

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

2nd of May, 2021

Welcome

On behalf of everyone at St. John's, Toorak, a very warm welcome to this church and faith community. 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, part of the Anglican Church of Australia and a member of the global Anglican Communion, comprised of 80 million people.



Location code NKH H8C

QR code for church

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

This church actively follows Jesus' command to love God, love one's neighbour and to care for all people. Our clergy and parishioners 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. If we can be of service to you or your family, please do not hesitate to get in touch. If you would like to give of your time and talents in the service of others, please also contact the church and we will gladly welcome your contribution.

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.



@stjohnstoorak



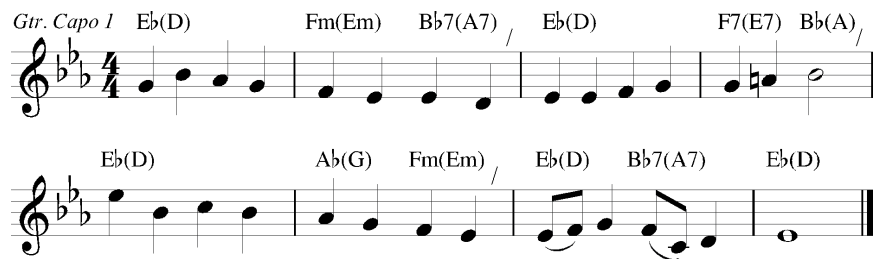
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Cover Image

Vincent van Gogh, *The Red Vineyard*, November 1888, Arles
Oil on canvas, 75 x 93 cm, Pushkin Museum, Moscow.

INTRODUCTORY RITE *please stand*

HYMN 'May the mind of Christ my Saviour' (*at 8am, only verses 1 & 5 are sung*)



1. May the mind of Christ my Saviour
live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling all I
do and say.

2. May the word of God dwell richly
in my heart from hour to hour so that
all may see I triumph only through his
power.

3. May the peace of God my Father
rule my life in everything,
that I may be calm to comfort
sick and sorrowing.

4. May the love of Jesus fill me
as the waters fill the sea;
him exalting, self denying,
this is victory.

5. May I run the race before me
strong and brave to face the foe,
looking only unto Jesus
as I onward go.

Katie Barclay Wilkinson 1859–1928 alt.
Music © D. R. Gould. Reproduced with
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INVOCATION

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.

GREETING

Christ is risen. Alleluia! **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

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.**

THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one; you shall love the
Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all

your mind, and with all your strength.' Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

CONFESSION

Christ our Passover Lamb has been offered for us, therefore we come to celebrate the festival. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, with a sincere and a true heart.

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 *pronounced by the celebrant*

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS *said at 8am, sung at 10am*

Gloria 4

Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth. Lord God,
 heaven-ly King, al-migh-ty God and Fath-er, we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we
 praise you for your glo-ry. Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fath-er,
 Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on
 us; you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fath-er: re-ceive our prayer. For
 you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord, you a-lone are the Most High Je-sus
 Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it, in the glo-ry of God the Fath-er. A-men.

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COLLECT FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Saving God, who called your Church to witness that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself: help us so to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may be reconciled to you; through him who died for us and rose again and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE CHILDREN'S ADDRESS *At 10am, all children are invited to the chancel step*

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE FIRST READING Acts 8.26-40 *Read at 8am by Scott Kirkland; and at 10am by Keith Beecher*

²⁶Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' ³¹He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. ³³In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.' ³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?' ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was

passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 22.26-32, *said together at 8am and sung by the choir at 10am*

²⁶ From you springs my praise in the great congregation:

I will pay my vows in the sight of all that fear you;

²⁷ The meek shall eat of the sacrifice and be satisfied:

and those who seek the Lord shall praise him —

may their hearts rejoice for ever!

²⁸ Let all the ends of the earth remember

and turn to the Lord:

and let all the families of the nations worship before him.

²⁹ For the kingdom is the Lord's:

and he shall be ruler over the nations.

³⁰ How can those who sleep in the earth do him homage:

or those that descend to the dust bow down before him?

³¹ But he has saved my life for himself:

and my posterity shall serve him.

³² This shall be told of my Lord to a future generation:

and his righteousness declared to a people yet unborn,

that he has done it.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, and now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE SECOND READING 1 John 4.7-21

Read at 8am by Ted Mouritz and 10am by Judy Richardson

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. ¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who

confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

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

Please stand and turn and face the Gospel as it is read

THE GOSPEL John 15.1-8

(AT 10AM ONLY) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. **Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia**

(AT 10AM ONLY) In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us. **Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

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.

¹I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever

you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.
This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

SERMON The Assistant Curate, The Revd. Keiron Jones

(AT 10AM) ANTHEM *Jubilate Deo*

Hans Leo Hassler (1564 – 1612)

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 *At 8am led by Brenda Mouritz. At 10am led by Scott Kirkland.*

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.

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.**

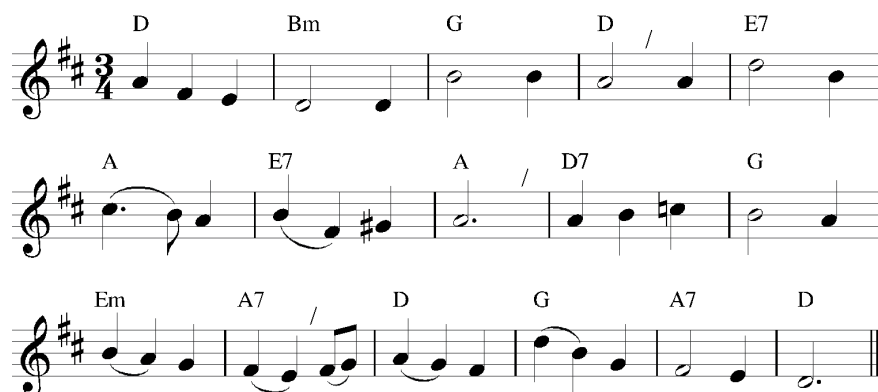
All share with each other a COVIDSafe sign of peace, saying, 'Peace be with you.'

PARISH NOTICES *given by The Vicar*

OFFERTORY

A monetary collection for the life and ministry of St. John's is taken here. You may give by contributing to the brass collection plate or paypoint at the rear of the church, or by prior arrangement with the parish office.

OFFERTORY HYMN 'O breath of God, breathe on us now'



1. O breath of God, breathe on us now and move within us while we pray; you are the spring of our new life, the very light of our new day.

2. How strangely you are with us, Lord, neither in height nor depth to seek: in nearness shall your voice be heard; spirit to spirit you will speak.

3. Christ is our advocate on high; you are our advocate within: O plead the truth, and make reply to every argument of sin.

4. But what a faithless heart is mine: the way I know, I know my guide: forgive me, O my friend divine, that I so often turn aside.

5. Be with me when no other friend the mystery of my heart can share; be always known, when fears descend, by your best name of Comforter.

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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 EUCHARISTIC PRAYER *said at 8am, sung at 10am*

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 priest continues to pray the Thanksgiving Prayer until

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/singing:

Sanctus

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are

Benedictus

full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

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The priest continues to pray the Thanksgiving Prayer until

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Acclamation

Christ has died. Christ is ri - sen. Christ will come a - gain.

The priest continues to pray the Thanksgiving Prayer until



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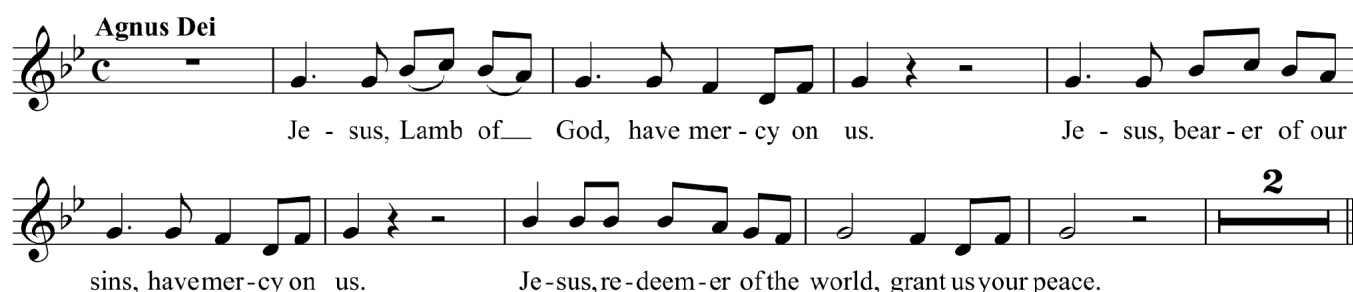
THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 forever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF 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 *said at 8am, sung at 10am*



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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

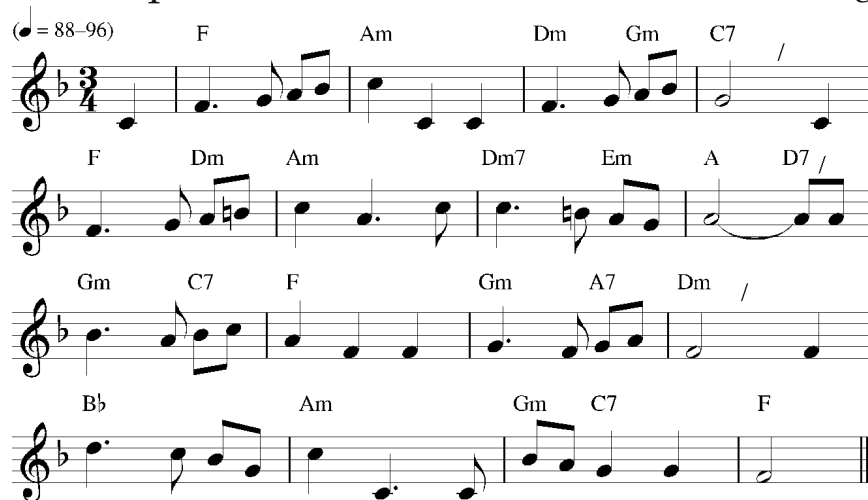
All baptized Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion. If you do not wish to receive communion and would like to receive a blessing, please come forward and indicate your desire to do so by keeping your arms behind your back. Due to COVID restrictions we can only communicate the bread, not the wine.

Translation: The eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Glory be to thee, O Lord.

POST COMMUNION PRAYERS *which end with*

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.

HYMN 'Help us to accept each other' (at 8am, verses 1 & 4 are sung)



1. Help us accept each other
as Christ accepted us;
teach us as sister, brother,
each person to embrace.
Be present, Lord, among us
and bring us to believe
we are ourselves accepted
and meant to love and live.

2. Teach us, O Lord, your lessons,
as in our daily life
we struggle to be human
and search for hope and faith.
Teach us to care for people,
for all — not just for some,
to love them as we find them
or as they may become.

3. Let your acceptance change us,
so that we may be moved in living
situations to do the truth in love;
to practise your acceptance
until we know by heart
the table of forgiveness
and laughter's healing art.

4. Lord, for today's encounters
with all who are in need,
who hunger for acceptance,
for righteousness and bread,
we need new eyes for seeing,
new hands for holding on:
renew us with your Spirit;
Lord, free us, make us one!

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Music © by Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL
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BLESSING

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE 'Introduction & Allegro' from *Sonata in the Style of Handel*

William Wolstenholme (1865-1931)



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.

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PARISH NOTICES

Help our Music Flourish with Tax-Free Donations to the St. John's Gibb Fund

You can support St John's Musical Program by making a donation to the Gibb Fund, celebrating its 70th Anniversary this year! Donations should be made to the Melbourne Anglican Cultural Organisation (MACO) via the Melbourne Anglican Fund. This can be done online via St John's website, here:

<https://www.saintjohnstoorak.org/support/>

Please ensure you nominate to have the donation made to the Melbourne Anglican Cultural Organisation directed to St John's Musical Program. Donations made to the Gibb Fund received via the Melbourne Anglican Cultural Organisation over \$2 are tax deductible.

Morning Tea After the 10am Service Today

Morning tea after the service this morning will be served in Buxton Hall, with thanks to Claire and Keith Beecher, Claire Morgan and Celia Langford.

Be part of our Sunday Services

All our ministries are supported by volunteers. The Rosters for May and June are NOW AVAILABLE. If you are able to assist with any gaps - particularly cleaning and welcoming - please contact the parish office.

Wednesday Night at 7pm Services

Each Wednesday at 7pm everyone is welcome to this quiet service of eucharist in the Angel Chapel. Please do come along and experience this hidden gem in the middle of a week, especially if you're unable to attend church on Sunday or need some prayer and community during a busy week.

Pew Cushions

On Wednesday 5 May at 1.30pm, we will be having a working bee (in the hall) to clean the pew cushions in readiness for their return to the church. If you are able to come, please sign-up in the narthex or email (enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org)

Cinema Group

If any parishioners and their friends are interested in joining us for a film at the elegant Palace Cinemas Como, South Yarra on a Sunday afternoon please leave your contact details with the parish office or contact Celia Langford 0418 552 335 to be put on the mailing list. Generally we gather on a Sunday afternoon, every six weeks or so, arriving early for refreshments and a chat beforehand. Any suggestions for a particular film are always welcome. How wonderful it is to be able to venture to the cinema once again!

The Melbourne Anglican (TMA)

The link to the latest edition of TMA is [here](#). The link to this week's Newstand is [here](#). The link to the April Prayer Diary and prayer resources is [here](#).

Prayers for Christian Unity

On Thursday 27 May at 10am, at The Swedish Church. An ecumenical service open to all.

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 our Assistant Curate Keiron Monday. 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.

MUSIC NOTES

Jubilate Deo omnis terra, cantate is the twelfth selection in the second edition of Hassler's *Sacri concentus*, and draws its text from Ps 98: Praise the Lord upon the harp: sing to the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving; with trumpets also and shawms. [BCP]. While living mostly in what we now call Germany, Hassler was one of the first foreigners to study with the Italian masters of the 16th Century. In addition to composing, he was an active organist, consultant to organ builders and examiner of new instruments.

COVID SAFE DIRECTIONS

as at 2 May, 2021

- PLEASE NOTE: You now MUST sign in digitally. After 23 April, you must sign in using a phone and the Victorian government QR code. If you do not have a smartphone, ask a welcomer, a fellow parishioner, or Covid-safe officer to use their phone to record your name and contact details. Sign-in sheets are no longer permissible and thus have been removed.
- Please do not come to church if you are unwell
- Use hand sanitiser, found at each of the doors
- Masks are not required to be worn indoors but it is recommended that they be worn when singing
- Please maintain physical distancing of at least 1.5m from another person unless you are sitting in a family group
- Please do not shake hands or hug other people
- The church is cleaned regularly
- Service Density Quotient remains at 170

Holy Communion remains Bread Only

Until government restrictions ease, Communion will be celebrated as usual but only administered in 'one kind,' that is, by people receiving the consecrated bread only. This is, and always has been, considered as communion in full and in no way diminished. Please note the clergy use hand sanitiser immediately before the Great Thanksgiving prayer and before administering Communion and giving blessings.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

From the Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & The Middle East; The Diocese of Ballarat (Bp Garry Weatherill, Clergy & People); University of Divinity (Peter Sherlock, Vice-Chancellor); The Anglican Parish of Pascoe Vale/Oak Park (vacant incumbency); Church of the New Guinea Martyrs Anglican Church, Croydon South - Pastoral Service (Bp Paul Barker); St Augustine's Moreland - Confirmation Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St Paul's Cathedral - Tintern Grammar (Bp Genieve Blackwell); Christ Church Melton - Pastoral Service (Bp Kate Prowd).

For all those who lead us in the Anglican Church, especially: Our Primate The Most Revd Geoffrey Smith, Our Archbishop The Most Revd Philip Freier, and our Bishop, The Right Revd Genieve Blackwell.

For those who lead us in Government: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II; Governor General David Hurley AC; Prime Minister Scott Morrison; Federal Member of Parliament for Division of Higgins, Dr. Katie Allen; Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews; Member for Malvern and Leader of the Opposition, Michael O'Brien.

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 those celebrating birthdays: David Smith on Wednesday.

For schools in our parish: Geelong Grammar School Toorak Campus, Head of Campus Rachel George; St Catherine's School, Principal Michelle Carroll; and Toorak Primary School, Principal Julie Manallack.

For the sick and all in need: Rosemary Griffith; Maggie Perkins; Rosie Creswell; Gwen; Audrey Leeton; Jean James; Lachie Sullivan; Mary; Delta; Sue; Adrian Hall; Debra Moore.

For those who have died, and the families who mourn them: Ron Lee; Maxwell Cooke.

For those in aged care and those who are housebound: Teri Lawrence; Janet Field; Beverley Joyce; Val Hurst; Marcia Larsson; Gordon Kennett; Anne Myers; Billee Edwards; Elizabeth Johnson.

Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week: Betty Alder; John Osborne; Richard Trebilcock; Henrietta Morgan; David Showers.

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY FOR FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

This commentary presents one interpretation; others may be possible. Comments are best read with the readings. Text from New Revised Standard version of the Bible (NRSV).

Acts 8:26-40

We are in the part of Acts where Luke (the author) tells of the spread of the good news to non-Jews in the Middle East. He has just told us about carrying the gospel to Samaria. Jews rejected Samaritans because they had a different principal place of worship and scriptural tradition. Now we hear of the conversion of another outcast, a eunuch. Per Deuteronomy 23:1, a eunuch could not be "admitted to the assembly of the LORD". The eunuch is from *Ethiopia*, now northern Sudan – on the extreme limits of the known world.

"An angel", an agent of God, instructs Philip to seek out the eunuch. "Gaza" is near the Egyptian border, on the Mediterranean. "Candace" (v. 27) is the queen's title; the eunuch is her *finance minister*. He is probably an admirer of Judaism. In the ancient world, people always read aloud, so Philip "heard him reading" (v. 30). The eunuch is reading part of a Servant Song, i.e. Isaiah 53:7-8 (vv. 32-33). Jesus was "silent" (v. 32) at his Passion. "Generation" (v. 33) is probably taken as referring to

Jesus' contemporaries, some of whom put him to death. Philip proclaims the "good news" (v. 35) to the eunuch by showing how the prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Christ. (Most texts of this story lack v. 37, the eunuch's confession of faith, as does the NRSV: it was probably added later.) Philip baptises him, but Luke does not mention the coming of the Holy Spirit on him: to Luke, the Spirit comes in the context of the community, the Church. Philip is *spirited away*, as was Elijah in 2 Kings 2. Philip finds himself at "Azotus" (v. 40, also known as Ashdod), a port, and entry point to the wider Roman world. He proclaims the good news throughout the Palestinian coastal "region", a Gentile area, as he travels home, to "Caesarea".

Psalm 22:23-31

This psalm, as a whole, is a prayer for deliverance from illness. The psalmist, gravely ill, feels that God has forsaken him. In the past, God has helped his people (vv. 4-5): may God help him now. His detractors laugh at him for trusting in God (vv. 6-8); his suffering is worse because they think that his illness is proof of God's displeasure. But, he says, God helped me when I was an infant, so I trust in him (v. 9). I will offer thanksgiving in assembly of the community in the Temple: v. 22 is that vow. God does hear, even the "poor" (v. 26, or *afflicted*); he provides perpetual life for the "poor" those who live in awe of him. May all people everywhere turn to God and worship him (v. 27). God is Lord of all (v. 28). All mortals, all who die ("go down to the dust", v. 29) worship him. I, the psalmist says, will live following his ways, and so will my offspring: they will be God's for ever, and will tell future generations about God's saving deeds.

1 John 4:7-21

In earlier chapters, the author has stressed two signs of fellowship with God: faith in Christ and love of fellow Christians. In vv. 1-6, he contrasts the work of the Holy Spirit with that of other supernatural powers (working through false teachers): the Holy Spirit inspires confession of who Christ really is: he has come from God, to be truly human. The author has told his Christian readers: you "are from God" (v. 4).

Our passage can be summed up in three words: "God is love" (vv. 8, 16). This love originates in God; this is the kind of love we have for each other. Being *lovers*, we are God's children and we love him (v. 7). If we don't actively love, we don't know God – because the very nature of God "is love" (v. 8). God's greatest expression of love for us, the Church, was sending "his only Son" (v. 9) into the far-from-perfect "world", thereby giving us a path to godly living ("atoning sacrifice", v. 10). God took this initiative, this action restoring us to unity with him. So we have a duty to love "one another" (v. 11). It is only through Christ that we can see the Father (v. 12a). The *flip side* is: if we love our fellows, God (love) is "in us": fraternal love completes ("is perfected", v. 12) God's.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is proof that we and God are interrelated (v. 13). Part of this is witnessing and believing who Christ is (v. 14). Being thus *in love* has a consequence: we need not fear judgement at the end of the era; fear and "punishment" (v. 18) are incompatible: God's "love casts out fear". We are called

to love both God and are fellows; it is impossible to love our fellows and not God, or God and not our fellows (vv. 20-21).

John 15:1-8

Jesus is preparing the disciples for the time when he will no longer be physically with them. He has said: "... I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples ..." (13:34-35).

In our reading, he probably has in mind the judgement on Judah in Isaiah 5:1-7: God has lovingly prepared a vineyard for the people, but the vines yielded "wild grapes", so God destroyed the vineyard. In John, God is the "vinegrower" (v. 1), Christ the vine, and members of the Church the fruit. Jesus says that he is the "true" (godly) vine, the one of whom Isaiah spoke. He is the Father's agent. Followers who are ineffective will be cut off, but those who are productive will be aided by God's power (v. 2). V. 3 may allude to Jesus' washing the disciple's feet: in 13:10, he tells the disciples that they are now clean: they have been *cleansed* by his revelation of God. Shared life with each other and with God is the basis for being fruitful (v. 5b). Leaving this community ends productivity, and leads to destruction and damnation ("thrown into the fire", v. 6). If they remain in unity with him, whatever they ask in prayer will be granted (v. 7). God's power and authority are shown forth ("glorified", v. 8) in the bearing of fruit, *doing* in Christ's name. The disciples represent Jesus in the world.

THIS SUNDAY

8am Service of Holy Communion

First Reading: Acts 8.26-40, read by Scott Kirkland

Second reading: 1 John 4.7-21, read by Ted Mouritz

Gospel Reading: John 15.1-8

Intercessor: Brenda Mouritz

Celebrant: The Revd Dr. Peter French

Preacher: The Revd Keiron Jones

10am Service of Holy Communion

First Reading: Acts 8.26-40, read by Keith Beecher

Second reading: 1 John 4.7-21, read by Judy Richardson

Gospel Reading: John 15.1-8

Intercessor: Scott Kirkland

Celebrant: The Revd Dr. Peter French

Preacher: The Revd Keiron Jones

Morning tea: Claire & Keith Beecher, Claire Morgan and Celia Langford

NEXT SUNDAY, 9th May

8am Service of Holy Communion

First Reading: Acts 10.44-48, read by Vivienne Randall

Second reading: 1 John 5.1-12, read by Lindsay Hosking

Gospel Reading: John 15.9-17

Intercessor: Scott Kirkland

Celebrant: The Revd Dr. Peter French

Preacher: The Revd Keiron Jones

10am Service of Holy Communion

First Reading: Acts 10.44-48, read by Michael Kirwan

Second reading: 1 John 5.1-12, read by Stella Jongebreur

Gospel Reading: John 15.9-17

Intercessor: James Griffith

Celebrant: The Revd Dr. Peter French

Preacher: The Revd Keiron Jones

Morning tea: Kari Gleeson & Daniel Urban, Stella Jongebreur.



**ST. JOHN'S
ANGLICAN
CHURCH**
TOORAK
EST. 1859

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