



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH  
TOORAK  
EST. 1859



# The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

29th of January, 2023

# 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.

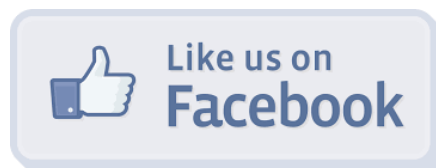
This church actively follows Jesus' command to love God, love one's neighbour and to care for all people. Our clergy and parishioners regularly visit the sick, home-bound, and the dying. We care for the poor and needy through service and charitable giving, through our Opportunity Shop run in partnership 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, only



@stjohnstoorak



### Cover Image

Carl Heinrich Bloch (1834-1895),  
*The Sermon on the Mount*, 1877  
Oil on copper, 104 x 92 cm  
Frederiksborg Slot, Hillerød.

## INTRODUCTORY RITE

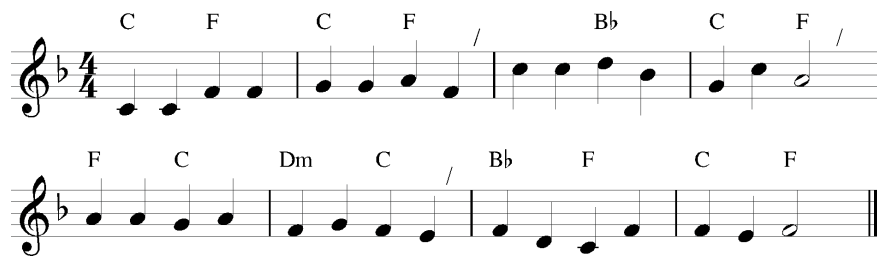
### THE INVOCATION

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 'In the Cross of Christ'



1. 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.
2. Through the cross, Christ's love  
empowers us  
worldliness and self deny;  
by his Spirit it inspires us  
him, through love, to glorify.
3. When the woes of life o'ertake  
us,  
hopes deceive and fears annoy,  
never shall the cross forsake us,  
from it shines our peace and joy.
4. Bane and blessing, pain and  
pleasure, by the cross are  
sanctified;  
peace is there that knows no  
measure,  
joys that through all time abide.
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-

### 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 Son of God has been revealed as a light to the nations. Let us bring our darkness to his light, 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 *Here absolution is pronounced by the celebrant*

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 - migh - ty 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 FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Righteous God, you confound the world's wisdom by giving your blessing to the lowly and pure in heart: give us such a hunger and thirst for justice and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the promise of your kingdom, which has been

revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE FIRST READING Micah 6.1-8 *Read by Molly Bull*

<sup>1</sup>Hear what the Lord says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. <sup>2</sup>Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel. <sup>3</sup>O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! <sup>4</sup>For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of slavery; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. <sup>5</sup>O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord. <sup>6</sup>With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old?

<sup>7</sup>Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? <sup>8</sup>He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

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

THE PSALM Psalm 15.1-7 *said together*

- <sup>1</sup> Lord, who may abide in your tabernacle:  
or who may dwell upon your holy hill?
- <sup>2</sup> Whoever leads an uncorrupt life  
and does the thing which is right:  
who speaks the truth from the heart,  
and has not slandered with the tongue;
- <sup>3</sup> Who has done no evil to a friend:  
nor vented abuse against a neighbour;
- <sup>4</sup> In whose eyes the worthless have no honour:  
but who makes much of those that fear the Lord;
- <sup>5</sup> Whoever has sworn to a neighbour:  
and will not go back on that oath;
- <sup>6</sup> Who has not put money to usury:

nor taken a bribe against the innocent.

<sup>7</sup> Whoever does these things:

shall never be overthrown.

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.

THE SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1.18-31 *Read by James Griffith*

<sup>18</sup>For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

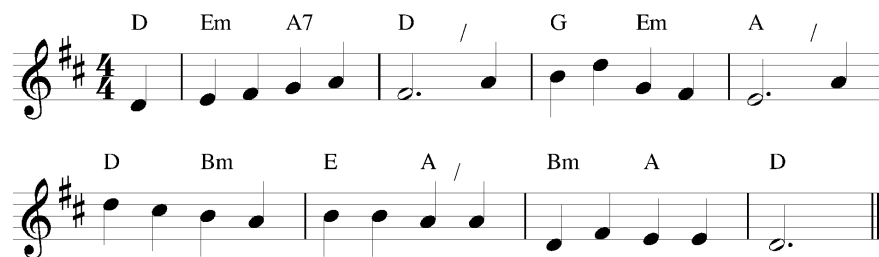
<sup>19</sup>For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart. <sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

<sup>26</sup>Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no one might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup>in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'

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



## HYMN 'Blest are the pure in heart'



1. Blest are the pure in heart,  
for they shall see our God;  
the secret of the Lord is theirs,  
their soul is Christ's abode.
2. The Lord who left the heavens  
our life and peace to bring,  
to dwell with us in lowliness,  
our pattern and our King:
3. still to the lowly soul  
he will himself impart,  
and for his cradle and his throne  
chooses the pure in heart.
4. Lord, we your presence seek;  
this blessing now renew:  
give us a pure and lowly heart,  
a temple fit for you.

John Keble 1792–1866 (vv. 1, 3) and others

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

## THE GOSPEL Matthew 5.1-12

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

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

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: <sup>3</sup>Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup>Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. <sup>5</sup>Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup>Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. <sup>7</sup>Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. <sup>8</sup>Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. <sup>9</sup>Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. <sup>10</sup>Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup>Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward

is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

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

THE SERMON The Assistant Curate, The Revd Lydia Thangadurai

THE ANTHEM *Selig sind die da Leid tragen Tröstungen, Op 47*

Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877-1933)

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 Jenny Smith*

*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 *given by The Vicar*

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*

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 at the paypoint at the rear of the church*

## HYMN 'Love divine all loves excelling'

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of six staves of music. The chords indicated above the notes are: F, Bb, F, C, Dm, Bb, C, G7, C, F, Bb, F, C, Dm, Bb, C7, F, Dm, Bb, F, Am, G7, C, Bb, F, Am, C, Dm, Gm, C7, F.

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heaven, to earth come  
down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown:  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
pure unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter every trembling heart.
2. Come, almighty to deliver,  
let us all thy life receive;  
suddenly return, and never,  
never more thy temples leave:  
thee we would be always  
blessing,  
serve thee as thy hosts above,

pray, and praise thee, without  
ceasing,  
glory in thy perfect love.

3. Finish then thy new creation,  
pure and spotless let us be,  
let us see thy great salvation,  
perfectly restored in thee:  
changed from glory into glory,  
till in heaven we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before  
thee,  
lost in wonder, love and praise.

Charles Wesley 1707-88 *alt.*  
Arrangement © Australian Hymn Book Co.

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**

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 singing:

**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

**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 *\*Please note update below\**

*All baptised Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Communion is available as consecrated bread, which is given to each person, and wine which may be drunk from the chalice. A separate chalice for intinction (dipped) is also provided. If you would prefer a blessing, please come forward and indicate this by keeping your arms behind your back.*

THE ANTHEM *Confitebor tibi, Domine, in toto corde meo*

Josef Rheinberger (1839 - 1901)

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 'Worship, honour, glory, blessing'

*Gtr. Capo 1*

Chords: Eb(D), Bb7(A7), Eb(D), Ab(G), Fm(Em), F7(E7), Bb(A), Eb(D), Bb7(A7), Eb(D), Ab(G), Fm(Em), F7(E7), Bb(A), Bb7(A7), Gm(F#m), Cm(Bm), F7(E7), Bb(A), Eb(D), Ab(G), Bb(A), Eb(D), Bb(A), Eb(D), Fm(Em), Eb(D), Bb7(A7), Eb(D)

Worship, honour, glory, blessing,  
Lord we offer to your name;  
young and old, their praise expressing,  
join your goodness to proclaim.  
As the saints in heaven adore you,  
we would bow before your throne;  
as your angels serve before you,  
so on earth your will be done.

Edward Osler 1798–1863

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE *Ernste Feier, Op 174*

Josef Rheinberger

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).

## **NOTICES**

### **Sunday 8am & 10am and Wednesday 7pm Services recommence February 5**

Please note, there will be only the 10am Sunday service today.

### **New Communion Instructions**

Please note that from today onwards the manner in which we serve Holy Communion will include a chalice from which to drink or a separate chalice into which the bread may be intincted (dipped). This is a return to the longstanding practice of St. John's. Naturally if you wish to simply receive the bread only that is fine. If you wish for a blessing only that is fine too.

### **Parish Office Hours Temporarily Changed**

Please note that for the period January 23 to February 6, the Parish Office will be open from 10am to 3pm on Mondays to Thursdays.

### **Childrens' Ministry Update**

Ministry with children is an important part of our church life, as is the case with any age specific ministry, such as that we serve in aged care facilities. During 2022 'The Children's Address' and the Sunday School program at the 10am Sunday service resumed, after the Covid19 lockdowns. The church is grateful to those who faithfully serve the children in the Sunday School, Jane Anderson, Shierly Paterson, Jo Paterson and Clive Wright. This ministry continues to attract only a small but faithful group of attendees. To expand this ministry and hopefully attract more children to the church, Sunday School and The Children's Address will be replaced by different opportunities for children to participate in our services of worship and thus learn more about Christianity. For our younger children (aged up to 5) there will be new resources for them at the rear of the church which they can interact with a parent. For children aged 6 and above, and our teenagers, there will be opportunities to be trained and serve as altar servers, gospel book bearers, and crucifers. For our teenagers there will also be an opportunity to be trained as readers. More information about this ministry will be shared in the coming month.

*The Vicar*

### **Our Vicar Peter on Long Service Leave**

From February 5, 2023 until April 15, 2023, our Vicar Peter will be away on Long Service Leave. This week on February 2, Peter will celebrate 24 years since his ordination as a deacon and the start of his service to the Anglican Church. For 14 years he has not taken such leave and has therefore accrued 14 weeks of leave. With our approval and that of our Bishop, Peter will be away for 8 weeks of long service

leave, alongwith 2 weeks of his annual leave, for time away from the parish for rest and rejuvenation. He will be uncontactable during this period and unavailable for any kind of parish duties. Our Assistant Priest, The Revd Dr Wendy Crouch, will be locum priest during this time, meaning that she shall be running the church in his absence. *Amanda Bagot and Anthony Mannering, Churchwardens*

### **An Introduction to Matthew's Gospel, Sunday 19 February, 11.30am**

All are warmly invited to a short seminar on The Gospel of Matthew, led by The Rev'd Dr Wendy Crouch following the 10am service and morning tea on Sunday February 19. Commencing at 11.30, and concluding by 12.30, this brief presentation will focus on themes in Matthew that will help us to understand the gospel as not just a story 'back then' but about our story now, and about a future for the church and the world. We are in 'Year A' of our three-year Sunday reading cycle, so the majority of our Sunday gospel readings throughout this year will be from Matthew's gospel. So come and hear about ways in which we can engage with this dramatic narrative about Jesus that is shot through with faith's vision.

### **Covid Safety Measures and Zoom Link**

It is recommended that we continue to wear masks, to physically distance and to avoid physical contact with each other. Our regular 10am Sunday service is streamed via Zoom.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81091944551?pwd=VGp0QlZLMdhhcXdxYXptUDFES2J5dz09> Meeting ID: 810 9194 4551 Passcode: 789184

### **Help those who are hungry through our 'Food for Friends' Program**

Money raised through direct donations will be spent during the year on food supplies for a variety of agencies including the Richmond Churches Food Group, The Sunday Suppers Program at St. Silas, Albert Park, and The Little St. Kilda Mission, all providing food and meals to those who need them most. So, please consider donating to The Toorak Ecumenical Fund - CBA Toorak BSB 063177 A/C 10026147. Please mark it 'F for F.' (No receipts will be issued.) Please see the flyer in the church foyer for further information. Thank you for your support!

### **Contribute to Worship Services**

All our ministries at St John's are supported by our volunteers. The rosters for January and February are [here](#). Please contact the office to help out.

### **The Melbourne Anglican (TMA)**

The link to the latest edition of TMA is [here](#). The link to the January Prayer Diary is [here](#).

### **Prayer Requests**

Prayer requests can be sent to [prayers@saintjohnstoorak.org](mailto: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 Assistant Curate Lydia has Monday and Vicar Peter has Friday. Wendy 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.

## **MUSIC COMMENTARY**

It's been a great joy to welcome soloists over the month of January, and I'd like to express my thanks to Jenny Stokes, Adamm Ferrier and Paola Bastreri-Grey for agreeing to present such a relevant and individual vocal contribution to the music program, over this period. I trust this has aided your personal devotions.

From this last week we recommence a more complete SATB group: not at all times, but as personnel allow.

*Selig sind die da Leid tragen Tröstungen, Op 47 Sigfrid Karg-Elert*

The text of the Beatitudes evokes a wide range of human conditions and emotions. This very private and impassioned setting by the German Karg-Elert [which may be inspired by the same-named movement from the Brahms' Requiem], is drawn from his opus 47 pieces for harmonium. I suspect this opus originated as private devotional material, however this opus is also sung as a solo, and today we hear it in the form of my SATB arrangement.

## **ART COMMENTARY**

Bloch's principal work is the series of 23 paintings with scenes from the New Testament that the brewer J.C. Jacobsen (1811-1887) of Carlsberg commissioned in 1865 as decorations for King Christian IV's (1577-1648) prayer seat in Frederiksborg Chapel. This particular painting has become virtually synonymous with the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5: 1-12, and now is the subject of countless memes.

## FOR YOUR PRAYERS

**From the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:** St John's Camberwell (John Baldock, Helen Creed); The Anglican Church of Australia (Primate Abp Geoffrey Smith, General Secretary Anne Hywood, the General Synod & the Standing Committee); Archdeaconry of Maroondah (Bruce Bickerdike); St Mark's Dromana – Pastoral Visit (Bp Paul Barker); The Church of Pakistan (United);

**For those who lead us in Government:** His Majesty King Charles III; Governor General David Hurley AC; Prime Minister Anthony Albanese; Federal Member of Parliament for Division of Higgins, Dr. Michelle Ananda-Rajah; 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:** Thomas Johnston today.

**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:** Gwen; Bruce Fordham; Sam Shepherd; Margaret Jones; Nichole Garnaut; Joanna; and, Sam.

**For those in aged care and those who are housebound:** Rosie Creswell; Beverley Joyce; Val Hurst; Anne Myers; Elizabeth Johnson; and, Claire Beecher.

**Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week:** Julia Jones (2020); Estelle Stott (2021); Brian Blythe (2022); Bp Ian George (2019).

### **Support St. John's**

Your support of St. John's is greatly appreciated. Donations can 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.

## **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).*

### **Micah 6.1-8**

Micah was roughly contemporary with Isaiah. He was a fearless champion of the oppressed and under-privileged, who attacked the socio-economic injustice of his day: wealthy capitalists oppressed peasant landowners. The scene for today's reading is a lawcourt ("plead your case"). Israel is on trial for contravening the Sinai covenant; the witnesses are the whole cosmos: the "mountains ... hills" and "foundations of the earth" (v. 2). (The earth was thought to stand on pillars.) God has a *bone to pick* ("controversy", lawsuit) with Israel ("his people") for forgetting that he has saved her in the past and for not walking in his ways. He speaks in vv. 3-5: what more could I have done? I cared for you and protected you. I delivered you from slavery in "Egypt" (v. 4); I gave you great leaders. Recall how when, during the Exodus, after you defeated the Amorites, I stymied Balak's (v. 5) devious scheme: he hired the prophet "Balaam" to curse you, but he blessed Israel! I gave you safe passage across the Jordan. ("Shittim" was Israel's last camping place before crossing and "Gilgal" the first on the west bank of the river.) I saved then, and I will do so again. In v. 6, Israel, the defendant, pleads her case: God, what can we do to make amends for our infidelity? Will you be pleased with sacrifices, especially "burnt offerings" (which were total, because nothing was left for consumption by the priests) of "calves" (which were especially valuable)? Would repeated offerings of rams and of oil (used in the liturgy for lamps, sacred anointings and purification) satisfy you? Should we sacrifice our eldest sons (as Canaanites do)? Perhaps Micah speaks in v. 8: no, God requires internal conversion and a proper spiritual attitude. He has told you what he expects: to be godly, ("to do justice ... to love kindness"), to hold him in proper respect and to walk in his ways.

### **Psalms 15:1-7**

This psalm was likely used in a liturgy of admission to the Temple. An inquirer or pilgrim asks God: who may come to Mount Zion ("hill") to worship in the Temple ("your tent")? Who is acceptable to you? Vv. 2-5a are the answer spoken by an officiant: those who are ethical ("walk blamelessly") in their words and deeds; do not wrong other Israelites ("friends ... neighbours", v. 3) by what they say and do; despise evil-doers and honour those who hold God in awe (v. 4); and charge no "interest" (v. 5) on loans to the needy and accept no bribes. They will never be hindered by obstacles ("moved") in their lives.

### **1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

The "message" of Christ crucified, risen and alive is God's power to us, but to those who hear the good news and reject "the cross" it is nonsense. This, Paul says, God prophesied through Isaiah (v. 19). He has decried divisions in the church at Corinth; he now recognizes two groups of humans: the "wise" (v. 19) and "those who believe" (v. 21). Are, he asks rhetorically, the Jewish "scribe" (v. 20) and the

rationalist (“debater”) – both possessors of worldly wisdom – truly wise? Through the coming of Christ, God has shown worldly wisdom to be folly, for (v. 21) one can’t “know God through wisdom”, i.e. in a philosophical way. *Knowing God* is experiential. In fact, God chose to save believers through the apparent folly of what Paul preaches (“our proclamation”). To “demand signs” (miracles, v. 22) is to refuse to trust in God; “Jews” refused Christ due to their particular expectations in a messiah. To “desire wisdom” is to construct a religion whose demands one is prepared to accept. (The “Greeks” in v. 22 are unbelieving *non-Jews*.) God’s ways are not human ways (v. 25). Consider yourselves, Christians at Corinth (v. 26): few of you are what *the world* would have chosen: few are *worldly wise*, “powerful” or aristocratic. But God’s way is to choose those of apparently little account (“foolish”, “weak”, v. 27) to show the apparently important that they are wrong, to “shame” them. This is God’s paradoxical way (v. 28); he does away with boasting. Christ’s living in human form started a new way of being human (v. 30): we are set apart for his purposes (“sanctification”) and no longer controlled by evil (“redemption”) so that we become one with God (“righteousness”) – so that we can (as God commanded through Jeremiah) “boast in the Lord” (v. 31). Christ is true wisdom.

### **Matthew 5:1-12**

Jesus ascends a mountain in Galilee where he speaks to his “disciples”, his followers, in the Sermon on the Mount – but the “crowds” hear too: see 7:28, the end of the Sermon. He speaks of the new era he has come to initiate. Vv. 3-12 are known as the Beatitudes, from the Latin for *blessed*. To be “blessed” is to be happy. All the qualities are expected of the faithful, for the consequence is the same: they will enjoy God’s end-time rule. In fact, the Kingdom has already begun, but is not yet completed. They will attain (and are attaining) eternal life. The “poor in spirit” (v. 3) are probably detached from wealth and dependent on God alone. Those who “mourn” (v. 4) the reign of evil forces on earth will be “comforted” and strengthened in the Kingdom. The “meek” (v. 5), people who do not press for personal advantage, will share in God’s rule. Those who “hunger” (v. 6, who ardently pursue God’s will and purpose for his people), and do so single-mindedly and sincerely, “the pure in heart” (v. 8), will come to know God intimately (“see God”). The “merciful” (v. 7) are those who pardon and love others (especially the poor). The “peacemakers” (v. 9), those who seek *shalom*, the total state of well-being God provides through Christ, “will be called children of God”, for they share in God’s work. Finally vv. 10-12: those spreading the good news, striving to reconcile the world to God, will be persecuted because of the message they carry (as were Old Testament “prophets”). They too should “rejoice and be glad” for God will reward them. Jesus tells his audience that the values for admission to the Kingdom are the reverse of those valued by materialists.



## This Week

SUNDAY, 29 January, 2023

### The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

10am Sung Eucharist

MONDAY, 30 January, 2023

5pm Wardens Meeting

TUESDAY 31 January, 2023

7pm Parish Council Meeting

FRIDAY, 3 February, 2023

4pm The Wedding of Jess Myer and Jack North

SATURDAY 4 February, 2023

1pm The Wedding of Emilia Stojanovic and  
Nicholas Vangeli

## Next Sunday, 5 February Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

### 8am Said Eucharist

First Reading: Isaiah 58.1-9a , Ted Mouritz

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2.1-13, Brenda  
Mouritz

Gospel Reading: Matthew 5.13-20

Intercessor: Volunteer required

Preacher: The Revd Dr Wendy Crouch

Celebrant: The Revd Lydia Thangadurai

### 10am Sung Eucharist

First Reading: Isaiah 58.1-9a, Anthony Mannering

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1.18-31, Volunteer  
required

Gospel Reading: Matthew 5.13-20

Intercessor: Keith Beecher

Preacher: The Revd Dr Wendy Crouch

Celebrant: The Revd Lydia Thangadurai

Morning Tea: TBC



ST. JOHN'S  
ANGLICAN  
CHURCH  
TOORAK  
EST. 1859

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