



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859



Second Sunday in Lent
16 March, 2025
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 (or violet) for Lent. Purple is rich in symbolism, originally the colour of royalty, it also symbolises suffering, mourning and penitence. Thus it is appropriate for Lent as we journey with Jesus on the way to the cross, where ultimately he will be crucified.

Cover Image

Christ in the Wilderness -The Hen, Stanley Spencer (1891-1959)
c. 1954, pencil

The Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth.

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 'Chorale Prelude: Abridge'

Craig Sellar Lang (1891-1971)

THE INVOCATION

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins,
Whose mercy endures for ever.

THE GREETING

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

HYMN 'The God of Abraham praise'

Gtr. Capo 1 C(B) Fm(Em) C(B) Fm(Em) Eb(D) Ab(G) Eb(D)
Ab(G) Eb(D) Fm(Em) Db(C) Ab(G) Eb(D) Ab(G)
A(G) Eb(D) Fm(Em) C(B)
Fm(Em) Db(C) Ab(G) Bbm(Am) Fm(Em) C(B) Fm(Em)

1. The God of Abraham praise
who reigns enthroned above,
ancient of everlasting days,
and God of love:
the Lord, the great I AM
by earth and heaven confessed!
We bow and bless the sacred name
for ever blessed.

2. The whole triumphant host
gives thanks to God on high:
'Hail, Father, Son and Spirit blest!'
they ever cry.
Hail, Abraham's God and ours!
with heaven our songs we raise:
all might and majesty are yours,
and endless praise.

Thomas Olivers 1725-99 *alt.* based on the Jewish
Yigdal c.13th cent. and Revelation 4 and 5 LEONI
(TiS 125)

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

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God, though we have rebelled and wandered far off. Let us then ask for mercy, confessing our sins that mar God's image in us.

Silence is kept

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

THE TRISAGION

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

THE COLLECT FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

God of our ancestors, whose chosen servant Abraham was given faith to obey your call and go out into the unknown: endow your Church with such faith that we may follow you with courage; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE FIRST READING Genesis 15.1-12, 17-18 *read by Anthony Rose*

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' But the word of the Lord came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' He brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness. Then he said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.' But he said, 'O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?' He said to him, 'Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.' He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire-pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates'.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 27 *said*

The Lord is my light and my salvation;

whom then shall I fear?:

the Lord is the stronghold of my life;

of whom shall I be afraid?

When the wicked, even my enemies and my foes,

come upon me to devour me:

they shall stumble and fall.

If an army encamp against me,

my heart shall not be afraid:
and if war should rise against me, yet will I trust.
One thing I have asked from the Lord,
which I will require:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
To see the fair beauty of the Lord:
and to seek his will in his temple.
For he will hide me under his shelter
in the day of trouble:
and conceal me in the shadow of his tent,
and set me high upon a rock.
And now he will lift up my head:
above my enemies round about me.
And I will offer sacrifices in his sanctuary
with exultation:
I will sing, I will sing praises to the Lord.
O Lord, hear my voice when I cry:
have mercy upon me and answer me.
My heart has said of you, 'Seek his face':
your face, Lord, I will seek.
Do not hide your face from me:
or thrust your servant aside in displeasure;
For you have been my helper:
do not cast me away or forsake me, O God of my salvation.
Though my father and my mother forsake me:
the Lord will take me up.
Teach me your way, O Lord:
and lead me in an even path, for they lie in wait for me.
Do not give me over to the will of my enemies:
for false witnesses have risen against me,
and those who breathe out violence.
But I believe that I shall surely see
the goodness of the Lord:
in the land of the living.
O wait for the Lord;
stand firm and he will strengthen your heart:
and wait, I say, for the Lord.

THE SECOND READING Philippians 3.17-4.1

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

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

Please stand for the reading of the Gospel

THE GOSPEL Luke 13.31-35

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.

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.' He said to them, 'Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem." Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of 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

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 'You servants of God'

Gtr. Capo 3 F(D) B♭(G) F(D) E♭(C) F7(D7) B♭(G)
 Dm(Bm) Gm(Em) C7(A7) F(D)
 B♭(G) E♭(C) Cm(Am) F(D)
 D7(B7) Gm(Em) E♭(C) B♭(G) F7(D7) B♭(G)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. You servants of God,
 your Master proclaim,
 and publish abroad
 his wonderful name;
 the name all-victorious
 of Jesus extol;
 his kingdom is glorious,
 and rules over all.</p> | <p>3. Salvation to God,
 who sits on the throne!
 let all cry aloud,
 and honour the Son:
 the praises of Jesus
 the angels proclaim,
 fall down on their faces,
 and worship the Lamb.</p> |
| <p>2. Our God rules on high,
 almighty to save;
 and still he is nigh,
 his presence we have;
 the great congregation
 his triumph shall sing,
 ascribing salvation
 to Jesus our king.</p> | <p>4. Then let us adore,
 and give him his right,
 all glory and power,
 all wisdom and might,
 all honour and blessing,
 with angels above,
 and thanks never-ceasing,
 and infinite love.</p> |

Charles Wesley 1707–88 *alt.*
 LAUDATE DOMINUM (Tis 215)

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 'May this Lenten discipline'

Refrain D Em A D Bm



May this Len - ten dis - ci - pline, which we un - der -
- take with love, turn our minds to things a - bove.

Verses E7 F#m E A Bm F#m



1 Sin has sun - dered us from God, self - ish we have -
grown and cold, fool - ish were the ways we trod,
e - vil ha - bits keep their hold.

*May this Lenten discipline,
which we undertake with love,
turn our minds to things above.*

1. Sin has sundered us from God,
selfish we have grown and cold,
foolish were the ways we trod,
evil habits keep their hold.
2. Now we fast that we may feast
where the Lord of Life presides;
may our hunger be increased
for the bread which he provides.

3. As we keep this Lent with prayer
and from pleasures are withdrawn,
minds and bodies we prepare
for the joy of Easter dawn.

James Phillip McAuley 1917-76
LINDFIELD (TiS 463)

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE 'Elegy'

Harold Darke (1888-1976)

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

Lenten Studies 2025 Session #2 TODAY 11.30 in Whitney King Room

This year our Lenten Study will be following "Journeying Through Lent with New Daylight" There are two opportunities to attend a study:

Sundays at St. John's, 11.30am, March 9, 16, 23 & 30 OR Tuesdays with our fellow Christians, March 18 at St John's, 25 at the Swedish Church & April 1 at Toorak Uniting Church.

Lent retreat next weekend

Please pray for the 12 participants in the Lent Retreat next weekend in Queenscliff as they take time apart to reflect on *Journeying with Jesus*. Pray too for Wendy as she prepares to lead them.

The Ecumenical Candle

In front of the lectern our ecumenical candle is lit. This is the candle which moves from each member church of the Toorak Ecumenical Movement, the Catholic, Swedish, Anglican and Uniting Churches, to symbolise our unity in Christ.

The word 'ecumenical' comes from the ancient Greek word 'oikumene,' meaning 'the whole (inhabited) earth,' and simply means churches who come together to better understand each other and to live into Christ's call for all his followers 'to be one.' St. John's has been a proud member of the Toorak Ecumenical Movement for all its 44 years of existence.

'The Ethics of Voting': a free public forum hosted by The Wesley Centre for Theology, Ethics, and Public Policy

Hear Robyn Whitaker in conversation with John Pesutto, Liberal member for Hawthorn and former Leader of the Opposition in Victoria, and Bronwyn Pike, former Labor MP and current CEO of Uniting VicTas, about the state of our democracy, the big issues this election, and the values behind the politics. Thursday 20th March, 12.30-1.20pm at Wesley Church, 130 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. Details at www.thewesleycentre.org

Sunday 6 April, Guest Preacher Paul McDonald Anglicare

Paul McDonald, chief executive of Anglicare Victoria, will be preaching at our 8am and 10am services on Sunday 6 April 2025. Following the 10am service he will join us for morning tea and further discussion.

Saturday 12 April, 10am-12pm, Holy Week Working Bee

On Saturday 12 April we are asking volunteers to join us in preparing the church for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter. This will include securing palm fronds along the church aisle to prepare us for our Palm Sunday service where we celebrate Jesus' entering Jerusalem.

Food for Friends

Shopping for Food for Friends has been done for Richmond Churches Food Bank, St Mark's Fitzroy and Christ Church Mission St Kilda. The need for this assistance is growing due to the rising cost of living. The Appeal remains open for donations so please consider giving. Thank you to all who have already donated, the food is gratefully received by the agencies and they send their thanks. *Brenda Mouritz*

Process of Selection of our New Archbishop

The Board of Nominators has chosen May 23 and 24, 2025 as days when the election synod for the new Archbishop of Melbourne will take place. General information about the process can be found here: 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 February Prayer Diary is [here](#).

Contribute to Worship Services

All our ministries at St John's are supported by our wonderful volunteers. The rosters for March 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=ZEN2M2xWRHRhMVhxTWhwcmVwTzFEEdz09> 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: Holy Trinity Coburg (Farag Hanna); The Diocese of Grafton (Bp Murray Harvey, Clergy & People); Geelong Grammar School (Rebecca Cody, Principal; Gordon Lingard, Chaplain); The Anglican Church of Australia (Abp Geoffrey Smith); St Paul's Cathedral – Valedictory service (Abp Philip Freier); Anglican Parish of Mount Dandenong – Pastoral service (Bp Paul Barker);

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 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, Principal Natalie Charles; and Toorak Primary School, Interim Principal Sharon Wildermuth.

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

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: Colum Stoney, Tom Paul & John Dale

Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week: Roderick Allen (2009); Shirley Gray (2024); Ernest Coate (1995); Susan Harms (2019); James Hayne (2021); Margaret Howes (2019); Sandra Scotis (2016); Peter Kincaid (2012); Larry Watkins (2011) & Irene Woods (2007)

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](#).

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

Genesis 15.1-12,17-18

God has called on Abram to leave Ur (now in Iraq) and to "Go ... to the land I will show you" (12:1). God has blessed him, and he, his wife Sarah and his brother Lot have migrated to Canaan. Famine has struck the land, causing Abram and his family to seek food in Egypt. Pharaoh has been attracted to Sarah, thinking that she is Abram's sister, taking her into the royal household. When he has discovered that she is Abram's wife, he has ordered them to leave the country.

Our reading is two stories of gifts from God: in vv. 1-6, a son and many descendants; in vv. 7ff, the Land. The formula "the word of the LORD came to ..." (vv. 1, 4) is later used of prophets; Abram is called a prophet in 20:7. God makes Abram his favourite; he will protect ("shield", v. 1) him. Abram's "reward" is really a free gift. Custom was that if a man's wife did not bear him a son, his chief servant ("slave", v. 3), here "Eliezer" (v. 2), might inherit. God promises Abram a son ("your very own issue", v. 4) and he will have countless descendants ("stars", v. 5). Abram puts his trust in God's promise; in this way, he establishes a right relationship ("righteousness", v. 6) with God.

God's words in v. 7 are like those he speaks later at Mount Sinai. But this time, Abram is not so trusting: he asks for a sign or sworn oath (v. 8). From Jeremiah we know that the ceremony in vv. 9-10 and 17 is of ancient origin. Going between the two halves ("pieces", v. 17) of sacrificial victims signified that if a party broke the agreement, he could expect to be dismembered. As in v. 1, Abram has a vision (v. 12): the descent of the sun, "deep sleep", terror and great "darkness" express the awesomeness of supernatural intervention. God's presence is symbolized by fire (v. 17). Only he has obligations under the pact, so only he passes between the "pieces". The *deal is cut* (thus the Hebrew), as are the victims: David's empire later stretched almost from the Nile to near the upper reaches of the "Euphrates" (v. 18). (In the other version of this story, God changes Abram's name to Abraham to signify his new relationship to God.)

Psalm 27

The psalmist expresses his confidence in God. "Light" is linked with "life". When "evildoers" (v. 2) try to destroy him ("devour my flesh"), they fail to do so. Even if they are many ("army", v. 3), he is sure that they will fail. He has asked of God that he may worship in the Temple ("live", v. 4) for as long as he lives, see the "beauty" of what God does, to know more of God; these things he intends to do. God's "tent" (v. 5) is the Temple; it is the psalmist's refuge; there God makes him unreachable by his ungodly foes (v. 6). So he will praise God. He pursues his request in vv. 7-12. May God allow himself to be seen (v. 9); in the past he has seemed hidden from Israel. May God care for him (v. 10). May God guide him in godly ways so that he may not become subject to the "will" (v. 12) of his foes who tell lies about him ("false witnesses", v. 12). V. 13 is the conclusion: he trusts that he will see the effects of God's caring, throughout his life. Possibly v. 14 is a later addition: God does not act according to our schedule.

Philippians 3.17-4:1

Paul has written: "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death" (3:10). He has not yet fully understood Christ, but he *presses on* (3:12) towards the goal of being with Christ when he comes again. This is how "mature" (3:15) Christians should think: they have not yet achieved full understanding. Now Paul offers himself as an example of centering oneself in Christ, in his sufferings. (At the time, Paul was in prison.) Observe those who follow his (our) example! He warns against "many" (3:18) who centre on other things: at the end of the age, sadly they will be destroyed. Who are they? Perhaps self-centred people, but more likely Christians who insist on keeping Jewish dietary laws ("belly", 3:19) and on circumcision: to boast in this is to *glory* in an organ which should be modestly covered ("shame"). These are "earthly things", made obsolete by Christ's coming. Society looks to Rome for citizenship but we look to "heaven" (3:20). Our bodies, now mortal, will enter eternal life in a changed form, to achieve union with Christ (3:21). Per Psalm 8, the Messiah will be sovereign over all ("subject to himself"); Christ is the Messiah. Do not deviate from the true faith! (4:1).

Luke 13.31-35

Someone has asked: "Will only a few be saved?" (v. 23). Jesus has warned that few who have eaten with him will enter the Kingdom; many apparently pious people will be excluded. Many others, from across the world, will eat with him.

Now "some Pharisees" (v. 31), in perhaps the only favourable mention of them in the gospels, advise him to leave Herod Antipas' territory ("here", i.e. Galilee and Perea). (Herod the Great died soon after Jesus was born.) To Jesus, Herod is "that fox" (v. 32): destructive, tricky, sly, politically motivated. Herod will not cut short Jesus' earthly ministry. His journey to Jerusalem "must" (v. 33), in accord with the Father's will, continue day-by-day; in and at his resurrection ("third day", v. 32), he will complete, consummate, his mission of restoring mankind to the relationship God intended at creation.

Jerusalem, not Herod, has first claim on God's messengers! (v. 33b). This city is to be the place of, and the agent of, his murder. In vv. 34-35, Jesus laments over the city and (probably) its religious leaders ("house"). Perhaps v. 34b speaks of Jesus' extensive effort to bring Judeans to him, of efforts not recorded in the gospels. The city's residents, rejecting him now, will not see him again until they shout "Blessed ..." (v. 35) as he rides triumphantly into the city on the first Palm Sunday.

MUSIC COMMENTARY

PRELUDE 'Chorale Prelude: Abridge'

Craig Sellar Lang (1891-1971)

Lang was a New Zealand-born British organist, composer, and music teacher. He was a pupil of Sir Walter Parratt and Sir Charles Villiers Stanford at the Royal College of Music, and received his Doctorate of Music from The University of Durham.

POSTLUDE 'Elegy'

Harold Darke (1888-1976)

Darke was an English composer and organist particularly known for his choral compositions, which are an established part of the repertoire of Anglican church music. He had a fifty-year association with the church of St Michael, Cornhill, in London.

ART COMMENTARY

The Hen, is part of a series of paintings by artist Stanley Spencer entitled *Christ in the Wilderness*. Spencer noted that in the gospels the temptations only take place at the end of the 40 days. They give no account of what happened in the wilderness before then. He decided to paint a series of 40 images of Christ in the wilderness, one for each day of Lent. In this one, Christ's body encircles the mother hen and her chicks, affording them protection. This painting is inspired by Christ's lament over Jerusalem recorded in both Matthew and Luke, declaring "How often have I desired to gather your children together as a mother gathers her brood under her wings" (Matthew 23. 37). The cockerels moving in the background signal to us that Spencer's Christ is focused on the maternal love of the hen for her chicks. His longing is like that of a mother, wanting the best for her children. Interestingly, Christ here is posed not unlike his own mother, Mary, in a nativity scene by Giotto. In the life of a family there are moments which are precious but which the parent knows will not last. And yet here, Spencer, who through an affair, had lost his own family home, shows this transient maternal love enfolded in Christ's enduring love.



A Prayer of Feasting and Fasting, for Lent

Fast from judging others; feast on the Christ indwelling in them.
Fast from emphasis on differences; feast on the unity of all life.
Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light.
Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude.
Fast from anger; feast on patience.
Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism.
Fast from worry; feast on trust.

Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation.
Fast from negatives; feast on affirmatives.
Fast from unrelenting pressures; feast on unceasing prayer.
Fast from hostility; feast on nonviolence.

Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.
Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others.
Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal truth.
Fast from discouragement; feast on hope.

Fast from facts that depress; feast on truths that uplift.
Fast from lethargy; feast on enthusiasm.
Fast from suspicion; feast on truth.
Fast from thoughts that weaken; feast on promises that inspire.
Fast from idle gossip; feast on purposeful silence.



Gentle God, during this season of fasting and feasting, gift us with your presence so we can be a gift to others in carrying out your work.
Amen.

William Arthur Ward (1921-1994)

This Week

SUNDAY, 16 March 2025

Second Sunday in Lent

8am Said Eucharist

10am Sung Eucharist

11.30am Lenten Study #2

TUESDAY, 18 March 2025

2.30pm Funeral for Tom Paul

7pm TEM Lenten Study #2

at St John's

WEDNESDAY, 19 March 2025

2pm Funeral for Colum Stoney

7pm Eucharist, in the Angel Chapel

THURSDAY, 20 March 2025

2pm Funeral for John Dale,

in the Angel Chapel



Next Sunday, 23 March

Third Sunday in Lent

8am Eucharist

First Reading: *Isaiah 55:1-9*, Volunteer Required

Second Reading: *1 Corinthians 10:1-13*, Volunteer Required

Gospel Reading: *Luke 13:1-9*

Intercessor: Volunteer Required

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

10am Eucharist

First Reading: *Isaiah 55:1-9*, Glenda Strike

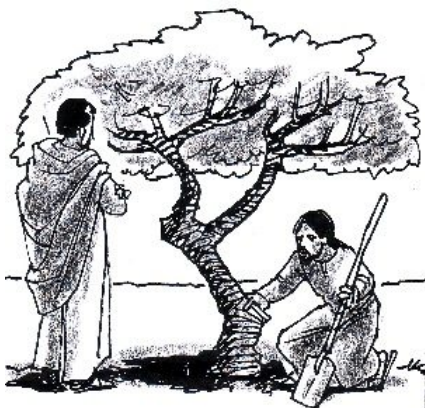
Second Reading: *1 Corinthians 10:1-13*, Keith Beecher

Gospel Reading: *Luke 13:1-9*

Intercessor: Volunteer Required

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

Morning Tea: Volunteers Required



ST. JOHN'S
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CHURCH
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EST. 1859

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