



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859



Transfiguration Sunday

11 February, 2024

8am Service

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 green, the colour of Ordinary Time, the colour of vestments and altars outside of particular periods of time, such as Lent.

Cover Image

The Transfiguration of our Lord, 15th Century

Russian icon from the Holy Theotokos Dormition Church on the Voloto,
Novgorod, Museum of Art

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 INVOCATION

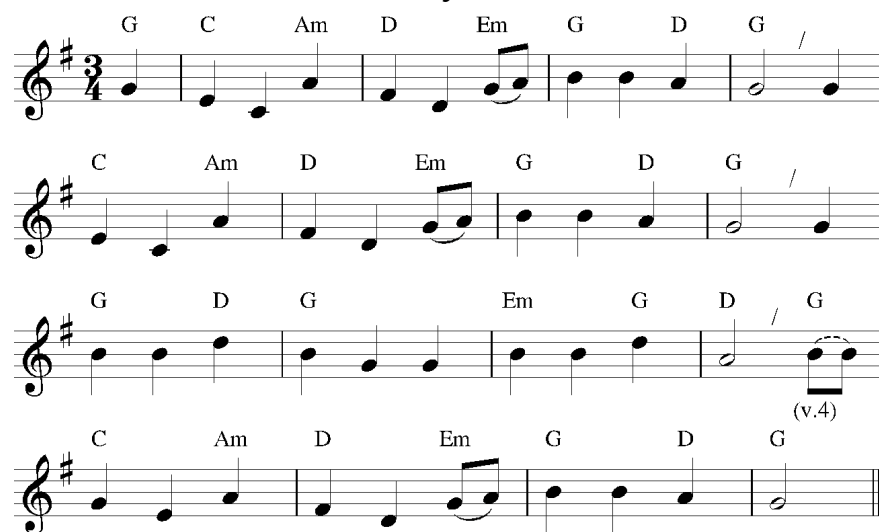
Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.

THE GREETING

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

HYMN 'Immortal, invisible, God only wise'



1. Immortal, invisible, God only
wise,
in light inaccessible hid from
our eyes,
most blessèd, most glorious, the
Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, your great
name we praise.

5. All praise we would render:
reveal to our sight
what hides you is only the
splendour of light;
and so let your glory, Almighty,
impart,
through Christ in the story, your
Christ to the heart.

Walter Chalmers Smith 1824-1908 *alt.*
(TiS 143)

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 *said*

Lord, have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Christ, have mercy, Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy, Lord have mercy.

CONFESSIO

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.

A moment of silence may be kept

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

ABSOLUTION

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS *said*

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the Glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE COLLECT FOR TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY

Almighty God, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us faith to perceive his glory, that being strengthened by his grace we may be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE FIRST READING 2 Kings 2 Kings 2.1-12 *read by Brenda Mouritz*

Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel. The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?' And he said, 'Yes, I know; keep silent.' Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they came to Jericho. The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?' And he answered, 'Yes, I know; be silent.' Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground. When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' He responded, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted to you; if not, it will not.' As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 50.1-6 *said*

The Lord our God, the Mighty One, has spoken:
and summoned the earth,
from the rising of the sun to its setting in the west.

From Zion, perfect in beauty:
God has shone out in glory.

Our God is coming, he will not keep silent:
before him is devouring fire,
and tempest whirls about him.

He calls to the heavens above:
and to the earth, so he may judge his people.

‘Gather to me my faithful ones:
those who by sacrifice made a covenant with me.’
The heavens shall proclaim his righteousness:
for God himself is judge.

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 2 Corinthians 4.3-12 *read by Sam Shepherd*

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are
perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of
the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the
glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not proclaim
ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your
slaves for Jesus’ sake. For it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of
darkness’, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the
knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have
this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this
extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We
are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to
despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;
always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus
may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are
always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus
may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but
life in you.

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

We stand and face the Gospel as it is read

THE GOSPEL Mark 9.2-9

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.

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

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

THE SERMON The Assistant Curate, The Revd Lydia Thangadurai

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 Jason Pennell*

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*

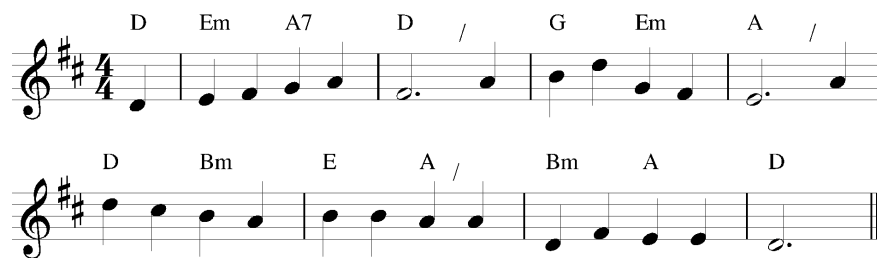
We are the body of Christ. His Spirit is with us.

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 '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 & others (TiS 488)

PRAYER FOR RECEIVING THE OFFERTORY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

All remain standing

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

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

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

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer continues to the following

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and 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 'I want to walk as a child'

1 I want to walk as a child of the light,
2 I want to see the bright-ness of God,
3 I'm look - ing for the com - ing of Christ;

1 I want to fol - low Je - sus, God set the stars to give
2 I want to look at Je - sus; clear sun of right-teous-ness,
3 I want to be with Je sus. When we have run with

1 light to the world; the star of my life is Je - sus,
2 shine on my path and show me the way to the Fa - ther.
3 pa-tience the race we shall know the joy of Je - sus.

Refrain
In him there is no dark-ness at all; the night and the
day are both a - like. The Lamb is the light of the
cit - y of God; shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

1. I want to walk as a child of the
light,
I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to
the world:
the star of my life is Jesus.

*In him there is no darkness at
all;
the night and the day are both
alike.
The Lamb is the light of the
city of God;
shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.*

2. I'm looking for the coming of
Christ;
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience
the race
we shall know the joy of Jesus.

Kathleen Armstrong Thomerson 1934–
(TiS 643)

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE

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

Ash Wednesday, 14 February

Lent will soon be upon us, commencing with the Service of Ash Wednesday at 7pm on 14 February. The service will be held in the main body of the church and include a service of eucharist with the anointing of ashes on participants' foreheads. Pop it in the calendar - and start thinking and praying about what Lenten disciplines you will take on this coming Lent.

Lent Quiet Day Saturday, 9th March 9.30-4pm

This will be held at the lovely venue *St Joseph's By the Sea*, Williamstown, where we held our September Quiet Day last year. We meet in the bay room of the beautiful old home looking out to the sea. There is opportunity between the guided reflections to walk along the beach or in the Botanic Gardens which is next door. A sign up sheet is available in the narthex today or contact the parish office to indicate your interest. For any questions about the day contact Revd Wendy through the office or on assistantpriest@saintjohnstoorak.org.

Lenten Studies 2024, 'The Love that is God'

This year our Lenten Study will be based on 'The Love that is God: An Invitation to Christian Faith,' by F. C. Bauerschmidt, a wonderful and thoughtful book. The book is available for purchase [here](#) and available as a paperback or kindle book.

[The Love That Is God: An Invitation to Christian Faith : Bauerschmidt, Frederick Christian, Coakley, Sarah: Amazon.com.au: Books](#)

There are **two** opportunities to attend a study:

Sundays: 18 February, 25 February, 3 March and 10 March, 11.30am in the Hall **OR**
Thursdays with the Toorak Ecumenical Churches : 22 February, 29 February, 7 March and 14 March at 10.30am, locations TBA.

If you would like to order the book through the Parish Office please call or email by the end of next week. A sign-up sheet is available in the Narthex or online for you to indicate your Lent Study preference ([click here](#)).

March & April Rosters, 2024

You can now sign-up to be on the Worship & Morning Tea roster for the months of March and April, 2024. Sign-up by completing the roster forms in your pewsheets, in the Narthex or online [here](#).

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, 2023, 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)

World Day of Prayer

When: Thursday 29 February, 11am

Where: St. John's Church

Country: Palestine *Prepared by Christian Palestinian Women*

Theme: *I Beg You ... Bear With One Another in Love*

Speaker: Kim Jennings



Kim is a physiotherapist from Melbourne who has taught extensively throughout the Middle East, Australia/New Zealand, Europe, and Asia. She is a Bachelor of Physiotherapy, Master of Public Health, and a Doctorate of Physiotherapy.

Kim first met members of the Palestinian diaspora in 1989 whilst working in hospitals in London and Saudi Arabia. Since then, she has had a strong interest in the Palestinian situation, driven by a sense of social justice. Kim most recently spent three months observing Palestinian life on the West Bank.

The World Day of Prayer will follow morning tea after Prayers for Christian Unity starting at 10am.

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 February Prayer Diary is [here](#).

Contribute to Worship Services

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

Communion Instructions

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

Zoom Link

Our 10am Sunday service is streamed here:

us02web.zoom.us/j/87520014330?pwd=VFNaRGFaSzAzSmcrSEZuK1lkVzFDQT09

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: Redemption Church Craigieburn; Ministry with the Torres Strait Islander people of Australia (Torres Strait Islander Clergy & People); Brotherhood of St Laurence (Conny Lenneberg, CEO, Michelle Trebilcock, Debra Saffrey-Collins, chaplains); Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan (Abp Justin Badi Arama); St James' Dandenong – pastoral visit (Abp Philip Freier); St Alban's Coburg West and Pascoe Vale South – Confirmation Service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); Bellarine Anglican Parish – pastoral visit (Bp Brad Billings); Clyde North - morning service (Bp Paul Barker); Ormond Anglican Church – Episcopal visit (Bp Kate Prowd);

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, Interim Principal Robert Marshall; and Toorak Primary School, Principal Julie Manallack.

For the sick and all in need: Gwen, Rex, Bruce, Sam, Margaret, Nichole, Joanna, Ivan, Anthea, David, John, Tim, Joan, James, Karen, Trisha, Garry, Emma & Thomas.

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

For those who have died and their families who mourn them: Suzanne Collister, Trevor Craddock, Jill Patterson & Robert Hartley.

Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week: Michael Drummond (2013); Beverly Flanagan (2017); Ken Bullen (2023); Jenny Hirst (2021); Patricia Osborne (2016) & Carol Clay (2022).

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

2 Kings 2:1-12

Israel has split into two kingdoms: Israel (the north) and Judah (the south). At the time of our story, (850-849 BC), Ahaziah is King of Israel. The Bible tells us of only two people who were sufficiently worthy to be taken up to heaven without dying: Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and Elijah. Elijah and Elisha start their journey at Gilgal, in the hill country north of Bethel. Three times (vv. 2-3, 4-5, 6) Elijah invites Elisha to travel no further: he tests Elisha, to determine whether he is truly loyal to his master. Each time, Elisha proves his loyalty, and so the two travel southward from "Gilgal" (v. 1) to "Bethel" (v. 2), then east to "Jericho" (v. 4) and "the Jordan" (v.6). (Note that vv. 4-5 differ from vv. 2-3 only in the place name.) The "company of prophets" (vv. 3, 5, 7) are communities of followers, disciples, of Elijah; they are like monks.

Elijah's "mantle" (v. 8), his cloak, is almost part of him. As in the crossing of the Reed Sea (see Exodus 14) and the carrying of the Ark across the Jordan (Joshua 3:14-17), the waters part. In v. 9, Elijah offers Elisha a reward for his loyalty: then Elisha requests that he receive the principal ("double") share of Elijah's spirituality. (Deuteronomy 21:17 requires that the eldest son inherit a double portion of his father's possessions.) Per v. 10, Elijah cannot grant this request himself, for it is

God's to give. If Elisha sees Elijah taken up, God will grant the wish. "Fire" (v.11) is a symbol of God's presence (e.g. God appeared in the burning bush in Exodus 3:2.) V. 12a is difficult to interpret. Perhaps Elisha contrasts the chariots of God (v. 11) with those of Israel; perhaps Elisha recognizes that Elijah's spiritual strength is better security for Israel than its army. Elisha does see Elijah's departure. Tearing of clothes was an expression of grief or distress. In vv. 13-17, Elisha picks up Elijah's mantle, the symbol of spirituality. Some of the "company of prophets" search for days to find Elijah's body, but in vain. Elijah has been taken up to heaven. Elisha is his successor.

Psalms 50:1-6

This is a liturgy of divine judgement. God "summons" the whole earth and the "heavens" (v. 4) to witness his legal judgement of the ungodly. In Jerusalem ("Zion", v. 2) he shows himself in traditional Old Testament ways: in "fire" (v. 3) and "tempest". He will be both "judge" (v. 6) and prosecuting attorney ("testify...", v. 7). Animal sacrifices sincerely offered are acceptable to him (v. 8), but offering sacrifices as mere ritual is not; indeed it is needless slaughter of his creatures (vv. 9-13). Reciting the Law without the intention of keeping it (v. 16) is to mock him: not obeying him, ignoring his advice, befriending thieves and "adulterers" (v. 18), slandering family members, and thinking that he is evil too (v. 22), are the grounds for God's case against the wicked, "you who forget God". They will be destroyed, but those who "honour" (v. 23) him, who walk in his "way", will be rewarded with "salvation", prosperity.

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 NRSV

Paul continues to answer a letter from the Corinthian church. It appears that some have criticised him for failing to make the good news clear, or for limited success in bringing people to Christ. In v. 2 he says: "... by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God". V. 3 recalls 1 Corinthians 1:18: "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing ...", who will be destroyed at The Last Day (but their conversion is still possible.) "In their case" (v. 4), the devil or the god who is this world (a possible translation), materialism, has so filled their minds that they cannot see that the gospel illuminates, shows, the "glory of Christ" (and, per v. 6, of God shown by Christ), Christ being the perfect "image of God" (v. 4), representation of God – and the model for the Christian's future state. In v. 5, Paul says that (contrary to what some may claim), he proclaims not himself but Jesus; he serves the church for Christ's sake whatever suffering that may entail. In quoting Genesis (the first words God speaks in the Bible) in v.6, he points out that God began the creation process with "light", understanding. God reveals himself through history. The light of God undergirds the ministry Paul brings to the Corinthians. God's light has been experienced by people throughout the ages; the believer's transformation is in the heart. Those who see Jesus' face reflect his glory.

Mark 9:2-9

Jesus has foretold his death and resurrection, and that God's kingdom will begin soon. "... the Son of Man must ... be rejected ... and be killed, and ... rise again. He said this quite openly" (8:31-32). Then: if any want to follow him, let them renounce their self-centeredness. Those who play it safe will perish; those who give their lives for him and the gospel will be saved (8:34-35). Now "six days" (v. 2) after Peter's recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus takes the inner circle of disciples ("Peter and James and John") up a mountain. There he is "transfigured", changed in form, metamorphosed. He appears in "dazzling white" (v. 3), a sign of God's presence (as did Moses when he had been "talking with God", Exodus 34:29). "Elijah" (v. 4) was taken up into heaven. Moses' burial place was unknown (see Deuteronomy 34:6); in late Judaism, he was also thought to be taken up. (Others point out that Elijah represents the prophets and Moses the law, the basic authority in Judaism.) Peter rejoices in this experience ("good", v. 5): it is a preview of Jesus' glorification as God's Son. He wishes to prolong the event by making "dwellings", temporary shelters as erected at the Feast of Tabernacles, a joyous festival of God's presence. V. 6 may say that he was so dumbfounded by the experience that what he said was irrational. The "cloud" (v. 7) is a symbol of God's presence. The proclamation spoken by the divine voice is like that at Jesus' baptism (see 1:11). The Son of Man is revealed to be Son of God. The vision ends "suddenly" (v. 8). Then v. 9: only when Jesus has risen will the vision make sense to others.

ART COMMENTARY

This icon of the Transfiguration was possibly made in the icon workshops in the northern Russian town of Novgorod in the late 15th or early 16th century. It shows unmistakable signs of Muscovite influences in the elongated proportions of the figures.

At the Transfiguration, Christ appears with Moses and Elijah, the two preeminent figures of Judaism, standing alongside him. They represent the Law and the Prophets – Moses received the Law from God, and Elijah was a great prophet. They both experienced visions of God – Moses on Mount Sinai and Elijah on Mount Carmel. They also represent the living and the dead – Elijah, the living, because he was taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire, and Moses, the dead, because he did experience death. Peter, James and John are also pictured with Christ on the mountain top. They are the only disciples to have been given nicknames by Jesus: Simon became the Rock, James and John were the sons of thunder (Luke 5: 10). Peter is often referred to as the rock on which the Church is built, James was the first of the apostles to die a martyr's death and John is the beloved disciple. They are a trusted group who also serve to represent us at each moment in the story of salvation.



This Week

SUNDAY, 11 February, 2024

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

8am Said Eucharist

10am Sung Eucharist

TUESDAY, 13 February, 2024

7pm Parish Council Meeting

ASH WEDNESDAY, 14 February, 2024

7pm Eucharist

THURSDAY, 15 February, 2024

11am Funeral for Trevor Craddock

FRIDAY, 16 February, 2024

11am Funeral for Jill Patterson



Next Sunday, 18 February Transfiguration Sunday

8am Eucharist

First Reading: *Genesis 9:8-17*, Jason Pennell

Second Reading: *1 Peter 3:18-22*, Anthony Rose

Gospel Reading: *Mark 1:9-15*

Intercessor: Volunteer required

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

10am Eucharist

First Reading: *Genesis 9:8-17*, Nick Cree

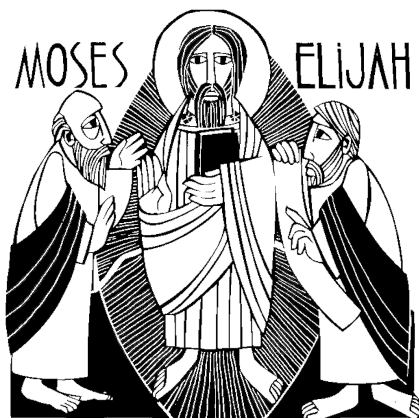
Second Reading: *1 Peter 3:18-22*, Marinella Milne

Gospel Reading: *Mark 1:9-15*

Intercessor: John Horan

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

Morning Tea: Anthony Mannering & Jane Anderson



ST. JOHN'S
ANGLICAN

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