracy and many of its people assert that it is an independent, sovereign state with its own government, military, and currency. Chinese leadership are determined to 're-integrate' this independent Nation into the Republic of China - presumably by force. WOW! Oh what it must be to be a megalomaniac!

The 'ceasefire' rhetoric in Gaza is overshadowed by further Jewish illegal settlement in the West Bank and region, and the State of Israel's control and blatant disregard for the wellbeing of Palestinian people through restrictions of food, medical supplies and access to international organisations providing essential services.

There is no question that HAMAS has to disarm. Terrorism and fundamentalist ideology no matter where it is borne must be challenged, confronted and abolished. While fear and oppression and disempowerment remain - I fear that genuine peace will always be elusive. This goes for the example of all National leaders - and for you and me at 'home.'

In our own country, the increasing prevalence of domestic violence remains a shocking reality for many women and children in our society and our rural community. We are not and cannot be removed from it and class it as "*someone else's problem*" anymore. I am committed in building a stronger and safer community through our endeavours as a community of faith, and as a male member of society. Violence against women has to STOP!

As global citizens, I invite us all to be responsible for our own 'patch' of influence and exercise leadership in attitudes and behaviour that lead to peace and a 'return to wholeness.'

Good things are happening globally also. While not exhaustive, here are a couple of examples.

Water Sanitation: Key Global Improvements (2019-2024/2025) suggest that there has been a significant increase to water access for many of the world's population.

- Drinking Water: The world population using safely managed drinking water increased from 68% in 2015 to 74% in 2024, representing 961 million new people served.
- Sanitation: The population with access to safely managed sanitation services increased from 48% in 2015 to 58% in 2024, an increase of 1.2 billion people.
- Hygiene: Global coverage for basic hygiene services rose from 66% to 80% between 2015 and 2024, reaching an additional 1.6 billion people.

Despite these improvements, substantial challenges remain, with progress lagging the pace required to achieve universal access by 2030. One in four people globally still lack access to safe drinking water.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/26-08-2025-1-in-4-people-globally-still-lack-access-to-safe-drinking-water---who--unicef>

Renewable Energy Growth: The renewable energy sector (from a global perspective) continues to break records, with solar power surging and growing, making clean energy increasingly dominant and cost-effective. For instance; Costa Rica is running almost entirely on renewable energy most of the year! In 2023, about 95% of Costa Rica's electricity came from renewable sources: 74% hydropower, 13% geothermal, 12.5% wind, 0.5% solar, and 0.1% biomass. That's actually a dip from recent years, mostly due to drought. Since 2015, the country has consistently generated more than 98% of its electricity from renewables, peaking at a record 99.98% in 2021. <https://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/en/market-industry-info/search-country-region/country/canada-costa-rica-export/cleantech-market.html>

I recognise that the Renewable Energy Movement has it's own difficulties and 'stumbling blocks' within our region - for reasons well publicised. Our Parish Council maintains our 'Support for farmers' - an important statement and reality - no matter your own personal view or choices that people make regarding their own farming wellbeing and reality. The lack of genuine consultation within the community, the disempowerment of farmers and their families by Government 'authorities' and community division are having a significant impact on many people's physical and mental wellbeing.

Essentially, we need each other. Neighbour, 'enemy' or friend. A healthy community has the ability to accept difference and tolerate the opinion of others - without breeding division or alienate ANY member of our community. It distresses me that some people feel attacked by others - personally or otherwise - by decisions that they make to explore or reject the renewable energy situation in our region. I do not think this is helpful at all. Further, I do not think that there is one answer to this dilemma.

A healthy community is able to discern people with leadership skills and people with empathy to help guide decisions and understanding for the benefit of all. While this may come too late for some, I hope that in 2026 we can encourage each other to find ways through the thick fog of dissent and dis-ease specifically related to this issue that can assist in better wellbeing and empowerment for this generation and for those that follow.

Conservation Successes & Wildlife Havens: Ocean cleanup projects are making a tangible impact, cities are becoming thriving wildlife havens, and conservation efforts are leading to species recovery and deforestation reduction.

For instance, Burkina Faso saved a huge amount of its country by planting trees in areas where the land was drying out, saving a lot of people from hunger and misery. Launched by the African Union, the initiative is designed to fight desertification in the Sahel and slow the Sahara's expansion by planting a living wall of trees stretching from Djibouti to Senegal. Its goals are ambitious: capture 250 million tons of carbon dioxide and create 10 million jobs. By 2024, the project had restored 30 million hectares of degraded land — nearly the size of the Philippines, and about 30% of its overall target (and faces many further obstacles).

[\[https://geographical.co.uk/science-environment/will-africas-great-green-wall-ever-be-finished\]](https://geographical.co.uk/science-environment/will-africas-great-green-wall-ever-be-finished)

The Ocean Cleanup is proving to be a major success in its endeavours globally. The Ocean Cleanup is an international non-profit project developing and scaling technologies to rid the oceans of plastic. To achieve this goal, The Ocean Cleanup employ a dual strategy: intercepting in rivers to tackle the sources of ocean plastic pollution, and cleaning up what has already accumulated in the ocean and will not go away by itself.

[\[https://theoceancleanup.com/\]](https://theoceancleanup.com/)

I wonder what impact we can have in our own home and region to assist this massive effort?

And much closer to home, as a Parish we are celebrating 140 years of prayer, praise and proclamation in Warracknabeal and region in 2026.

Our first major event is the Lions Market Day on Saturday 21st February at Christ Church. Regular Stalls, car-boot-sale, and a few surprises will fill the Parish Centre, Lyle Street frontage and church grounds as we welcome the community to this unique event.

We will then celebrate our 140yr High Tea on Saturday 21st March - 3.00pm for 3.30pm. Tickets are essential and can be purchased for \$15.00 from "trybooking" link: <https://www.trybooking.com/DIJPI>

This will be a wonderful occasion to toast all who have gone before us and those who will follow - through our own presence! All guests will be welcome, however, we do have a limited number of tickets RSVP: 01 March 2026.

Our 140 year formal celebrations will culminate at Sunday's Liturgical Celebration on 22nd March 2026.

I am most grateful for all our endeavours in the parish - and the constant energy and encouragement from many parishioners and friends of the parish that help sustain our pastoral and outreach ministry.

We have much to be proud of.
Every blessing for 2026!

Warm regards,
Rev James