



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859



Fifth Sunday in Lent
6 April, 2025
10am

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

The Anointing at Bethany,
Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) & Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641),
1618, Oil on canvas
The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.

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 'Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier' (Dearest Jesus, we are here) BWV 731
J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

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 'Hail to the Lord's anointed'

Gr. 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. He comes with help and mercy
to those who suffer wrong,
to raise the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong,
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls condemned and
dying
were precious in his sight.

3. He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth, and love, joy, hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth; before him on the mountains shall peace the herald go, and righteousness in fountains from hill to valley flow.

5. 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.*
CRÜGER (TIS 275)

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 *sung together*

Brother Colin Smith CFC

The musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two staves. The first staff has four measures: Cantor (Lord, have mer - cy), Congregation (Lord, have - mer - cy), Cantor (Christ, have mer - cy), and Congregation (Christ, have mer - cy). The second staff has two measures: Cantor (Lord, have mer - cy) and Congregation (Lord, have mer - cy). The lyrics are written below the notes.

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 FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

O God, the Redeemer of all who trust in you: heed the cry of your people, and deliver us from the bondage of sin, that we may serve you in perfect freedom and rejoice in your unfailing love; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, 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 Isaiah 43.16-21

Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honour me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 126 *sung by the choir*

When the Lord turned again the fortunes of Zion:

then were we like those restored to life.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter:

and our tongue with singing.

Then said they among the heathen:

'The Lord has done great things for them.'

Truly the Lord has done great things for us:

and therefore we rejoiced.

Turn again our fortunes, O Lord:

as the streams return to the dry south.

Those who sow in tears:
 shall reap with songs of joy.
 They that go out weeping, bearing the seed:
 shall come again in gladness,
 bringing their sheaves with them.

THE SECOND READING *Philippians 3.3-14* read by *Carolyn Mackenzie*

For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh – even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

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

THE GRADUAL HYMN 'Help us, O Lord, to learn'

Chord symbols: C, F, Gm, C, F, Bb, C7, F, A, Dm, Bb, C, Dm, C, F

1. Help us, O Lord, to learn
the truths your word imparts:
to study that your laws may be
inscribed upon our hearts.
2. Help us, O Lord, to live
the faith which we proclaim,
that all our thoughts and words
and deeds
may glorify your name.

3. Help us, O Lord, to teach
the beauty of your ways,
that all who seek may find the
Christ,
and live a life of praise.

William Watkins Reid, Jr. 1923–
DAY OF PRAISE (TiS 428)

Please remain standing for the reading of the Gospel

THE GOSPEL John 12.1-8

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

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

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

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

THE SERMON Paul McDonald, *Chief Executive Officer of Anglicare Victoria*

THE ANTHEM 'God so loved the world'

John Stainer (1840-1901)

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 James Griffith*

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 'Praise to the Holiest in the height'

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all his words most wonderful,
most sure in all his ways.</p> <p>2. O wisest love, that flesh and blood,
which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the
foe,
should strive and should prevail;</p> | <p>3. and that a higher gift than grace
should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and his very self,
and essence all-divine.</p> <p>4. Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all his words most wonderful,
most sure in all his ways.</p> |
|---|---|

John Henry Newman 1801-90 *alt.*
GERONTIUS (TIS 141)

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 singing:

Brother Colin Smith CFC

Bless'd is He whocomes in the Name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer continues to the following

...Let us proclaim the mystery of faith

Christ has died, Christ is ris-en, Christ will come a-gain.

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer ends with the following

... songs of never ending praise.

Bless-ing and hon-our and glor-y and pow'r are
yours for ev-er and ev-er. A-men.

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

Choir Congregation
 Lamb of God, you take a-way the sins of the world; have mer-cy on us. have mer-cy on us.
 Choir Congregation
 Lamb of God, you take a-way the sins of the world; have mer-cy on us. have mer-cy on us.

5. In the cross of Christ I glory,
towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.

John Bowring 1792–1872 *alt.* v.2 Charles Louis
Fouvy 1928– STUTTGART (TiS 349)

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE 'Prelude and Fugue in G minor' BWV 558 *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.



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Daylight saving time for 2025 ended this morning, Sunday 6 April, at 3am. Don't forget to set your clocks back an hour and enjoy the extra hour today!



FALL BACK

CURRENT NOTICES

TODAY Sunday 6 April, Guest Preacher Paul McDonald, CEO of Anglicare
Paul McDonald will be preaching at our 8am and 10am services. Following the 10am service he will join us for morning tea and further discussion.

Paul McDonald is the Chief Executive Officer of Anglicare Victoria, where he has been leading the organization since 2010. With a career dedicated to serving the community, Paul has held various significant roles, including Deputy Secretary of the Children, Youth and Families Division at the Department of Health and Human Services, and CEO of the Youth Substance Abuse Service. His extensive experience in child protection, family services, and youth justice has made a profound impact on the lives of many. Paul is also a passionate advocate for extending state care for young people and has been recognised with numerous awards for his contributions to social welfare.

Thursday 10 April 2025 7:30pm, Choral Concert at St Peter's Church, Toorak
On Thursday 10 April 2025, 7:30pm at St Peter's Catholic Church Toorak, a new choral piece called '*The Primacy of St Peter: Part One*' will debut. Composed by their ARIA award winning Music Director Conrad Helfrich and performed by an esteemed 25-voice vocal ensemble, featuring some of Melbourne's best singers, including members of *Chorus Ecclesiae*. If you are interested in this event, please click the following link to RSVP: www.trybooking.com/DABRV.

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 in preparation for our Palm Sunday service the next day where we celebrate Jesus' entering Jerusalem. Please sign up to help on the sign up sheet in the narthex or email the Parish Office.

Sunday 13 April, Palm Sunday - 10am Service ONLY
Please note that there is no 8am service on Palm Sunday. We will have one service commencing at 10am in the garden, weather permitting.

Sunday 20 April, Easter Day, Morning Tea Volunteers needed!
We need volunteers to help with food, tea and coffee, setting up tables and chairs and clean-up. If you are willing and able to do any of the above please contact the parish office.

Sunday 4 May, Patronal Festival, Visit from Bishop Alison Taylor and Lunch
On Sunday May 4, we will celebrate our patron St. John the Evangelist with a visit from Bishop Alison Taylor. After the 10am service we will have a church lunch prepared by some of our dedicated volunteers.

Sunday 4 May 2pm, Sesquicentenary: A Concert Celebrating 150 Years

Celebrate 150 years of Toorak Uniting Church with this *sesquicentenary* celebration. The program will consist of arias from opera, operetta and musical theatre. Featuring performers from *Opera Su Presto*: Amanda Stevenson, Dannielle O'Keefe, Bruce Raggatt, Stephen Coutts, Daniel Vigne and John Parncutt, with pianist David Ross-Smith. A donation will be made to Uniting AgeWell's Music For David. Tickets are \$30 for general admission or \$20 for concession.

Book online at: www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1359654.

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. Updated 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 April 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=ZEN2M2xWRHRhMVhxTWWhwcmVwTzFEZz09> 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: All Saints' Kooyong (Kuncoro Rusman); The Diocese of Bathurst (Bp Mark Calder, Clergy & People); Peninsula Grammar (Stuart Johnston, Principal); The Anglican Church of Chile (Bp Enrique Lago); St Mark's Fitzroy - Pastoral service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St Thomas' Winchelsea - Pastoral service (Bp Brad Billings); St Peter's Jieeng Congregation with St Alban the Martyr - Pastoral service (Bp Brad Billings); St John the Divine Croydon - 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 those who are celebrating birthdays this week: Ted Mouritz

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, and Stephen.

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

For those who have died: Paul, and Charles Ebsworth.

Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week: Barry Cooper (2021); Joan Cowan (2018); Terry Johns (2017); Robin Gowan (2020); Peter Cooper (2002); John Rowe (2024); Philip Westbrook (1992); David Darling (2012) & Eric Pearce (1997).

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

Isaiah 43:16-21

Babylonian armies captured Jerusalem in 587 BC; many residents were deported to Babylon. Chapters 40 to 55 of Isaiah were written there in the final years of the Exile. The author had great faith in God as intervening in human affairs when needed throughout history. He sustains the theme of a new Exodus throughout *Second Isaiah*: God will surely restore the Israelites to Judea (v. 14).

A prophet serves as a channel of communication between the divine and the human realms. Today we say that *history repeats itself*; this prophet would add: *continually*. In vv. 16-17, he recalls God's saving act of enabling the Israelites to cross the Reed (or Red) Sea: how the waters separated, providing "a way in the sea", and how the Egyptian chariots, "army and warrior[s]", were swallowed up by the waters, "never to rise again" (Revised English Bible). This is who God is: he was the motive force behind Israel's deliverance; he saved Israel from slavery. (Perhaps the audience is people who, in exile, have given up on God.) But, says God through the prophet (v. 18), do not wallow in the past to the extent of being blind to what is happening now! God is "about to do a new thing" (v. 19); in fact, he has already begun ("now"). Can't you see it? He is providing a godly way for his people, protecting them and giving them sustenance ("water", "drink", v. 20). The allusion is to return from exile across the Arabian desert: the animals who will honour God live in the desert. Israel, the people whom he moulded by his instruction and discipline ("formed", v. 21) are to declare to all that he is praiseworthy for his love and actions on their behalf. However, say vv. 22-25, the covenant relationship between God and his people has become one of weariness for, in spite of God being reasonable in his expectations as to how the people should honour him, the Israelites have ignored him. All they have done is complain and stray from his ways. Even so, God is merciful; he will forget their waywardness.

Psalm 126

This is a prayer for deliverance from national misfortune. Vv. 1-3 recall past events: it was a joyous occasion when God showed favour towards his people ("Zion"), almost beyond belief (although "those who dream" can be translated as *those healed*.) Other nations recognized what God had done for Israel (v. 2). Then the community prays that God may grant them his favour once again: may it spring up, as the parched dry wadis ("watercourses", v. 4) in the "Negeb" desert rush with water during the seasonal rains. Perhaps v. 5 is a proverb: may our fortunes be reversed! V. 6 expands on v. 5. The good times remembered may be the Exodus or the return from Exile; if the latter, it reminds us that life in Palestine was difficult: it took years to restore agriculture.

Philippians 3:4b-14

Paul has warned his readers about those who try to convince them that being a Christian requires acceptance of Jewish law, including circumcision. True

circumcision is *of the heart* – and not of the “flesh”, i.e. following legal precepts, as in Judaism. Inner circumcision is what is required of us.

He cites his own experience as an example. In early life, he was as true to Judaism as anyone could be: he was circumcised; he is from the elite tribe (“Benjamin”, v. 5), as Jewish as one can be (“a Hebrew born of Hebrews”); like other Pharisees, he knew the Law well and applied it in daily life. He zealously persecuted Christians and faultlessly kept the Law. And yet, knowing Christ has made him realize that a Jewish, law-based, approach to God is a “loss” (vv. 7-8) for Christians: it obstructs God’s free gift of love. True “righteousness” (v. 9) comes through “faith in Christ”, not self-assessment of godliness, per legal precepts. He has cast aside all his Jewishness in order to realize the gain Christ offers (v. 8). He wants to “know Christ” (v. 10) as risen and living. This involves attaining oneness with him through sharing his sufferings and participating in his death. Out of this, he will come to know “the power of his resurrection”. He is still working on understanding Christ completely (v. 12), an obligation he has – for Christ has chosen him (“made me his own”). He has made progress not on his own, but through God’s grace (v. 13); however he has left his past behind and eagerly seeks what lies ahead. As the winner in a Greek foot race was called up to receive his “prize” (v. 14), so he seeks God’s call to share in eternal life. (“Heavenly” is literally upward.)

John 12:1-8

Jesus has raised Martha’s and Mary’s brother, “Lazarus”, “from the dead”, because Martha trusts that Jesus is the Messiah. Many people are making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for Passover. The religious authorities, aware that Jesus has performed “many signs” (11:47), and afraid that the Romans will destroy the Temple and the nation because of him, ask that anyone knowing where he is tell them so they can arrest him.

Now Jesus returns to Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, a mere three kilometres (two miles) east of Jerusalem. “Perfume made of pure nard” (v. 3, spikenard oil), was derived from the roots of a plant grown in the Himalayas. If the guests were reclining on couches, Jesus’ feet would be accessible for anointing, but a respectable Jewish woman would hardly appear in public with her hair unbound. Judas’ reaction points forward to Jesus’ arrest (18:1-11). “Three hundred denarii” (v. 5) was close to a year’s wages for a labourer. Anointing was the last step before burial, but not for executed criminals. Perhaps in v. 7 Jesus means that Mary bought the perfume so as to have it ready for his burial, that what she did has a meaning she does not realize, and that the perfume is not wasted. Perhaps v. 8 says: the poor are constantly in need, but Jesus’ impending death is unique. There is a place for spontaneous love of Jesus.

MUSIC COMMENTARY

PRELUDE 'Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier' (Dearest Jesus, we are here) BWV 731

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Whether sung as a hymn or offered in a chorale prelude, this hymn tune is placed at the beginning of a service, intended to prepare hearts for the sermon. Bach harmonised this hymn as a four-part chorale and also set it in four different chorale preludes. BWV 731 is a gentle treatment reminiscent of a slow concerto movement. A highly embellished melody unfolds over a simple three-part accompaniment in which the interest moves back and forth between the alto and tenor lines.

POSTLUDE 'Prelude and Fugue in G minor' BWV 558

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

While these works are often attributed to Bach, they are now believed to have been composed by one of Bach's pupils, possibly Johann Tobias Krebs or his son Johann Ludwig Krebs. In 1931, it was suggested by the musicologist Fritz Dietrich that the prelude could technically be regarded as an "Italian courante", but, as others have pointed out, that runs counter to the ABAB form and the change of harmony in every bar.

ART COMMENTARY

The art on today's pewsheet is a collaboration between master, *Peter Paul Rubens*, and pupil, *Anthony Van Dyck*. Rubens conceives the painting as a dramatic conflict between the Pharisees and Christ. The Pharisees' world of material values and uncompassionate religious views is opposed to the Christian world of virtue, noble acts, a world of sympathy, charity and goodness. The disciples, taking in the words of their teacher, are portrayed with completely contrasting expressions to those of the Pharisees, on whose faces we can read a lack of comprehension, annoyance and even anger. But it is Mary, who takes center stage in our painting. Our eyes are drawn towards her. Mary is at Jesus' feet with the jar of ointment. On the right side of Christ, we see her brother, Lazarus. Judas (with some Pharisees behind him) is sitting to the left of our composition. He is already painted with a traitor-like expression, questioning Jesus about the cost of the ointment.





ST. JOHN'S
ANGLICAN
CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859

This Week

SUNDAY, 6 April 2025

Fifth Sunday in Lent

8am Said Eucharist

10am Sung Eucharist

11.15am Morning Tea & Discussion

with Paul McDonald, CEO of Anglicare Victoria

TUESDAY, 8 April 2025

7pm, Parish Council, Vestry

WEDNESDAY, 9 April 2025

7pm Eucharist, in the Angel Chapel

SATURDAY, 12 April 2025

10am, Holy Week Working Bee



Next Sunday, 13 April Palm Sunday

10am Eucharist

First Reading: *Isaiah 50:4-9a*, Kim Collins

Second Reading: *Philippians 2:5-11*, Richard Uglow

Gospel Reading: *Luke 23.1-49*

Intercessor: Keith Beecher

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

Morning Tea: Volunteers Required



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Mr Adriaan den Dulk

Mr Jason Pennell

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