



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859



The Third Sunday after Epiphany

23rd of January, 2022

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, a faithful Christian presence for over 160 years. We are part of the Anglican Church of Australia and a member of the global Anglican Communion.

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.

If you're visiting for the first time please introduce yourself to a welcomer or member of the clergy.

Services of Worship during January Sundays at 10am



@stjohnstoorak



Cover Image

Marcantonio Raimondi *Jesus before the Temple* First half of 16th Century
Engraving, 260 x 336 mm,
British Museum, London.

INTRODUCTORY RITE

THE INVOCATION

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

THE GREETING

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

HYMN 'God has spoken by his prophets'



1. God has spoken by his prophets,
spoken his unchanging word,
each, from age to age
proclaiming
God, the one, the righteous Lord.
In the world's despair and
turmoil
one firm anchor holds us fast:
God is king, his throne eternal,
God the first, and God the last.
2. God has spoken by Christ Jesus,
Christ, the everlasting Son,
brightness of the Father's glory,
with the Father ever one;
spoken by the Word incarnate,
God from God, ere time began,
Light from Light, to earth
descending,
God, revealed as Son of Man.
3. God is speaking by his Spirit,
speaking to our hearts again,
in the age-long word expounding
God's own message, now as
then,
through the rise and fall of
nations
one sure faith yet standing fast;
God still speaks, his word
unchanging,
God the first, and God the last.

Words: George Wallace Briggs 1875–1959 *alt.*
Words © 1953, renewal 1981 by The Hymn
Society. All rights reserved.
Arrangement © L. F. Bartlett

THE COLLECT FOR PURITY *said together*

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.

CONFESSION

Christ the grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all. Let us bring our weaknesses and infirmities to him, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

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

ABSOLUTION

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Gloria

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

Lord God, hea - ven - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we

give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry. Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the

Fa - ther, 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 Fa - ther: 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 Spi - rit, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

From Parish Eucharist - Michael Dudman (1938-1994)

THE COLLECT FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you: mercifully accept our prayers, and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do nothing good without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE CHILDREN'S ADDRESS *all children are invited to the chancel step*

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE FIRST READING Nehemiah 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10 *Read by Ted Mourtiz*

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. ²Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. ³He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. ⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen', lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. ⁸So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. ⁹And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'

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

THE PSALM Psalm 19

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God:
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork;

² One day tells it to another:
and night to night communicates knowledge.

³ There is no speech or language:
nor are their voices heard;

⁴ Yet their sound has gone out through all the world:
and their words to the ends of the earth.

⁵ There he has pitched a tent for the sun:
which comes out as a bridegroom from his chamber,
and rejoices like a strong man to run his course.

⁶ Its rising is at one end of the heavens,
and its circuit to their farthest bound:
and nothing is hidden from its heat.

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul:
the command of the Lord is true,
and makes wise the simple.

⁸ The precepts of the Lord are right,
and rejoice the heart:
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
and gives light to the eyes.

⁹ The fear of the Lord is clean, and endures for ever:
the judgements of the Lord are unchanging,
and righteous every one.

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold:
sweeter also than honey,
than the honey that drips from the comb.

¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant taught:
and in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² Who can know their own unwitting sins?:
O cleanse me from my secret faults.

¹³ Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins,
lest they get the mastery over me:
so I shall be clean, and innocent of great offence.

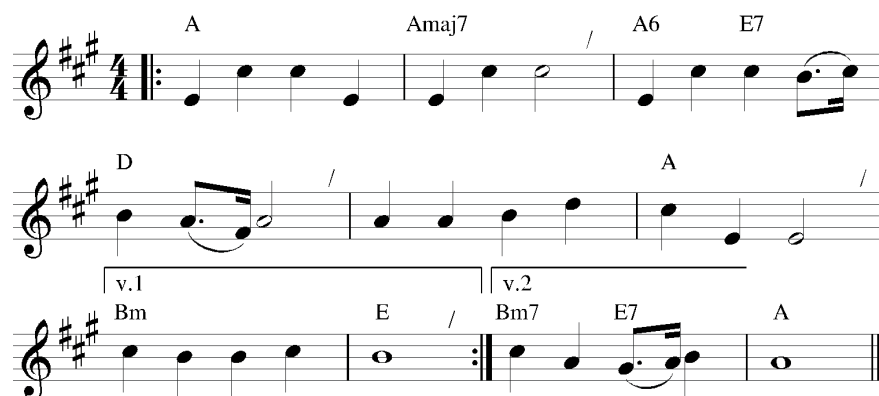
¹⁴ May the words of my mouth and the meditation
of my heart be acceptable in your sight:
O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

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

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' ²²On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, ²⁵that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. ²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

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

HYMN 'O Lord Jesus Marrkapmirr'



1. O Lord Jesus Marrkapmirr*,
all the power belongs to you.
Hold me by this power, O Lord,
you alone are king.

2. Now we praise you for your
Word,
living, true and full of light.
Yours the hands that rest on me:
hold me for all time.

Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land versified by D'Arcy Wood 1936-
*'Marrkapmirr' is a term of endearment, and means in this context 'altogether lovely, and worthy
of affection'. Words and music © Australian Hymn Book Co.

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

THE GOSPEL Luke 4.14-21

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.

¹⁴Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. ¹⁶When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ¹⁸'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' ²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat

down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

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

THE SERMON The Vicar, The Revd Dr. Peter French

ANTHEM *Bereite dich, Zion, mit zärtlichen Trieben* J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

sung by Alicia Groves, *mezzo soprano*

Text: 'Prepare thyself Zion with tender affection, the purest, the fairest this day to receive.'

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 *kneeling led by Brenda Mouritz*

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

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, the paypoint at the rear of the church, or by prior arrangement with the parish office*

HYMN 'Lord of earth and all creation'

1 Lord of earth and all cre - a - tion, let your
love pos - sess our land: wealth, and free - dom,
far ho - ri - zons, moun - tain, for - est, shi - ning sand: may we
share, in faith and friend - ship, gifts un-meas-ured from your hand.

1. Lord of earth and all creation,
let your love possess our land:
wealth, and freedom, far
horizons,
mountain, forest, shining sand:
may we share, in faith and
friendship,
gifts unmeasured from your
hand.
2. People of the ancient Dreamtime,
they who found this country
first,
ask with those, the later comers,
will our dream be blessed or
cursed?
Grant us, Lord, new birth, new

living,
hope for which our children
thirst.

3. Lord, life-giving healing Spirit,
on our hurts your mercy shower;
lead us by your inward dwelling,
guiding, guarding, every hour.
Bless and keep our land
Australia:
in your will her peace and power.

Michael Rayner Thwaites 1915–
and Honor Mary Thwaites 1914–93
Words © M. R. Thwaites
Music © R. Boughen

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 stand

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

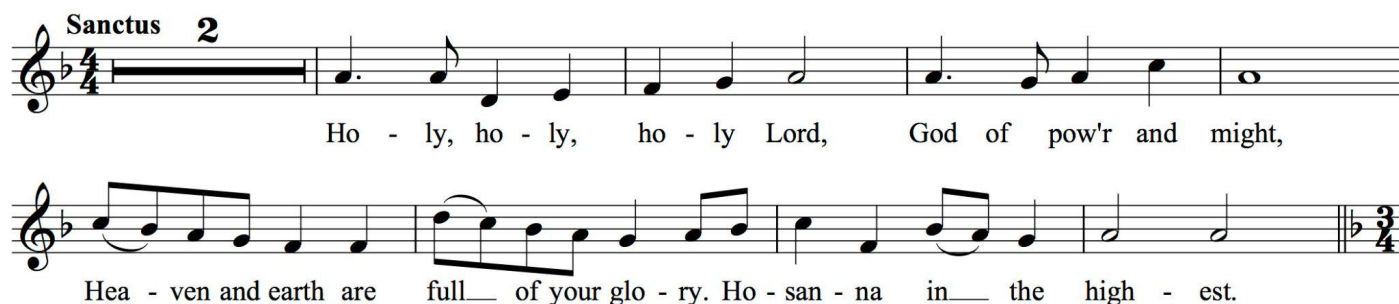
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

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

The celebrant continues, concluding with

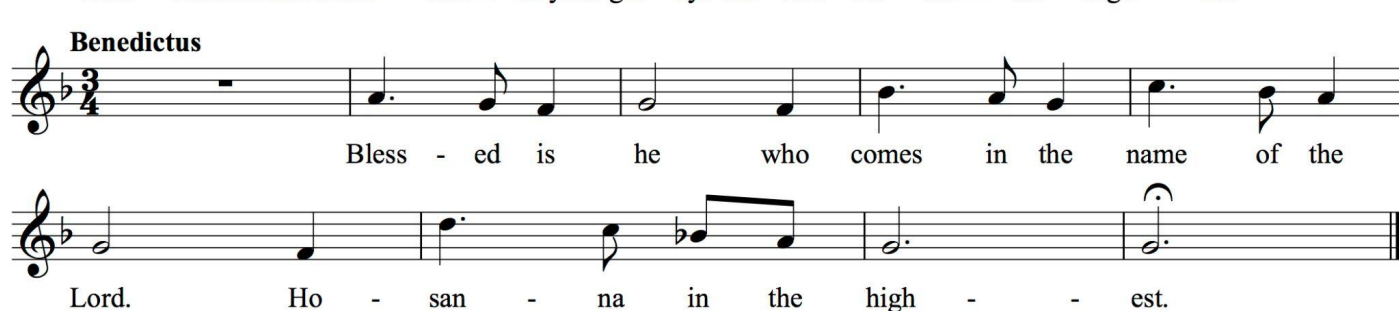
Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

Sanctus 2



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
Hea - ven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Benedictus



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

From Parish Eucharist - Michael Dudman (1938-1994)

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer continues until the following

...Let us proclaim the mystery of faith

Acclamation



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. or ... now and for ever.

Acclamation

Bless - ing and hon - our and glo - ry and power are yours for
ev - er and ev - er. A men.

From Parish Eucharist - Michael Dudman (1938-1994)

THE LORD'S PRAYER *Please pray the Lord's Prayer of your custom, in your own language, or using the following translation*

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 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

Agnus Dei

Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer - cy on us. Je - sus, bear - er of our
sins, have mer - cy on us. Je - sus, re - deem - er of the world, grant us your peace.

From Parish Eucharist - Michael Dudman (1938-1994)

INVITATION TO COMMUNION *kneeling or standing*

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

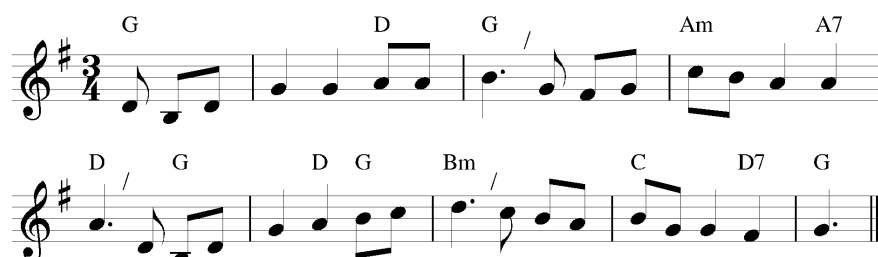
*All baptised Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion. If you would prefer a blessing, please come forward and indicate this by keeping your arms behind your back.
Please maintain social distancing during Holy Communion.*

COMMUNION ANTHEM *Jesu, joy of man's desiring* [Cantata 147] J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER *which ends 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 'Now let us from this table rise'



1. Now let us from this table rise
renewed in body, mind and soul;
with Christ we die and live
again,
his selfless love has made us
whole.

2. With minds alert, upheld by
grace,
to spread the Word in speech and
deed,
we follow in the steps of Christ,
at one with all in hope and need.

3. To fill each human house with
love,

it is the sacrament of care;
the work that Christ began to do
we humbly pledge ourselves to
share.

4. Then give us grace, Companion*
God,
to choose again the pilgrim way,
and help us to accept with joy
the challenge of tomorrow's day.

* 'Companion', from Latin *cum* = 'together with', *panis* = 'bread', means literally 'someone who breaks bread with you'.
Frederik Herman Kaan 1929-

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her*, BWV 769 [Var. 5] J. S. Bach

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

PARISH NOTICES

Summer Services during Summer, 10 am ONLY

From 26 December until 30 January, there will be only ONE service on Sunday mornings. This is a great opportunity for both our Sunday congregations to join together in prayer and worship. On Sunday, February 6, 8am and 10am Services will recommence.

Wednesday Eucharist Returns, February 2, at 7pm

Our regular celebration of the eucharist, followed by supper in the vestry, will return on February 2. This is a lovely, quiet service in the peaceful Angel Chapel, to which everyone is always welcome.

Ordination of Deacons, February 5, 2022, at 10.30am

Everyone is invited to celebrate the Ordination of new Deacons in the Church of God, at the ordination service at St. Paul's Cathedral at 10.30am. Our Vicar Peter will be attending and all are welcome to come along.

Welcome to our New Assistant Curate, February 6

God willing and the church in agreement, Lydia Thangadurai will be ordained a Deacon on February 5 and will join us as Assistant Curate on Sunday, February 6. Please come and welcome Lydia to St. John's!

The Church is Open Daily

The Church is open each day from 9am-5pm. Please follow Covid-19 instructions, upon arrival sign in on the Q.R code, hand sanitiser is also available. All welcome.

The Melbourne Anglican (TMA)

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

Be part of our Sunday Services

All our ministries are supported by volunteers. The Roster for January and February is now available. If you are able to assist with duties (fill the gaps) please contact the parish office on 0477 091 492 or at enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org

Prayer apps to help us pray

Along with prayer books and the Bible, a number of apps are available, which can help us maintain an active and engaged prayer life. Here are a few for you to consider: [epray](#) [Daily Prayer app and podcast](#) [Pray as you go](#)

Clergy Days Off

Our clergy have one regular day off per week. Our Vicar Peter has Friday. 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.

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.

Support St. John's

Your support of St. John's is greatly appreciated. The church often gets requests from members and friends about how best to support the church financially. With this in mind, donations can always be made directly to: St. John's Anglican Church General Account, Westpac, 509 Toorak Road, Toorak, Victoria, 3142, Australia. Account Name is St. John's Anglican Church. BSB is 033 086. Account No. is 871931. For international transfers please include SWIFT code WPACAU2S.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST. JOHN'S?

For the latest details go to [Community & Events - St. John's Anglican Church, Toorak](#)

Sundays 26 December, 2021 - 30 January, 2022 Summer Sundays! One Service at 10am.

Sunday 6 February Return to 8 and 10am Services, with Welcome to new Asst. Curate, Lydia Thungadurai

FOOD for FRIENDS in COVID TIMES

Again, we are not able to do our usual Supermarket collections.

So, as we did last year with remarkable success, we again are asking for money donations.

This money is spent during the year on food requirements for each nominated agency. This proved to be the best as the agencies were receiving increasing demands through the year as the Covid fallout showed its effect.

So, please consider donating this way...to

The Toorak Ecumenical Fund CBA Toorak

bsb:063177 acc: 10026147. Please mark it F for F.

No receipts will be issued. This money will be spent on food throughout 2022.

Thank you for your support



Food delivery to Christ Church Community Centre St Kilda

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

From the Anglican Cycle of Prayer: Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (Abp Andrew Chan, Primate); Ministry with the Torres Strait Islander people of Australia (Torres Strait Islander Clergy & People); Hume Anglican Grammar School (Bill Sweeney, Principal; Peter Waterhouse, Chaplain); St John's Blackburn (Andrew Price, Mark Chew); St Thomas' Moonee Ponds – Pastoral Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell).

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.

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: Cam Johnston on Saturday.

For those who have died recently, and the families who mourn them: Peter Middleditch

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: Rosie Creswell; Gwen; Jean James; Lachie Sullivan; Mary; Sue; Adrian Hall; Samantha; Anthea; Bp. Andrew St. John; Matthew; Gabriella; Bianca.

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

Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week: Felicity Holding; Jonathan Sharrock; Julia Jones; Penny Stott; Caroline Searby; Bp Ian George.

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

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)

Nehemiah 8:1-3,5-6,8-10

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah form one story. Ezra begins with Cyrus of Persia's decree, in 538 BC, permitting the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple, a venture in which they are to be materially aided. Cyrus orders that the sacred vessels taken from the Temple in 587 be returned. More than 42,000 leave Babylon for Judah. The altar is erected on the site of the destroyed Temple; the priests again offer burnt offerings. Construction of the new Temple begins: a more modest structure than Solomon's.

But subversion arises among local people; they succeed in convincing the Persian king that the Jews plan a rebellion against his rule, so he halts rebuilding. Eventually construction is allowed to continue. Ezra, the scribe and priest, enters the picture in Ezra 7. Commissioned by King Artaxerxes, he travels to Jerusalem with a wave of exiles; he is "to study the law of the LORD ... and to teach the statutes and ordinances in Israel" (Ezra 7:10), and to prepare the Temple for worship. He is to appoint "magistrates and judges" (Ezra 7:25). Many scholars say that Nehemiah 8 (and 7:73b) follow here (although Nehemiah 6:15-7:4 tell of the building of the walls of the city, including the "Water Gate", Nehemiah 8:1). The people who have come from Babylon are now "settled in their towns" (Nehemiah 7:73b).

The "book of the law of Moses" (v. 1) is most likely an earlier version of the biblical Leviticus: it is quoted in vv. 14-15. Note the stress on "understanding" (vv. 2, 3, 7). V. 4 says that Ezra stood on a "wooden platform" or *tower*. The people agree to obey the law ("Amen", v. 6). Ezra reads in Hebrew (v. 8); the Levites (priestly assistants) translate into Aramaic (the common language) and "gave the sense", interpret it in the current context. Nehemiah is not listed elsewhere as a "governor" (v. 9): here this is probably a prestige title. Ezra declares the day "holy", a *sabbath*. It seems that what Ezra reads makes the people sad, but he commands that they celebrate a feast: vv. 14-15 tell us that this is the Festival of Booths (Tabernacles, Sukkoth).

Psalms 19

To the Israelites, the "firmament" was a giant pudding bowl over the earth, beyond which was a hierarchy of "heavens". God's glory is told "day" (v. 2) and "night", yet silently (v. 3a), to all people. He has created the sun as his agent (v. 5); it rises early in the morning, as does the "bridegroom" from his night's rest, traverses from one edge of the heavens to the other, making God's presence known with its "heat" (v. 6). Vv. 7-9 present the wonders of the law, as an expression of God's will for Israel. Here we find synonyms for the Law, characteristics of it, and its benefits for humankind, e.g. it *makes* "wise the simple", those immature in understanding and judgement. It warns the psalmist ("servant", v. 11). If he accidentally break it ("hidden faults", v. 12), may God forgive him. May God protect him from those who intentionally go against God's ways ("the insolent", v. 13), lest he be influenced into

sinning intentionally (“great transgression”). May his words and his thoughts be acceptable to God, who restores him to godliness (v. 14).

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Paul has told the Christians at Corinth that spiritual gifts come through the Holy Spirit and are given by him, as he chooses, for the benefit of the whole community. Now he turns to the nature of the Church – using the analogy of the human body. Whatever our ethnic or social origins, “we were all baptised into one body” (v. 13), into the risen glorified body of Christ, and empowered by the same Holy Spirit acting in the Church. V. 14 is key: the body needs various members; so too the Church needs various spiritual gifts, each making its own contribution. In vv. 15-20, Paul makes the point that all members contribute in various ways to the welfare of the whole. Diversity is rooted in, and contributes to, unity. In vv. 21-25, he says that each member needs every other member, whether he or she be strong or weak (v. 22). Vv. 23-25 say that the instinct of modesty reveals part of God’s plan, e.g. by respecting our “less respectable members”, we make them equally respectable. This applies in the community as it does in the body. In this way, the community is peaceable, without “dissension”; each cares for others. When one suffers the whole community does (v. 26).

In vv. 27-28, Paul applies these principles: “you”, Corinthian Christians, are both one body and individually its members. Three groups with God-given and -appointed spiritual gifts are especially important: (1) “apostles” chosen to continue spreading the good news; (2) “prophets”, those with new insights into God’s plan; and (3) those who teach the faith. He then lists some other gifts: some help the poor and needy; others are leaders, managers, in church affairs. The questions in vv. 29-30 must surely be answered *no*. Perhaps v. 31a suggests that all seek to grow in the use of the gifts, great or small, given to them.

Luke 4:14-21

Jesus has been tempted by the devil in the wilderness (vv. 1-13) to misuse his power for his personal benefit, for worldly domination, and for protection from God’s plan fulfilled on the cross. Now he returns to Galilee. Jesus customarily attends synagogue services to worship and present his message; it is there that Luke tells us who Jesus is: he stands in continuity with God’s promises of old. Jesus is a great teacher; he has great authority in telling people about God and his plan. Jesus begins with one part of the scroll (Isaiah 61), then *rewinds* to another: vv. 18- 19 emphasize his mission to those who are “poor” in any way, be it financially, in spirit, in health. In “the year of the Lord’s favour”, the jubilee year, debts were forgiven and slaves were set free. Jesus applies these verses to himself: he performs the works of the Messiah than expected. He then sits to interpret the readings: he says that God’s plan is now being completed (“fulfilled”, v. 21).

THIS SUNDAY

10am Service

First Reading: Nehemiah 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10, read by Ted Mouritz

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 12.12-31, read by Brenda Mouritz

Gospel Reading: Luke 4.14-21

Intercessor: Brenda Mouritz

Preacher: The Revd Dr. Peter French

Celebrant: The Revd Dr. Peter French

NEXT SUNDAY, 30th January

10am Service

First Reading: Jeremiah 1.4-10, read by Jenny Smith

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 13.1-13, read by Barbara Brown

Gospel Reading: Luke 4.21-30

Intercessor: Jenny Smith

Preacher: The Revd Dr. Peter French

Celebrant: The Revd Dr. Peter French



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

Vicar The Reverend Dr Peter French
vicar@saintjohnstoorak.org

Wardens Mrs Amanda Bagot,
Mrs Stella Jongebreur,
Mr Anthony Mannering

Parish Council

Mr Dougal Colhoun, Mr Craig Cooper,
Mrs Vivienne Brown, Ms Diana Dunlop,
Dr Jessica Hall, Mr Michael Kirwan,
Mr Harrison Young

Director of Music/Organist
Mr Christopher Cook
acccook2001@yahoo.com.au

**Parish Administrator/Child Safe
Compliance** Mrs Sally Robertson
enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org

Child Safe Officer Mrs Vivienne Brown
Sunday School Teachers Mr Clive Wright,
Ms Shierly & Miss Jo Patterson

Archivist Professor Geoff Quail OAM
geoffrey.quail@monash.edu