



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859



The First Sunday of Advent

3 December, 2023

8am

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. We are part of the Anglican Church of Australia and a member of the global Anglican Communion, comprised of 80 million people.

Worship

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

Mission

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.

Visitors

If you're visiting for the first time please introduce yourself to a welcomer or member of the clergy, and fill out the blue 'Welcome' card found at the end of every pew so we can stay in touch with you.

The Church

The church is decorated in purple for Advent, and shall thus remain so until Christmas. Flowers are removed and bare Christmas trees and wreaths decorate the church. They remain bare until Christmas Eve when, with the help of volunteers, we dress them for the grand celebrations of Christmas.

Cover Image

Sebastiano Ricci, *The Resurrection*,
Oil on Canvas, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge we meet on the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the East Kulin Nations and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.



@stjohnstoorak



Like us on
Facebook

As you enter the church, please ensure your phone is switched off or to silent. Please also use the time before the service for prayer and quiet reflection and allow others to do the same.

INTRODUCTORY RITE *please stand as the procession enters the church*

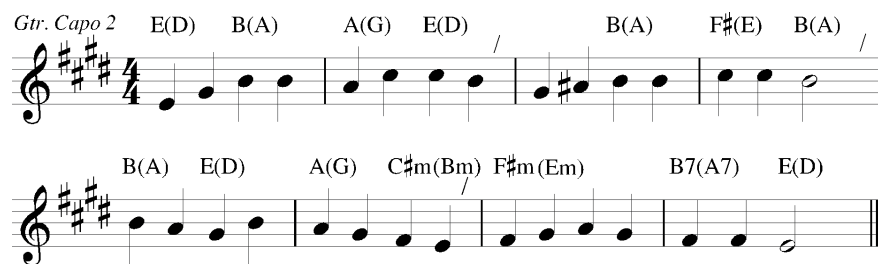
The First Candle on the Advent Wreath is lit, and the following prayer prayed

God of Abraham and Sarah, and all the patriarchs and matriarchs of old, you are our God too. Your love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of David. Help us in preparing to celebrate his birth, to make our hearts ready for your Holy Spirit and to make his home among us. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. **Amen.**

THE GREETING

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

HYMN "Hark! a herald voice is calling"



1. Hark! a herald voice is calling:
'Christ is near,' it seems to say,
'cast away the dreams of
darkness,
waken, children of the day!'
2. So when love comes forth in
judgment,
debts and doubts and wrongs to
clear,
faithful may he find his servants
watching till the dawn appear.

Anon., Latin ?6th cent. *tr.* Edward Caswall
1814-78 and others

COLLECT FOR PURITY

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

KYRIE ELEISON

Lord, have mercy, **Lord have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy, **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy, **Lord have mercy.**

CONFESSION

The Lord comes, bringing to light things now hidden in darkness, and disclosing the purposes of the heart.

Silence is kept

Let us open our hearts and prepare for his coming, 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

TRISAGION *said together*

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

THE COLLECT FOR FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Eternal God, through long generations you prepared a way for the coming of your Son, and by your Spirit you still bring light to illumine our paths: renew us in faith and hope that we may welcome Christ to rule our thoughts and claim our love; to whom be glory for ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE FIRST READING Isaiah 64.1–9 *read by Ted Mouritz*

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence — as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil — to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity for ever. Now consider, we are all your people.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 80.1-7, 17-19 *said*

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you that led Joseph like a flock:
you that are enthroned upon the cherubim,
shine out in glory;

Before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh:
stir up your power, and come to save us.

Restore us again, O Lord of hosts:
show us the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.

O Lord God of hosts:
how long will you be angry at your people's prayer?

You have fed them with the bread of tears:
and given them tears to drink in good measure.

You have made us the victim of our neighbours:
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

Restore us again, O Lord of hosts:
show us the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.

Let your power rest on the man at your right hand:
on that son of man
whom you made so strong for yourself.

And so we shall not turn back from you:
give us life, and we will call upon your name.

Restore us again, O Lord of hosts:
show us the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.

THE SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1.1–9 *read by Fiona McLeay*

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind – just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you – so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

We stand or remain standing and face the Gospel as it is read

THE GOSPEL Mark 13.24–37

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

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

‘But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you

know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

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

THE SERMON The Assistant Priest, The Revd Dr Wendy Crouch

THE NICENE CREED *said together, standing*

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *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 PARISH NOTICES

THE GREETING OF PEACE *standing*

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

All share with each other a 'COVIDsafe' sign of peace

OFFERTORY *As the gifts of bread and wine are brought forward, a monetary collection for the life of St. John's is taken. Please give by contributing to the collection plate, or at the paypoint at the rear of the church*

OFFERTORY HYMN 'Lo! he comes with clouds descending'

The musical score is written for a single voice part in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The lyrics are: (v. 2) deep - ly shamed be - fore him, deep - ly shamed be - fore him. The score includes various musical notations such as treble clef, key signature (one sharp), time signature, and various note values (quarter, eighth, and half notes). Chord symbols are placed above the notes: G, Em, C, G, D, G, D, G, Em, C, G, D, G, D, G, C, G, D, D, D7, G, Em, C, D, G, Am, D, G, Em, D, C, G, D, G. The score ends with a double bar line.

1. Lo! he comes with clouds
descending,
once for favoured sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints
attending
swell the sound of this refrain:
Hallelujah, hallelujah,
hallelujah!
God appears on earth to reign.

2. Sing amen! let all adore you,
high on your eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and
glory,
claim the kingdom for your own;
O come quickly, O come quickly,
O come quickly;
hallelujah! Come, Lord, come.

Charles Wesley 1707–88 *alt.*

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 forever.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

All remain standing

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

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

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

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer continues to the following

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

SANCTUS

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.**

BENEDICTUS

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer continues to the following

...Let us proclaim the mystery of faith

Christ has died, Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer ends with the following

... now and for ever.

**Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever.
Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray
**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us
from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the
power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ. We who are many are
one body, **for we all share in the one bread.**

AGNUS DEI

**Jesus Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION *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.**

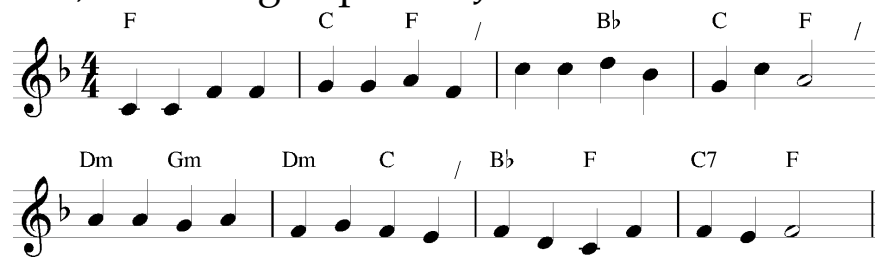
ADMINISTRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

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

POST COMMUNION PRAYER *Please stand. The prayer ends with the following*

**Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and
work to your praise and glory.**

FINAL HYMN 'Come, thou long-expected Jesus'



1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release
us,
let us find our rest in thee.
2. By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Charles Wesley 1707–88

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE *Dir, dir Jehova will ich singen* Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877 – 1933)

As the postlude is played please remain seated or leave quietly



Order of Service from *A Prayer Book for Australia* 1995. Broughton Books by E.J.Dwyer (Australia) Pty Ltd, Unit 13, Perry Park, 33 Maddox Street, Alexandria, NSW 2015. © 1995, The Anglican Church of Australia Trust Corporation.

With the Liturgical Psalter, Inclusive Language Version English text © 1995 by David L Frost, John A. Emerton, Andrew A Macintosh. Hymns from *Together in Song Australian Hymn Book II*. © The Australian Hymn Book Pty Ltd 2006. Registered Office 14 Martin Place (Level 17) Sydney 2000. Used with permission. C.C.L.I Licence number 669476.

All readings from scripture are taken from The Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

CURRENT NOTICES

Tonight at 7pm, Ecumenical Advent Service, Toorak Uniting Church

All are welcome to join with our fellow Christians in Toorak for a service celebrating Advent. Our Vicar will be preaching.

December 9, 4-6pm Vicarage Garden Party

Our Vicar Peter and his wife Robyn invite members of the church to the Vicarage for a garden party on Saturday December 9 from 4 to 6pm. Drinks and nibbles will be served in the garden (weather permitting) and inside if not permitting! All are welcome. Please RSVP to the Office, 9826 1765 or enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org. Attendees are welcome to bring a plate of food to share, please also let us know if you are doing so.

Advent Quiet Morning

Many thanks to the Revd Dr Wendy Crouch for leading the Advent Quiet morning yesterday. It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on how we prepare ourselves during Advent for Christmas, the festival of the nativity of Christ.

Advent Preparation of the Church

Thank you to those who came to help prepare the church for the season of Advent yesterday afternoon. The unadorned Christmas trees and wreaths will remain bare until Christmas Eve when, with the help of volunteers, we dress them for the grand celebrations of Christmas.

A Book for Advent- available for purchase today!

The Meaning is in the Waiting by Paula Gooder is a wonderful reflective study book to read during Advent. Copies available to purchase today for \$30. Highly recommended.



Advent Resources

In the narthex, and also available from the church office, are two advent booklets for you to take home. The first is *Morning and Evening Prayer in Advent*, and the other is *Taking Advent Home*, some suggestions for preparing ourselves during this waiting time, the festival of the nativity of Christ.

And there are two youtube resources for adults and children explaining Advent in two minutes! Enjoy.

- ✦ [Advent in 2 Minutes! - YouTube](#)
- ✦ [What is Advent? for Kids | Advent Explained in 2 Minutes | Where did Advent Calendars Come From? - YouTube](#)

Supporting the suffering in the Holy Land through our Anglican Agencies

Donations can be made here:

- ✦ www.abmission.org/appeals/emergency-appeals/al-ahli-hospital-emergency-appeal/
- ✦ anglicanoverseasaid.org.au/our-work/occupied-palestinian-territories/

The Silent Minute Prayer for Peace

At our November Toorak Ecumenical Council meeting it was decided that the daily Silent Minute Prayer for Peace would be encouraged in our churches. This practice was started in WWII when at 9pm each evening people would pause for a minute's silent prayer for peace to prevail - prayed according to one's own beliefs. This practice has been reinstated at various times of conflict since WWII. Bishop Genieve has sent us a request from the Franciscans in Australia that our parishes promote this practice at this time of violence and war in so many places. We encourage you to find a time each day for a minute's prayer for peace across the world. You can set your phone alarm as a reminder - as some in our parish have already done.

"There is no power on earth that can withstand the united cooperation on spiritual levels of men and women of goodwill everywhere. It is for this reason that the continued and widespread observance of the Silent Minute is of such vital importance in the interest of human welfare." Major Wellesley Tudor-Pole (1940)

Food for Friends Appeal

The Christmas shopping was completed and delivered this week, using the remaining funds available to St John's from the 2022/23 Appeal.

- ✦ *Richmond Food Bank*: \$331.80
- ✦ *St Mark's Fitzroy*: \$330.40
- ✦ *Christ Church Mission*: \$322.20



These contributions were targeted for the Christmas Hampers that are being assembled at this time. With our Appeal for 2023/24 now open, we ask that you consider your donations for the coming year. These agencies all stressed the growing need for assistance for struggling communities. I wish you could all see the joy I see when I arrive with your donations. See flyer for details on how to donate.

Many thanks, *Brenda Mouritz*

IN THE NARTHEX

- ✦ *The Bethlehem Prequel: An Advent Reflection* - Kim Beales, minister at St. Marks Anglican Church Bellerive has developed four insightful studies on the book of Ruth. Feel free to take a copy.
- ✦ *Anglican Board of Mission & Anglicans in Development: Advent & Christmas Appeal 2023*. This year the Advent & Christmas Appeal focuses on *Wontulp-Bi-Buya* and *Nungalinya* Colleges who are celebrating their 40 and 50 years of education respectively. Feel free to take a donation envelope and read more about the appeal by scanning the QR code on the envelope or visiting www.abmission.org/Christmas2023.
- ✦ *Christmas Bowl*. Founded in 1949, Christmas Bowl aims to help provide practical care so refugees and people who have been displaced can live in safety and dignity, knowing they are loved and not forgotten. Each week we will share a different story from refugees the Christmas Bowl has assisted. Donation envelopes will be available or you can donate through the following link: mycb.link/47109.

REGULAR NOTICES

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

St. John's is committed to safeguarding all people and protecting their wellbeing, including young and vulnerable people, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children with diverse needs. All relevant staff and volunteers are trained in child safety and have appropriate clearance for service or clearance for ministry. If you have any concerns about the wellbeing of children in this parish, contact Kooyoora on 1800 135 246 or www.kooyoora.org.au If you have concerns about your wellbeing or that of another churchgoer please contact the clergy.

Pastoral Care

Clergy and members of the St John's Pastoral Care Team offer pastoral care on a regular basis to parishioners as well as to those who specifically request it. This may include Home Communion. They also visit local hospitals at the request of patients, family, friends or staff with the consent of the recipient. Clergy and Lay Pastoral Carers visit a number of local Aged Care facilities on a regular, usually monthly, basis. Parishioners and others are welcome to phone the church office to arrange a home visit by the clergy or a lay pastoral carer. Those who are no longer able to attend usual services at the church are visited on a regular basis at time intervals that suit them.

The Melbourne Anglican (TMA) and Prayer Diary

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

Contribute to Worship Services

All our ministries at St John's are supported by our wonderful volunteers. The roster for December is available [here](#). And you will note that volunteering for morning tea has now been added to the list of duties. If you can help fill any of the gaps please contact the parish office. Thanks in advance.

Communion Instructions

All are welcome at the altar and those baptised are welcome to receive Communion. Holy Communion is distributed via a chalice from which to sip or, a separate chalice into which the bread may be intincted (dipped). If you wish to simply receive the bread only that is perfectly appropriate. A blessing only is also available.

Zoom Link

Our 10am Sunday service is streamed here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87520014330?pwd=VFNadGFaSzAzSmcrSEZuK1kVzFDQT09>

Meeting ID: 875 2001 4330 Passcode: 670339

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 Assistant Curate Lydia has Monday and Vicar Peter has Friday. Wendy usually works Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday only. Please respect their time away from work and unless in an emergency, please refrain from telephoning, texting, visiting the Vicarage, or emailing them on these days. Thank you.

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

A Prayer for the Holy Land

O God of all justice and peace, we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land. Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths – Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land. While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples. Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children – for to all of us you are our Heavenly Father. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

From the Anglican Cycle of Prayer: St Mark's Anglican Church Templestowe (Lui Wong); The Diocese of Sydney (Abp Kanishka Raffel, Regional Bps Chris Edwards, Michael Stead, Peter Hayward, Peter Lin, Malcolm Richards, Gary Koo, Clergy & People); Diocesan Liturgical Committee; St Andrew's Corio/Norlane – pastoral visit (Abp Philip Freier); The Church of North India (United) – The Revd Bijay Nayak;

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; and Premier of Victoria, Jacinta Allan.

For Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians: For Aboriginal Anglican clergy and lay-leaders around Australia, their spiritual health and physical well-being, and the people they care for. For Aboriginal and Government leaders and their work together.

For The Toorak Ecumenical Movement: Our partner churches, St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, Toorak Uniting Church, and The Swedish Church.

For The Anglican Board of Mission, The Brotherhood of St. Laurence, and Anglicare.

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

For those who are celebrating birthdays this week: Rona Hatfield

For the sick and all in need: Gwen; Bruce; Sam; Margaret; Nichole; Joanna; Ivan; Anthea; David; John; Tim; Joan; James; Karen and Trisha.

For those in aged care and those who are housebound: Rosie; Beverley; Val; Rosalind; Anne; Elizabeth; Trevor, and Sue.

Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week: Philip Strang; Betty Bloomfield (2012); Lauren West (2018); Hugo Griffiths (2020); Margaret Schneider (2014); John Devine (2019) Lee Gregory (2022) Jeanette Smith (2013); Tony Gamble (2016) and Alan Miles (2021).

Support St John's Toorak

Your support of St John's is greatly appreciated. Donations can be made directly to:

St. John's Anglican Church General Account, Westpac,

509 Toorak Road, Toorak, VIC 3142, Australia.

Account Name: St John's Anglican Church | BSB: 033 086 | Account: 871931.

International transfers please include SWIFT code **WPACAU2S**.

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

Isaiah 64:1-9

This part of the book was probably written 530-510 BC, soon after Jews returned to Israel. In Chapter 63, God's action in delivering Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land is recalled: in spite of their waywardness, God was always with them, but now, in their sinfulness, he seems to have deserted them. As the writer asks in 63:17, "Why, O Lord, do you make us stray from your ways and harden our heart, so that we do not fear you?". Please God, deliver your forsaken people from their sin, and restore the Temple!

Now, in 64:1-5a, the prophet prays to God: please reveal yourself as you did during the Exodus! "Fire" (v. 2) is a symbol of God's wondrous works: he showed his power to his (and Israel's) "adversaries": nations feared him. V. 4 sounds more like a pious hope than a fact. Note v. 5a: the emphasis is on God coming to Israel, rather than humans approaching God. V. 5b says that the people felt, in their waywardness, that God in his anger had hidden from them. In vv. 6-7, the writer, on behalf of the people, confesses their sin and hopelessness: they have become like one who is ceremonially "unclean". (During her period, a woman put on a "cloth" and was considered unclean.) The people feel like nothing at all, like chaff blown away by the "wind". Formerly, in times of distress Israel called on God, but no one does so now (v. 7). It is as though God has caused them to sin. Vv. 8-12 are a further petition to God: you are still "our Father". As clay does not ask what the potter is making with it, so we do not ask of you; we just do what you tell us. Please, Lord, relent from your anger; do not hold the sin which we have intentionally committed ("iniquity") against us for ever, for we are in essence "all your people". In Chapter 65 God replies: I was ready to be sought by you, but no one came seeking; I invited you, rebellious as you are – off worshipping other gods. A time will come when I will separate the ungodly from the godly, when the ungodly will suffer and die. Those remaining will inherit the Land, and I will make it plentiful and bless it.

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

Vv. 1-3 are a cry for help. Please God ("Shepherd of Israel"), you who lead the Israelite ("Joseph") people ("flock"), come to our military aid ("stir up your might", v. 2). (Joseph's sons were Ephraim and Manasseh; the tribal areas "Ephraim ... Manasseh" were in the northern kingdom, so this psalm comes from there. God was thought of as seated on the "cherubim" (v. 1), the half-human, half-animal figures on the Ark.) Vv. 3, 7 and 19 are a refrain: please take us back, God, into the covenant relationship with you! In 31:16, God's face shining is equivalent to "save me with your steadfast love". The nation's current plight is seen as due to God's anger. In vv. 8-13, the Exodus is likened to a vine; the vineyard is the Promised Land. God's creative acts ("mountains", v. 10, "cedars") stretch from the Mediterranean "sea" (v. 11) to the Euphrates "River". Why God, ask vv. 12-13, have you acted though our

enemy, letting him occupy our land and lay waste to it? Please God, deliver us (v. 14); care for your people ("have regard for this vine"). May you destroy our enemy (v. 16b). Help our king ("the one ...", v. 17) whom you once "made strong". When you help him, we will be faithful to you for ever; we will come to know you intimately ("call on your name", v. 18).

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Paul greets his readers: he wishes them "grace" (God's freely given gift of love) and "peace" (the total state of well-being to which we are admitted through Christ): both come from the Father (as source) and the Son (as means or agent). In later chapters, Paul cautions his readers against misuse of spiritual gifts (v. 7), so in v. 5 he may be damning them with faint praise. He praises their eloquence ("speech") and understanding ("knowledge") but not (as in other letters) their faith, hope and love for each other and for Christ. In v. 6, "testimony" is bearing witness: God has strengthened them through their telling of the good news. They are indeed richly blessed (v. 7), but (as mentioned later), they tend to dwell on the excitement of the present rather than looking forward to "the revealing of ... Christ", his second coming. God will help them prepare for that day, so that they may be among those judged worthy of eternal life ("blameless", v. 8). God is "faithful" (v.9): he will not abandon what he has begun. He has called them into "fellowship", union with other believers which is union with Christ.

Mark 13:24-37

In v. 2, Jesus has prophesied the destruction of the Temple to the disciples. Then Peter, James, John and Andrew (the first four he called) have asked him: "when will this be ... ?" (v. 4). How will we know when "these things" are about to happen? He has told them of persecution, of strange natural phenomena, of societal breakdown, of the fate of the disciples. The portents will be wars, earthquakes and famines (vv. 7-8). The end will come suddenly; people will suffer greatly. It is only because God, in his mercy, has "cut short those days" (v. 20) that the elect, the godly, will be saved. Even they will be tempted by other messiahs. Now we come to our reading. "In those days" (v. 24) there will be darkness: a sign of the coming of divine judgement (as in Isaiah 13:10). The elect will see "the Son of Man", a superhuman person with heavenly power and glory, coming to inherit his kingdom (v. 26, as prophesied Daniel 7:13). He will bring the godly together (as in Isaiah 11:11) from all over the world. (Winds were thought to originate at the four corners of the earth.) By implication, the "Son of Man" (v. 26) is the true Messiah, Christ come the second time. Jesus admonishes his followers to "keep alert" (v. 33) for this coming. The leafing of the "fig tree" (v. 28) is a sure harbinger of summer; similarly, when they see "these things", the End is near, very near (v. 29), but when is the Father's prerogative. The images are those of apocalyptic (vision of the future) literature, popular in Jesus' day.

ART COMMENTARY

The Resurrection, by Sebastiano Ricci, depicts the miraculous moment of Christ's resurrection. Carrying a flag and bathed in bright light cast down from Heaven, Christ appears from the sky as a host of angels pull apart the clouds. Soldiers guarding his tomb attempt to flee as they witness this miraculous event.

While Sebastiano Ricci (1659-1734) spent most of his life in northern Italy, he took several foreign commissions in London and Paris during the 1710s. This painting, executed towards the end of Ricci's stay in London, around 1714-16, is one of two modelli, or oil sketches, for the fresco in the apse of the Chapel of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. Some of the elements in these works seem to reference motifs by earlier generations of Italian artists including Paolo Veronese (the angels lifting the grave's lid), Annibale Carracci (the soldiers, the grave and the lantern) and Salvator Rosa (the cliffs in the background and the soldiers).

CHRISTMAS BOWL

Since it was founded by Rev. Frank Byatt in 1949, the Christmas Bowl has brought together committed Australian Christians with dedicated local partners around the world, to give hope to people uprooted by conflict and disaster. When Rev. Byatt sat down to his Christmas dinner all those years ago, he knew millions of people were starving in war-ravaged Europe. And he was compelled to offer help. He put a Bowl of Remembrance on his Christmas dinner table and asked his loved ones to place a gift in it to 'share your good dinner with hungry children in other lands'. Frank couldn't have foreseen how his simple act of compassion that evening would grow into the powerful Christmas Bowl tradition now celebrated in thousands of churches across Australia. And he couldn't have known how much it would be needed in our world today. As we break bread with our loved ones, we will also remember the millions of refugees and other displaced communities who are going hungry this Christmas. Each week of Advent we will share a different story from the Christmas Bowl.

First Sunday of Advent



Hope for families forced to flee

Jehan*, a brave mother of five, made the courageous decision to escape on foot to Pakistan with her family when Afghanistan fell to the Taliban in 2021. Your gifts through the Christmas Bowl can help Act for Peace coordinate rapid emergency responses with local partners, like Church World Services Asia, so that they can immediately act, giving families like Jehan's safety in exile – and hope for the future – when they need it most. **Please give today.**

*Name changed for safety reasons


Christmas Bowl

CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

FOOD for FRIENDS 2023 APPEAL

As we have done for the last two years, with considerable success, we are asking for financial donations once again.

This money raised will be spent during the coming year on food supplies for the various nominated agencies. This has proved to be very successful as the agencies have been experiencing increasing demand throughout the year, not just at Christmas time, for their services as inflation continues to contribute to the rising cost of living.

So, please consider donating to
The Toorak Ecumenical Fund – CBA Toorak

BSB: 063 177

ACC: 1002 6147

Please mark it F for Food

Cheques/cash may be dropped into the parish
office.

Cheques should be made payable to the Toorak
Ecumenical Fund.



*Sincere thanks to all those generous people who have supported our appeal in
previous years.*



The agencies we assisted this year were:

Aboriginal Catholic Mission

Church of All Nations

Richmond Churches Food Bank

Broadmeadows Food Bank

John Pierce Centre for the Deaf

St Joseph's, Sth Yarra.

Brotherhood of St Laurence.

MacKillop Family Services

St Mark's, Fitzroy.

Christ Church Mission, St Kilda

Prahran Mission



ST. JOHN'S
ANGLICAN
CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859

This Week

SUNDAY, 3 December, 2023

First Sunday of Advent

8am Said Eucharist

10am Sung Eucharist

WEDNESDAY, 6 December, 2023

7pm Eucharist, Angel Chapel

SATURDAY, 9 December, 2023

4pm Vicarage garden party



Next Sunday, 10 December Second Sunday of Advent

8am Said Eucharist

First Reading: *Isaiah 40:1-11*, Nicholas Cree

Second Reading: *2 Peter 3:8-15a*, Brenda Mouritz

Gospel Reading: *Mark 1:1-8*

Intercessor: Molly Bull

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

Celebrant: The Revd Lydia Thangadurai

10am Sung Eucharist

First Reading: *Isaiah 40:1-11*, Nicholas Cree

Second Reading: *2 Peter 3:8-15a*, Brenda Mouritz

Gospel Reading: *Mark 1:1-8*

Intercessor: Volunteer Required

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

Celebrant: The Revd Lydia Thangadurai

Morning tea: Anthony Mannering & Volunteers required

Parish Office, Open 9am - 5pm,

Monday to Friday

9826 1765 or 9826 1434

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Mr Adriaan den Dulk,

Ms Vivienne Randall

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Blanckenberg, Mr Dougal Colhoun,

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