



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH  
TOORAK  
EST. 1859



Fourth Sunday of Advent  
22 December, 2024  
*8am*

# Welcome

St. John's welcomes everyone to all services and events, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race or background. This is a wonderful and historic church, founded in 1859. We are part of the Anglican Church of Australia and a member of the global Anglican Communion, comprised of 80 million people.

## Worship

Regular services of worship are held each Sunday at 8am and 10am, and Wednesday at 7pm. Services are followed by times of fellowship over food and drinks. All are welcome.

*\*During January we only hold services at 10am on Sunday, normal services resume in February.*

## Mission

Our mission is to know and love Christ and neighbour. We actively follow Jesus' command to love God, love one's neighbour and to care for all people. We regularly visit the sick, home-bound, and the dying. We care for the poor and needy through service and charitable giving, through our Opportunity Shop run in partnership with the local Catholic and Uniting churches, and by supporting the work of Anglicare, The Brotherhood of St. Laurence and The Anglican Board of Mission. Our clergy regularly baptise new members of the church, preside at weddings and care for the grieving through our funeral ministry.

## Visitors

If you're visiting for the first time please introduce yourself to a welcomer or member of the clergy, and fill out the blue 'Welcome' card found at the end of every pew so we can stay in touch with you.

## The Church

The church is decorated in purple for Advent, and shall thus remain so until Christmas. Flowers are removed and bare Christmas trees and wreaths decorate the church. They remain bare until just before Christmas Eve when, with the help of volunteers, we dress them for the grand celebrations of Christmas.

## Cover Image

*The Visitation*, Mariotto Albertinelli (1474-1515)  
1503, oil on canvas  
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge we meet on the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the East Kulin Nations and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.



@stjohnstoorak



Like us on  
**Facebook**

As you enter the church, please ensure your phone is switched off or on silent and use the time before the service for prayer or quiet reflection, allowing others to do the same

## INTRODUCTORY RITE

Please stand as the procession enters the church

PRELUDE 'Meine Seele erhebt den Herren' BWV 648 J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

The Fourth Candle on the Advent Wreath is lit, with the following prayer

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, merciful and gentle: to you be praise and glory for ever. Your light has shone in our darkened world through the child-bearing of blessed Mary; grant that we who have seen your glory may daily be renewed in your image and prepared like her for the coming of your Son, who is the Lord and Saviour of all. **Amen.**

### GREETING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

HYMN 'Long ago, prophets knew'

Verses 1905 92

Refrain

1. Long ago, prophets knew  
Christ would come, born a Jew,  
come to make all things new,  
bear his people's burden,  
freely love and pardon.

*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
When he comes,  
when he comes.  
who will make him welcome?*

2. Journey ends: where afar  
Bethlem shines, like a star,  
stable door stands ajar.  
Unborn Son of Mary,  
Saviour, do not tarry.

*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!  
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!  
Jesus comes,  
Jesus comes:  
we will make him welcome.*

Frederick Pratt Green 1903-2000 (TiS 283)

COLLECT FOR PURITY

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

KYRIE ELEISON *said*

Lord, have mercy, **Lord have mercy.**  
Christ, have mercy, **Christ, have mercy.**  
Lord, have mercy, **Lord have mercy.**

CONFESSION

The Lord comes, bringing to light things now hidden in darkness, and disclosing the purposes of the heart.

*Silence is kept*

Let us open our hearts and prepare for his coming, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

ABSOLUTION

TRISAGION *said together*

**Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

COLLECT FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Gracious God, you have visited your people and redeemed us in your Son: as we prepare to celebrate his birth, make our hearts leap for joy at the sound of your word, and move us by your Spirit to bless your wonderful works. We ask this through him whose coming is certain, whose Day draws near, your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**



## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE FIRST READING Micah 5.2-5a *read by Molly Bull*

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers.

Hear the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

THE CANTICLE 'Song of Mary', Luke 1.46-55 *said*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord:  
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
Who has looked with favour on his lowly servant:  
from this day all generations will call me blessed.  
The Almighty has done great things for me:  
and holy is his name.  
God has mercy on those who fear him:  
from generation to generation.  
The Lord has shown strength with his arm:  
and scattered the proud in their conceit,  
Casting down the mighty from their thrones:  
and lifting up the lowly.  
God has filled the hungry with good things:  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has come to the aid of his servant Israel:  
to remember the promise of mercy,  
The promise made to our forebears:  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

THE SECOND READING Hebrews 10.5-10 *read by Marcia Fregon*

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God" (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).' When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Hear the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand for the reading of the Gospel*

THE GOSPEL Luke 1.39-45

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to St. Luke.  
**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

For the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

THE SERMON The Assistant Priest, The Revd Dr Wendy Crouch

THE NICENE CREED *said together, standing*

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *led by Vivienne Randall*

*The Prayers end with the following*

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.  
**Grant that what we have asked in faith, we may by your grace receive, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

PARISH NOTICES

THE GREETING OF PEACE *standing*

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**  
The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

*All share with each other a 'COVIDsafe' sign of peace  
Feel free to come and share peace with those people joining us on Zoom*

OFFERTORY

*As the gifts of bread and wine are brought forward, a monetary collection for the life of St. John's is taken. Please give by contributing to the collection plate, at the paypoint at the rear of the church or by scanning the QR code.*



OFFERTORY HYMN 'O little town of Bethlehem'

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of four staves of music. The chord symbols above the staves are: C, F, Bb, Dm, C, Gm, C, F, C; F, Bb, Dm, C, Gm, C, F; Am, C, F, C, F, Bb, C; F, Bb, Dm, C, Gm, C, F.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. O little town of Bethlehem,<br/>how still we see you lie!<br/>Above your deep and dreamless<br/>sleep<br/>the silent stars go by:<br/>yet, in your dark streets shining<br/>the everlasting light,<br/>the hopes and fears of all the years<br/>are met in you tonight.</p> | <p>3. How silently, how silently<br/>the wondrous gift is given!<br/>So God imparts to human hearts<br/>the blessings of his heaven.<br/>No ear may hear his coming;<br/>but in this world of sin,<br/>where meek souls will receive him,<br/>still<br/>the dear Christ enters in.</p> |
| <p>2. For Christ is born of Mary;<br/>and, gathered all above,<br/>while mortals sleep the angels<br/>keep<br/>their watch of wondering love.<br/>O morning stars, together<br/>proclaim the holy birth,<br/>and praises sing to God the King<br/>and peace to all on earth.</p>  | <p>4. O holy child of Bethlehem,<br/>descend to us, we pray;<br/>cast out our sin and enter in,<br/>be born in us today.<br/>We hear the Christmas angels<br/>their great glad tidings tell;<br/>O come to us, abide with us,<br/>our Lord Immanuel.</p>                               |

Phillips Brooks 1835-93 *alt.* (TiS 316)

PRAYER FOR RECEIVING THE OFFERTORY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

*All remain standing*

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**  
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*The Great Thanksgiving Prayer continues to the following*

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

SANCTUS

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.**

BENEDICTUS

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

*The Great Thanksgiving Prayer continues to the following*

...Let us proclaim the mystery of faith  
**Christ has died, Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

*The Great Thanksgiving Prayer ends with the following*

... songs of never ending praise *or* ... now and for ever.  
**Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray:  
**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily  
bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the  
kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.  
We who are many are one body, **for we all share in the one bread.**

AGNUS DEI

**Jesus Lamb of God, have mercy on us.**

**Jesus bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.  
 Jesus redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.  
 Blessed are those who are called to his supper. **Lord, I am not worthy  
 to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

ADMINISTRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*All baptised Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Communion is available as consecrated bread, which is given to each person, and wine which may be drunk from the chalice. A separate chalice for intinction (dipped) is also provided. If you would prefer a blessing, please come forward and indicate this by keeping your arms behind your back. Gluten free wafers are available on request.*

POST COMMUNION PRAYER *Please stand*

*The prayer ends with the following*

**Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus  
 Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and  
 work to your praise and glory.**

FINAL HYMN 'Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!'

*Magnificat*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!<br/>       Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;<br/>       tender to me the promise of his word;<br/>       in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.</p> | <p>2. Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!<br/>       Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.<br/>       Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord<br/>       to children's children and for evermore!</p> |
|--|---|

Timothy Dudley-Smith 1926–  
 based on Luke 1:46–55 (TiS 161)

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**

POSTLUDE 'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme' BWV 645 J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

*As the postlude is played please remain seated or leave quietly*



Order of Service from *A Prayer Book for Australia* 1995. Broughton Books by E.J.Dwyer (Australia) Pty Ltd, Unit 13, Perry Park, 33 Maddox Street, Alexandria, NSW 2015. © 1995, The Anglican Church of Australia Trust Corporation.

With the Liturgical Psalter, Inclusive Language Version English text © 1995 by David L Frost, John A. Emerton, Andrew A Macintosh. Hymns from *Together in Song Australian Hymn Book II*. © The Australian Hymn Book Pty Ltd 2006. Registered Office 14 Martin Place (Level 17) Sydney 2000. Used with permission. C.C.L.I Licence number 669476. All readings from scripture are taken from The Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

### **Support St John's, Toorak**

Your support of St John's is greatly appreciated!

Donations can be made directly to:

St. John's Anglican Church General Account, Westpac

Account Name: St John's Anglican Church | BSB: 033 086 | Account: 871931.

International transfers please include SWIFT code WPACAU2S.



## CURRENT NOTICES

### **TODAY 22 December, Readers' Refresher Session**

Immediately following the 8am and 10am services today there will be a short 10 minute session led by Wendy for both current and newer readers. If you are not able to attend please let Wendy know to make alternative arrangements.

### **TODAY 22 December, Christmas Decorating**

Sunday 22 December, after the 10am service, we will be decorating the Christmas trees and wreaths, and tidying the church in preparation for the festivities of Christmas Eve and Day.



### **Advent Resources in the Narthex**

We have a variety of Advent reading materials available in the Narthex, including prayers, reflections and season guides. Please enjoy!

### **25 December 2024 - 5 January 2025, Parish Office CLOSED**

For URGENT enquiries, please call the Parish Office on 9826 1765 or 9826 1434 and leave a voicemail, a clergy member will be in contact as soon as they are able. For any non-urgent enquiries, please email [enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org](mailto:enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org) and Alicia will respond to you when she returns on Monday 6 January 2025.

## Christmas volunteers needed to overcome food insecurity

The Richmond Churches Food Centre is looking for volunteers to help at their annual Christmas Day BBQ. This special occasion provides food, social connection and community to those who would otherwise be alone and isolated on Christmas Day. The Richmond Churches Food Centre Christmas Day BBQ will be held on Wednesday 25 December, 12pm-3pm, at St Ignatius Hall, 326 Church Street, Richmond. For more information contact: [rfoodcentre@gmail.com](mailto:rfoodcentre@gmail.com) or 0493 104 144.



## Food for Friends

The last of this year's money was spent on food and Christmas treats for St Mark's Fitzroy and Christ Church Mission St Kilda. Maureen List joined me in delivering the food. We also delivered your donated food to St Mark's. A huge thank you to Glenda Strike, who, apart from her food contribution also sourced dental packs from her dentist. They were gratefully received. The Appeal for 2025 is now underway. Money can be donated to BSB 063177 Acc. 10026147 Please mark donation FoodFF. This is not tax deductible. Many thanks to all who have donated to this Appeal. The needs keep on increasing so be generous again. Blessings, *Brenda Mouritz*



## Giving to St. John's Ministry via the Anglican Development Fund (ADF)



We recommend using ADF to set up regular giving. Simply download and complete the form [here](#) or scan the QR code. You can choose to give through *direct debit* or *credit card*, and at what intervals you would like. It not only makes it easier for you to contribute to the ministry of St. John's, it also helps us to budget for the coming year. For any confidential questions or assistance, email our Parish Recorder, Richard Uglow: [giving@saintjohnstoorak.org](mailto:giving@saintjohnstoorak.org)

## Process of Selection of our New Archbishop

Updates on the Selection process are available at [www.boardofnominators.org](http://www.boardofnominators.org)

### PRAYER FOR THE SELECTION OF OUR NEW ARCHBISHOP

Eternal God, shepherd and guide, in your mercy give your Church in this diocese a shepherd after your own heart, who will walk in your ways, and with loving care watch over your people. Give us a leader of vision and a teacher of your truth. So may your Church be built up and your name glorified; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*A Prayer Book for Australia, p. 212.*

# REGULAR NOTICES

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## **Safeguarding and Wellbeing**

St. John's is committed to safeguarding all people and protecting their wellbeing, including young and vulnerable people, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children with diverse needs. All relevant staff and volunteers are trained in child safety and have appropriate clearance for service or ministry. If you have any concerns about the wellbeing of children in this parish, contact Kooyoora on 1800 135 246 or [www.kooyoora.org.au](http://www.kooyoora.org.au) If you have concerns about your wellbeing or that of another churchgoer, please contact the clergy.

## **Pastoral Care**

Clergy and members of the Pastoral Care Team offer pastoral care on a regular basis to parishioners as well as to those who specifically request it. This may include Home Communion. They also visit local hospitals at the request of patients, family, friends or staff with the consent of the recipient. Clergy and Lay Pastoral Carers visit a number of local Aged Care facilities on a regular, usually monthly, basis. Parishioners and others are welcome to phone the church office to arrange a home visit by the clergy or a lay pastoral carer. Those who are no longer able to attend usual services at the church are visited on a regular basis.

## **The Melbourne Anglican (TMA) and Prayer Diary**

The latest edition of TMA is [here](#). The link to the December Prayer Diary is [here](#).

## **Contribute to Worship Services**

All our ministries at St John's are supported by our wonderful volunteers. The rosters for September are available [here](#). And you will note that volunteering for morning tea has now been added to the list of duties. If you can help fill any of the gaps please contact the parish office. Thanks in advance.

## **Communion Instructions**

All are welcome at the altar and those baptised are welcome to receive Communion. Holy Communion is distributed via a chalice from which to sip or, a separate chalice into which the bread may be intincted (dipped). If you wish to simply receive the bread only that is perfectly appropriate. Gluten free wafers are available on request. A blessing only is also available.

## **Zoom Link**

Our 10am Sunday service is streamed here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86212089431?pwd=ZEN2M2xWRHRhMVhxTWWhwcmVwTzFEZj09> Meeting ID: 862 1208 9431 | Passcode: 541347

## **Prayer Requests**

Prayer requests can be sent to [prayers@saintjohnstoorak.org](mailto:prayers@saintjohnstoorak.org). The clergy check emails for prayer requests daily, and pray in solidarity with anyone who would like prayers said for them.

## **Clergy Days Off**

Our clergy have one regular day off per week. Our Vicar Peter has Friday and Wendy usually works Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday only. Please respect their time away from work and unless in an emergency, please refrain from telephoning, texting, visiting the Vicarage, or emailing them on these days. Thank you.

# FOR YOUR PRAYERS

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## **Prayers for Victims of War**

Give comfort, O Lord, to all who are torn away from their homes and their loved ones, by war, by famine, or by cruelty; give the world your peace and turn the hearts of those who will to war; grant that we who dwell secure in this insecure world may be generous in caring for our displaced brothers and sisters, of all faiths and none. We ask this in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**From the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:** The Parish of St Eanswythe's, Altona w. St Clement's, Laverton (Kerry Davis); The Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn (Bp Mark Short, Asst Bp Vanessa Bennett, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Williamstown (Glenn Buijs); The Church of the Province of Uganda (Abp Stephen Kaziimba); St Augustine's Mentone - Pastoral service (Bp Kate Prowd); St Michael's & St Luke's Dandenong - Pastoral service (Bp Paul Barker); Clyde North & Casey Dinka - Prayer service on new land (Bp Paul Barker); St Peter's Mornington - Carols service (Bp Paul Barker); The Melbourne Assessment Prison West Melbourne - Pastoral service (Bp Genieve Blackwell);

**For those who lead us in Government:** His Majesty King Charles III; Governor General Ms Sam Mostyn AC; Prime Minister Anthony Albanese; Federal Member of Parliament for Division of Higgins, Dr. Michelle Ananda-Rajah; and Premier of Victoria, Jacinta Allan.

**For Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians:** For Aboriginal Anglican clergy and lay-leaders around Australia, their spiritual health and physical well-being, and the people they care for. For Aboriginal and Government leaders and their work together.

**For The Toorak Ecumenical Movement:** Our partner churches, St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, Toorak Uniting Church, and The Swedish Church.

**For The Anglican Board of Mission, The Brotherhood of St. Laurence, and Anglicare.**

**For schools in our parish:** Geelong Grammar School Toorak Campus, Head of Campus Nicole Ginnane; St Catherine's School, Interim Principal Robert Marshall; and Toorak Primary School, Principal Julie Manallack.

**For the sick and all in need:** Gwen, Rex, Sam, Margaret, Nichole, Joanna, Ivan, Anthea, David, John, Tim, Joan, James, Karen, Trisha, Emma, Thomas, Rod, Robyn, Stephen, Stella & Spencer

**For those in aged care and those who are housebound:** Beverley; Angela; Marg; Val; Rosalind; Elizabeth; Russ & Sue.

**For those who have died recently and those who mourn them:** Tim Ward

**Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week:** Leslie Cranbourne (2004); Tony Warden (2002); Judith Morris (2017); Elaine Abbott (2016); Basil Vose (2016); Winifred Buxton (2003); James Cowan (2014); Irene Muriel Jolly (1990); Frederick Baden Langford (1986); Graeme Robertson (1975); Mary Strickland (2021); Wayne Watkins (2019); June Holyman (2017); Peter Lynch (2022); Kathleen Law (1994); Rosemary Gough (2021); Bonnie Sylvia Meares (1978); Valerie Spittel (2018); Rex Carnegie (1991); Nancy Smith (2003) & Nona Wilson (2019).



## SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

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### **Micah 5:2-5a**

Micah wrote at a time when the Assyrian army had invaded the northern kingdom, Israel, and when corruption was rife in Judah. The rich cheated and robbed the poor; priests and prophets adapted their words to suit their audiences. In 701 BC, Jerusalem was besieged and Judah became a vassal state of Assyria. The invaders occupied part of the coastal plain, menacing Micah's home city, Moresheth, and the surrounding area. The prophet speaks "the word of the LORD that came" (1:1) to him: in 4:9-5:1, he tells of the humiliation and difficulties Israel must experience in the near future. Despite "many nations [being] ... assembled against you" (4:11), God will give the Israelites victory over their enemies: this is God's plan.

But a time will come when a ruler will arise from the Ephrathah clan of the tribe of Judah (Ephrathah being the area round Bethlehem); he will "rule in Israel" (v. 2) and will be of ancient lineage ("from of old ..."). (David being from Bethlehem, people understood the lineage to be his; as Matthew 2:5-6 shows, at the time of Jesus, they understood this figure to be the Messiah, the ideal future king, who would bring misery to an end and usher in God's glorious kingdom.) God will "give them up" (v. 3, allow his people to be oppressed) until the right time. The woman in v. 3 is this king's mother. When he is born, oppression will end and all Israelites will be reunited. He will be like a shepherd, feeding his people ("flock", v. 4) through the power and authority of God. He will bring an era of peace. He will rule in Jerusalem (v. 7).

### **'Song of Mary', Luke 1.46-55**

Mary is visiting Elizabeth and Zechariah. God's messenger, Gabriel, has told her that she will bear Jesus, "the Son of God" (v. 35), successor to David and founder of an eternal kingdom. With God, "nothing will be impossible" (v. 37) – it was possible for Sarah to bear a child. Mary now thanks God in a poem known as the *Magnificat*, the first word of its Latin translation. Speaking today, she might begin: *From the depth of my heart, I declare the Lord's greatness and rejoice in God my Saviour.* "Servant" (v. 48) can also be rendered slave or handmaid: in v. 38, she has acknowledged that she is a "servant of the Lord", i.e. obedient to him in all things. She will be hailed by people of every age ("generations", v. 48) in the new era of salvation launched by her son. Why? Because of the seemingly impossible "things" (v. 49) God has done for her. Then a reminder (v. 50): God is compassionate to all who hold him in awe throughout time.

Vv. 51-53 universalises her experience, to reflect how God deals with all humanity. While the verbs are in the past tense in English, the Greek tense has the sense of: (1) how God customarily acts – as he always has and will continue to do – and (2) what he is starting to do in the conception of Jesus. The "proud" (v. 51), the arrogant, are alienated from God by their very "thoughts"; he reverses fortunes, raising up those in need ("lowly", v. 52, "hungry", v. 53) and rejecting the rich, those who think they don't need God. Vv. 54-55 sum up the *Magnificat*:

in his compassion, God has fulfilled and continues to fulfill his promises to the patriarchs.

### Hebrews 10:5-10

In v. 1, the author has stated that the sacrifices offered annually in the Temple on the Day of Atonement (according to Jewish law) foreshadow (point forward to) “the good things [that are] to come” through Christ. He then argues: if the temple sacrifices were “good things”, i.e. cleansing of all inner guilt that sin causes, why did these sacrifices need to continue? (v. 2) These sacrifices, he says, did not wipe the slate clean (v. 3); they can’t (v. 4).

Now, quoting Psalm 40, the author explains that God prefers obedience (“a body ...”, v. 5) to sacrifices: doing God’s will is what counts (v. 7). In v. 8 the author interprets the psalm. He lists the four types of sacrifice offered in the Temple, offered according to Mosaic “law” (v. 8). Jesus, he says (v. 9), came to do away with “the first” (the sacrificial system) and to inaugurate “the second” (the self-offering of Jesus). It is “by God’s will” (v. 10), carried out through Christ, that we have been “sanctified”, been made ceremonially clean and been perfected, made complete, through Christ’s death on the cross – “once for all” time.

### Luke 1:39-45

The gospel reading precedes the *Magnificat*, said or sung today. An angel has appeared to Zechariah in the Temple, and later the angel Gabriel has come to Mary. Zechariah has been told that his wife Elizabeth will bear a child in her old age; Mary has heard that she will bear a son to be called Jesus and “Son of the Most High” (v. 32), of God. God will make him a king of David’s line; he will rule Israel for ever.

Now Mary visits her “relative” (v. 36) Elizabeth. A scholar tells us that the Greek words translated “with haste” (v. 39) can be rendered very *thoughtfully*. In telling us that “the child” (v. 41, John the Baptist) “leaped” in Elizabeth’s womb, Luke intends us to understand that John recognizes his Lord, Jesus. Elizabeth’s reaction, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is to praise Mary. Luke’s first readers would have recalled the liberation brought to Israel militarily by two women called “blessed” (v. 42) in other books: one in Judges, the other in Judith. Elizabeth “exclaimed with a loud cry” (or voice) – the way marvellous prophecies were given in the Old Testament.

V. 43 translates a Semitic idiom: today Elizabeth might say: *How can I be thought worthy of being visited by the mother of my Lord?* V. 45 portrays Mary as the model believer: she trusted that God would keep his promise made through Gabriel, preposterous as it sounded.

*Need time for prayer? Some quiet space?*

*The church is open every day from 9am until 5pm for you to come and pray, meditate, or sit quietly. There are prayer books and prayer booklets in the Angel Chapel and the Narthex for use, the latter of which you can also download [here](#).*

## MUSIC COMMENTARY

PRELUDE 'Meine Seele erhebt den Herren' BWV 648

POSTLUDE 'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme' BWV 645

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

These chorale preludes by Bach are two of six from the *Schübler Chorales* set, named after Johann Georg Schübler, the engraver and publisher credited on the title page. Most of these chorales are transcriptions from movements in Bach's church cantatas. *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* is a transcription of the 10th movement of the cantata *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren*, BWV 10. The melody, derived from the traditional *tonus peregrinus*, a distinctive psalm tone often associated with the Magnificat.

*Wachet auf* is a transcription of "Zion hört die Wächter singen" ("Zion hears the watchmen sing"), which is the 4th movement of the cantata *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, BWV 140.

## ART COMMENTARY

The painting on the cover of today's pewsheet, *The Visitation*, is by Mariotto Albertinelli, painted in 1503. Albertinelli worked closely with Dominican friar Fra Bartolomeo, and both artists drew this composition together. The Renaissance architectural arch is fairly small and therefore optically enhances the monumentality of the figures of Mary and Elizabeth. Elizabeth is portrayed as an elderly lady greeting Mary. They shake hands, they embrace warmly. Look also at the fine detailing of the plants at the women's feet, very reminiscent of Leonardo da Vinci. This painting captures the very point where Elizabeth whispers to Mary the words 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.' We are part of their intimate greeting and conversation. Mary's expression in this painting conveys fatigue. She had made a long journey to visit her cousin whilst pregnant with the baby Jesus. Even before Jesus was born, Mary was sharing him with the world.

SO MARY WALKS INTO ELIZABETH'S HOUSE AND JUST BREAKS INTO SONG LIKE JULIE ANDREWS?



WWW.AGNUSDAY.ORG

WELL, MARY KNEW THE SONGS OF THE SCRIPTURES.



AND MARY'S SONG IS BASED ON HANNAH'S SONG\*. MAYBE THAT WAS ON HER MIND AS SHE TRAVELLED TO SEE ELIZABETH.

\* 1 SAMUEL 2:1-10

SO MARY DOES COVERS?



LUKE 1:39-55

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Toorak Ecumenical Council

# FOOD for Friends

2024 Appeal

As we have done for the last three years, with considerable success, we are asking for financial donations once again.

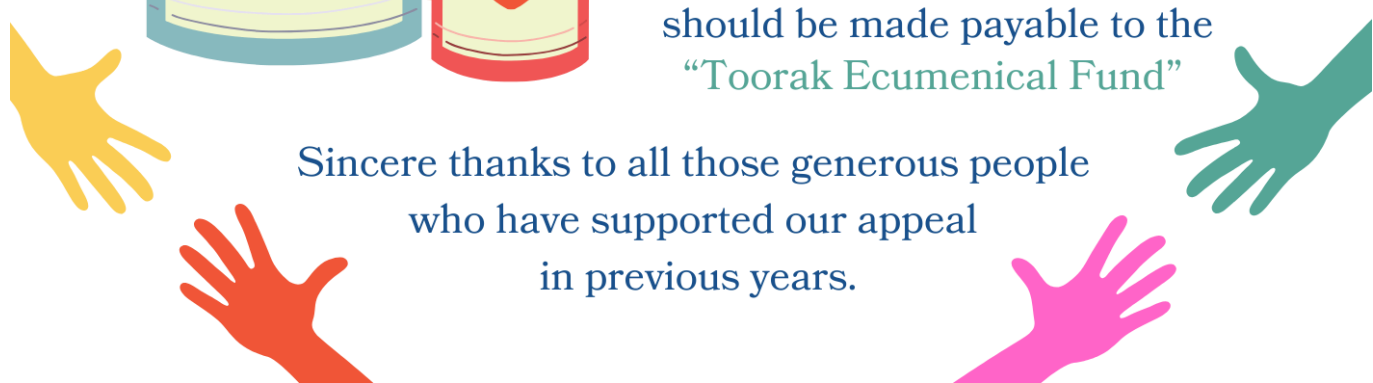
The money raised will be spent during the coming year on food supplies for the various agencies nominated by each Church. This has proved to be very successful in the last three years as all the agencies have been experiencing increasing demand throughout the year, not just at Christmas time, for their services as inflation continues to contribute to the rising cost of living.



Please consider donating to  
The Toorak Ecumenical Fund  
- CBA Toorak  
BSB: 063 177  
ACC: 1002 6147

Please mark it **FoodforFriends**

Cheques/cash may be dropped into the parish office. Cheques should be made payable to the "Toorak Ecumenical Fund"



Sincere thanks to all those generous people who have supported our appeal in previous years.

## This Week

SUNDAY, 22 December 2024

### Fourth Sunday of Advent

8am Eucharist

10am Sung Eucharist

MONDAY, 23 December 2024

2pm Funeral for Tim Ward

TUESDAY, 24 December 2024

### Christmas Eve

6pm Children's Christmas Pageant

11pm Midnight Mass

WEDNESDAY, 25 December 2024

### Christmas Day

10am Sung Eucharist

THURSDAY, 26 December 2024

Office CLOSED

FRIDAY, 27 December 2024

Office CLOSED



## Next Sunday, 29 December

### First Sunday after Christmas Day

#### 10am Eucharist

First Reading: *1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26*, Thomas Mackenzie

Second Reading: *Colossians 3:12-17*, Barbara Brown

Gospel Reading: *2:41-52*

Intercessor: Volunteer Required

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French



ST. JOHN'S  
ANGLICAN  
CHURCH  
TOORAK  
EST. 1859

#### Parish Office

Open 9am - 5pm | Monday - Friday

9826 1765 or 9826 1434

[enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org](mailto:enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org)

#### Wardens

Mr Keith Beecher OAM,

Mr Adriaan den Dulk

Mr Jason Pennell

#### Parish Council

Mr Rob Condon,

Mr Craig Cooper, Mr John Horan,

Ms Hsinhui Huang

#### Vicar

The Revd Dr Peter French

[vicar@saintjohnstoorak.org](mailto:vicar@saintjohnstoorak.org)

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The Revd Dr Wendy Crouch

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#### Director of Music & Organist

Mr Zachary Hamilton-Russell

#### Parish Administrator & Child Safe Compliance

Ms Alicia Groves

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#### Child Safe Officer

Mr Clive Wright

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