



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859



Second Sunday of Advent

8 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.

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 Christmas Eve when, with the help of volunteers, we dress them for the grand celebrations of Christmas.

Cover Image

Saint John the Baptist in the Wilderness, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682)
c. 1660-70, Oil on canvas
The National Gallery, London, UK.

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 'Pifa' Pastoral Symphony from Messiah *G.F. Handel (1685-1759)*

The Second Candle on the Advent Wreath is lit, and the following prayer prayed

Gracious God, you spoke to the prophets of old of a Saviour who would bring peace. You helped them to spread the joyful message of his coming kingdom. Help us, as we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth, to share with those around us the good news of your power and love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world.

Amen.

GREETING

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

HYMN 'On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry'

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the hymn 'On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry'. The first staff begins with the instruction 'Gtr. Capo 3' and a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are: Bb, Eb, F, Bb, Eb, F, C7(A7), and F(D). The second staff continues with notes: Bb, Gm(Em), Cm(Am), F(D), Eb, Bb, F7(D7), and Bb. Chord symbols are written above the notes.

1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
come then and hearken, for he
brings
glad tidings from the King of
kings.

5. To him who left the throne of
heaven
to free us all, let praise be given;
and praise be to the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, Three in One.

Charles Coffin 1676-1749 *tr.* John Chandler
1806-76 *alt.* (TiS 270)

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 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

God of our salvation, you straighten the winding ways of our hearts and smooth the paths made rough by sin: keep our hearts watchful in holiness, and bring to perfection the good you have begun in us. 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.**

Please be seated

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE FIRST READING Malachi 3.1-4 *read by Samuel Hartley*

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.

The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

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

THE PSALM The Song of Zechariah (Luke 1.68-79) *said*

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel:
who has come to his people and set them free.

The Lord has raised up for us a mighty Saviour:
born of the house of his servant David.

Through the holy prophets, God promised of old:
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us,

To show mercy to our forebears:
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship him without fear:
holy and righteous before him, all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High:
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

To give his people knowledge of salvation:
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God:
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death:
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

THE SECOND READING Philippians 1.1-11 *read by Anthony Rose*

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

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

Please stand for the reading of the Gospel

THE GOSPEL Luke 3.1-6

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 the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."' '

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

THE SERMON The Vicar, The Revd Dr Peter French

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 Samuel Hartley*

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 'Just as I am, without one plea'



1. Just as I am, without one plea
but that your blood was shed for
me,
and that you would my Saviour
be,
O Lamb of God, I come.
4. Just as I am, you will receive,
will welcome, pardon, cleanse,
relieve;
because your promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come.
5. Just as I am – your love unknown
has broken every barrier down –
now to be yours, and yours alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.
6. Just as I am, of that free love
the breadth, length, depth and
height to prove,
here for a season, then above,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Charlotte Elliott 1789–1871 *alt.* (Tis 584i)

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 'Hail to the Lord's anointed'

Gtr. Capo 2 E(D) A(G) B(A) E(D) C#m(Bm) B(A) E(D) /

A(G) B(A) E(D) C#m(Bm) B(A) E(D) /

F#m(Em) G#(F#) C#m(Bm) B(A) C#m(Bm) G#(F#) /

E(D) C#m(Bm) B(A) E(D) A(G) B(A) E(D)

1. Hail to the Lord's anointed,
 great David's greater Son;
 hail, in the time appointed,
 his reign on earth begun!
 He comes to break oppression,
 to let the captive free,
 and take away transgression,
 and rule in equity.

2. O'er every foe victorious,
 he on his throne shall rest,
 from age to age more glorious,
 all blessing and all-blest.
 The tide of time shall never
 his covenant remove;
 his name shall stand for ever,
 that name to us is love.

James Montgomery 1771-1854 *alt.* (TiS 275)

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE 'Chorale prelude on *In Dulci Jubilo*' BWV 729

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

Advent Quiet Day THANK YOU!

Many thanks to The Revd Dr Wendy Crouch for facilitating another wonderful Advent Quiet Day. And thank you to all those who participated.

22 December, Readers' Refresher Session

Immediately following the 8am and 10am services on Sunday 22nd 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.

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. If you are able to help, please confirm by completing the form [here](#), contacting the parish office, or putting your name on the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.



Christmas Flyer Distribution - Volunteers needed!

We are looking for volunteers to help distribute flyers around Toorak advertising our Christmas services. If you are interested and able, please complete the form [here](#) or contact the parish office, 9826 1765 or enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org.

Happy 100th Birthday to Parishioner, Rona Hatfield!

Rona celebrated her 100th birthday last Wednesday, 4 December.



Lenten Study book for 2025: 'Journeying through Lent with New Daylight'

The reading material for our Lenten studies in 2025 needs to be pre-ordered as it takes several weeks to arrive. St John's will be ordering several copies that can be purchased for \$10 each. If you would like to purchase through St. Johns please complete the form [here](#) or contact the parish office.

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!

Food For Friends Update

Today was St John's final major shop and delivery for this year. This went to St Mark's Fitzroy. The Appeal for 2024 is now underway so everyone is encouraged to give a financial donation to be spent in 2025. See flyer for details. The shopping is done through the year and the agencies we support are: Richmond Churches, St Mark's Fitzroy & Christ Church St Kilda.



During Advent, St John's is also collecting extra food items for St Mark's Fitzroy. When you are buying goods, keep in mind that St Mark's caters to the marginalised in the community, i.e. the homeless, the mentally ill, LGBTIQ+, Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. Make sure that tinned food items have ring pulls and dried items can be easily reconstituted with boiling water. Suggested items are small cans of tuna, tinned meals and long-life custard. I will collect from St John's and deliver on **18th December**. Please feel happy to speak to me if you have any queries or are willing to help. *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

Process of Selection of our New Archbishop

Updates on the Selection process are available at 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

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 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. 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

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 Anglican Parish of Upwey/Belgrave Heights with St George's Monbulk (Jerome and Vivianne Dias); The Diocese of Willochra (Bp Jeremy James, Clergy & People); Archdeaconry of Stonnington (Colleen O'Reilly); Province of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (Bp Ezekiel Kumir Kondo); Holy Trinity Doncaster – Pastoral service (Bp Kate Prowd); Footscray Anglican Parish – Pastoral service (Abp Philip Freier); St Peter's Brighton Beach – Choral service of lessons and carols (Abp Philip Freier); St Dunstan's Camberwell – Confirmation service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St Alban the Martyr St Alban's – Confirmation service (Bp Brad Billings); St Andrew's Corio/Norlane Karen Congregation – Pastoral service (Bp Brad Billings);

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 those who are celebrating birthdays this week: Shierly Patterson

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.

Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week: Tony Gamble (2016); Alan Miles (2021); Valda Whitford (2004); Bill Parsons (1992); Arthur Jones (1979); Millicent Crosby (2018); Ethne Wilson (1992); Pamela Middleton (2018); Garrick Gray (1997); Maurice Nathan (1982); Frank Scott (1993); Roger Williams (2020).

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

Malachi 3:1-4

Cyrus, King of Persia, has permitted the people of Israel to return to Palestine. The Temple, gutted in 586 BC, has been restored, but Israel is still a Persian province. People expected that their fidelity to God would be rewarded by (material) prosperity, but life has continued to be hard, so after several decades, they have lapsed into waywardness. It is the ungodly who prosper. In the old days, the king was God's agent, but now (there being no king), the priests have assumed this role. In previous chapters, the prophet has condemned the priests for despising God, corrupting worship and misleading the people.

A "messenger" (v. 1) or angel, God's agent, will come to prepare a way for him. God, long expected, will come to "his temple", to the priests. God's "covenant" with Israel was summed up in the priests. His arrival will be sudden, unannounced. V. 2 implies that when God comes, he will judge the people. (The accused stands to hear judgement.) A *refiner* used the heat of a fire to separate ore into pure metal and slag; a *fuller* cared for newly shorn wool or woven garments by cleaning them, purifying them, with lye. The messenger will "purify ... and refine" (v. 3) the priests ("the descendants of Levi") until they hold him in proper respect. Their offerings, on behalf of the people, will then again be "pleasing to the Lord" (v. 4). God will judge adversely those who deviate from proper moral behaviour and from his ways (v. 5). He will bless all who return to his ways, for he still cares for his people. 4:5 identifies the messenger as Elijah (who ascended to heaven without dying: see 2 Kings 2:10-12); hence the popular belief in Jesus' day that Elijah would return: see, for example, Luke 9:7-8.

Luke 1:68-79, The Song of Zechariah

Zechariah has been struck mute upon hearing that his wife Elizabeth will bear a child in old age. Later, she has given birth to a son, and his parents have brought him to be circumcised and named. Elizabeth has favoured the name John, and Zechariah has agreed. Now Zechariah "filled with the Holy Spirit ... spoke this prophecy" (v. 67), known as the *Benedictus* - the Latin translation of "Blessed" (v. 68).

Vv. 68-69 tell of the blessing Israel's God brings to "his people": the Jews are the elect. (While the verbs in translations are in the past tense, the present is equally appropriate. The tense in Greek shows that they describe how God characteristically acts and what he is inaugurating in Jesus.) God gives them one who will save them from sin ("mighty saviour", v. 69), descended from David, in fulfilment of prophecies he made through the Old Testament "prophets" (v. 70) who told of rescue from "enemies" (v. 71). God fulfils his promises, especially his pact with Abraham (vv. 72-73), so Israel may from now on hold him in proper respect but not fear his wrath. The "child" (v. 76) is John the Baptist. He will be thought to be Elijah, "the prophet ..." (although Luke sees the prophet long expected as Jesus). John's mission will be to bring people to an ethical, godly, way of living, thus preparing the way for "the Lord". Vv. 78-79 return to Jesus' role: he

will be the “dawn” (new light) from heaven, the one through whom God fulfills his purpose for humanity. At a time when hopes are at low ebb and people are particularly in need, he will be a beacon guiding them into “peace” (v. 79), i.e. wholeness, harmony, well-being, prosperity and security.

Philippians 1:3-11

In the verses following the salutation of the letter, Paul thanks God for the Christians at Philippi, “praying with joy” (v. 4, a pervasive quality of the book), because of their participation (“sharing”, v. 5) in spreading the good news, “from the first day”, since their conversion. Paul is “confident” (v. 6) that God (“the one”) will finish what God has begun among them by “the day of Jesus Christ”, i.e. when he returns at the end of the era. Paul is particularly close to the Philippians because they “share” (v. 7) in Christian community, “in God’s grace”, with him: in suffering, and in defending and confirming the good news. (At his trial, Paul will have the opportunity to defend the gospel and show its power, v. 16). He longs to be with them with deep affection (“compassion”, v. 8).

Vv. 9-11 are his prayer for them: may they grow in love of God through knowing more of the Christian reality, marked by keen awareness of its meaning (“insight”), that they may discern the difference being Christians makes (“best”), so that when Christ comes again, they may be ready – having achieved a right relationship with God (“harvest of righteousness”, v. 11), through being in and with Christ, thus augmenting God’s “glory”, the showing forth of his inherent absolute goodness, and being ideally suited to praising God, rendering him homage, for it.

Luke 3:1-6

As did classical Greek authors, Luke places an event (John’s ministry) in the context of rulers, here both secular and religious. (V. 1a gives the most precise dating of the start of Jesus’ ministry in the gospels, i.e. 26-29 AD.) “Herod” here is Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. “Caiaphas” (v. 2), Annas’ son, is now high priest but his father retains his prestige (and power). The Greek translated “the word of God came” (v. 2) is the same as in Jeremiah: Luke sees John as continuing Jeremiah’s role of announcing judgement at the end of the era and a new pact with God, available to all. John travels throughout the Jordan Valley, preaching return to God’s ways and being ethically and spiritually renewed, here (vv. 4-6) expressed through metaphor. (These verses are from Isaiah 40:3-5.) Luke makes one change in the quotation: “his” (v. 4) emphasizes that it is Jesus for whom he prepares the way. To Luke, “all flesh” (v. 6), all people, not only Jews, will have the opportunity to be rescued from sin.

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 'Pifa' Pastoral Symphony from Messiah

G. F. Handel (1685-1759)

Pifa comes from the start of the 4th scene of Handel's massively popular oratorio *Messiah*. This is an episode in the Nativity of Jesus described in the Bible in Luke 2, in which angels tell a group of shepherds about the birth of Jesus. The shepherds are introduced by this instrumental Pastoral which takes its name from the shepherd-bagpipers, or *pifferai*, who played in the streets of Rome at Christmas time.

POSTLUDE 'Chorale prelude on *In Dulci Jubilo*' BWV 729 J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

In dulci jubilo ("In sweet rejoicing") is a traditional Christmas carol. In its original setting, the carol is a macaronic text of German and Latin dating from the Middle Ages. Subsequent translations into English, such as J.M. Neale's arrangement "Good Christian Men, Rejoice" have increased its popularity, and Robert Pearsall's 1837 macaronic translation is a mainstay of the Christmas Nine Lessons and Carols repertoire.

ART COMMENTARY

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo was the leading painter in Seville in the later 17th century. He remained one of the most admired and popular of all European artists in the 18th and early 19th centuries. His early works were much influenced by the early works of *Velázquez*, executed before *Velázquez* left Seville in 1623, and by the paintings of *Zurbarán*. Murillo shows St John the Baptist within a rugged landscape and wearing a camel-hair tunic, alluding to the simple life he led in the wilderness, as described in the Gospel of Matthew. He holds a reed cross with a scroll coiled around the top. It bears a Latin inscription: *Ecce Agnus Dei* ('Behold the Lamb of God' - the words John spoke on meeting Christ, and a title that refers to Christ's self-sacrifice in atoning for humanity's sins). John is transfixed, looking up towards heaven. He places one hand gently on his chest as he recalls his encounter with Christ. The crop of the composition - just below John's knees - is unusual, but it is unlikely that the painting has been cut down. The painting arrived in England, from Spain, in the early 1780s and was particularly admired by the painter Thomas Gainsborough.





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.

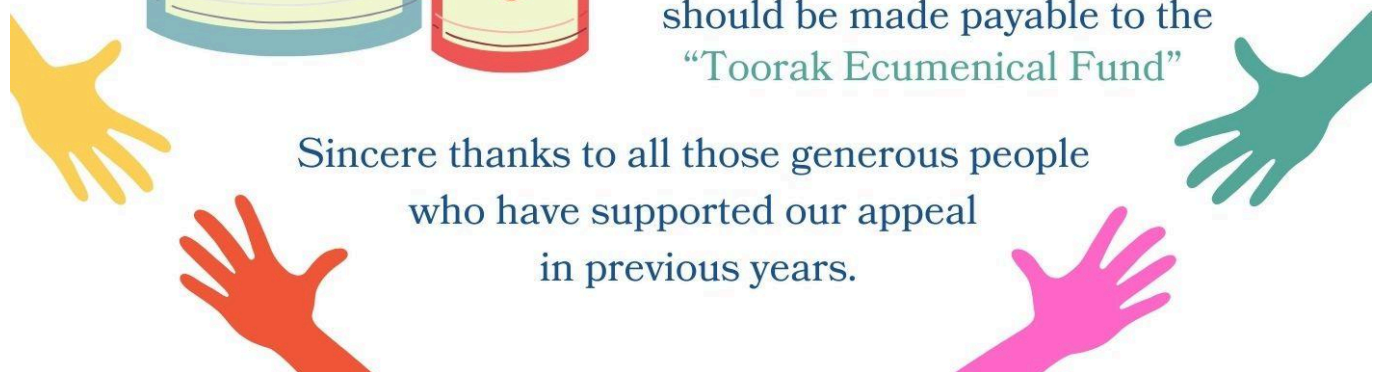


Please consider donating to
The Toorak Ecumenical Fund
- CBA Toorak
BSB: 063 177
ACC: 1002 6147

Please mark it **F** for Food

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, 8 December 2024

Second Sunday of Advent

8am Eucharist

10am Sung Eucharist

11.15am Interment of Ashes of
Betty Murray & June White

WEDNESDAY, 11 December 2024

7pm Eucharist in the Angel Chapel

FRIDAY, 13 December 2024

4pm Wedding of Sean Smith & Grace Sutcliffe

SATURDAY, 14 December 2024

10am Memorial Service for Robert Hartley



Next Sunday, 15 December

Third Sunday of Advent

8am Eucharist

First Reading: *Zephaniah 3:14-20*, Angus McLeay

Second Reading: *Philippians 4:4-7*, Fiona McLeay

Gospel Reading: *Luke 3:7-18*

Intercessor: Molly Bull

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

10am Eucharist

First Reading: *Zephaniah 3:14-20*, Jenny Smith

Second Reading: *Philippians 4:4-7*, Lincoln Li

Gospel Reading: *Luke 3:7-18*

Intercessor: Jenny Smith

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

Morning Tea: Jenny Smith & Celia Langford



ST. JOHN'S
ANGLICAN
CHURCH
TOORAK

EST. 1859

Parish Office

Open 9am - 5pm | Monday - Friday

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