



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859



Feast of the Holy Cross
14 September, 2025
8am

Welcome

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. Services are followed by times of fellowship over food and drinks. All are welcome.

Mission

Our mission is to know and love Christ and neighbour. We actively follow Jesus' command to love God, love one's neighbour and to care for all people. We 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 red. Red signifies blood, martyrdom, and the fire of the Holy Spirit. We use red on the feast days of Apostles and Evangelists, martyred Saints, Palm Sunday, Pentecost, and the Feast of the Holy Cross.

Cover Image

The Finding and Trial of the Three Crosses, Agnolo Gaddi (1369-1396),
c.1385-87, fresco painting
Chancel Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence, Italy.

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



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

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Please stand when the procession enters the church

PRELUDE 'Prelude on Rockingham'

Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)

THE INVOCATION

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

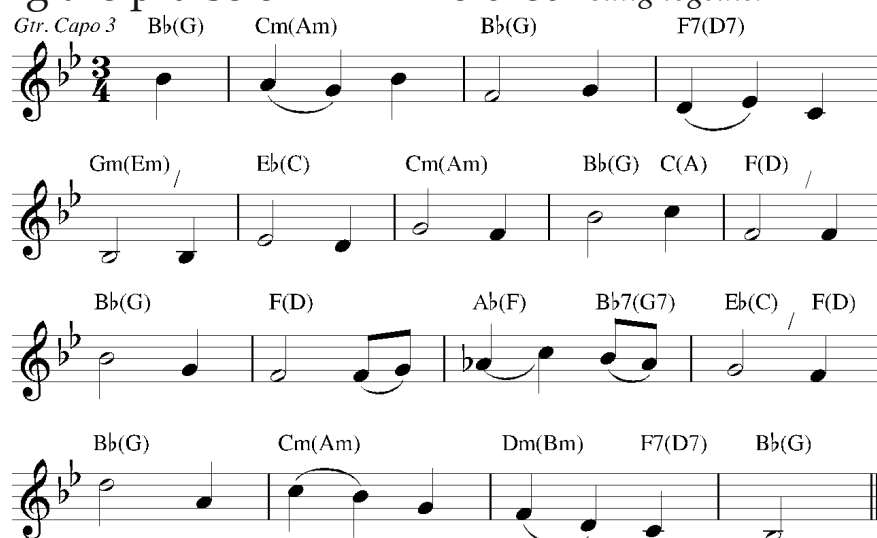
Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.

GREETING

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

HYMN 'We sing the praise of him who died' *sung together*

Gtr. Capo 3 Bb(G) Cm(Am) Bb(G) F7(D7)



Bb(G) Cm(Am) Bb(G) F7(D7)

Gm(Em) Eb(C) Cm(Am) Bb(G) C(A) F(D)

Bb(G) F(D) Ab(F) Bb7(G7) Eb(C) F(D)

Bb(G) Cm(Am) Dm(Bm) F7(D7) Bb(G)

1. We sing the praise of him who died,
of him who died upon the cross;
the sinners' hope though all deride:
for this we count the world but loss.

2. the balm of life, the cure of woe,
the measure and the pledge of love,
the sinner's refuge here below,
the angels' theme in heaven above.

Thomas Kelly 1769-1855 alt.

Sydney H. Nicholson

BOW BRICKHILL (Tis 347)

COLLECT FOR PURITY

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

THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

KYRIE ELEISON

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

CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

Silence is 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 sin 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 the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the Glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT FOR HOLY CROSS

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross that he might draw the whole world to himself: Mercifully grant that we, who glory in the mystery of our redemption, may have grace to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen**

Please be seated

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE FIRST READING Numbers 21.4b-9 *read by Jason Pennell*

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, but the people became discouraged on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food."

Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 98.1-5 *sung by the choir*

O sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things.

His right hand and his holy arm
have gotten him victory.

The LORD has made known his victory;
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.

He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the victory of our God. Feast of the Holy Cross

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.
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 Philippians 2:6-11 *read by Anthony Rose*

Christ Jesus, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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

Please stand for the Gospel, turning to face it as it is read

THE GOSPEL John 3.13-17

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

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

No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

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 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, at the paypoint at the rear of the church or by scanning the QR code.



OFFERTORY HYMN 'O dearest Lord, thy sacred head'

1 O dear-est Lord, thy sac - red head with thorns was pierced_ for
 2 O dear-est Lord, thy sac - red hands with nails were pierced_ for
 3 O dear-est Lord, thy sac - red feet with nails were pierced_ for
 4 O dear-est Lord, thy sac - red heart with spear was pierced_ for

1 me;_____ O pour thy bless - ing on___ my head that
 2 me;_____ O shed thy bless - ing on___ my hands that
 3 me;_____ O pour thy bless - ing on___ my feet that
 4 me;_____ O pour thy Spir - it in___ my heart that

1 I may think_ for thee._____
 2 they may work_ for thee._____
 3 they may fol - low thee._____
 4 I may live_ for thee._____

1. O dearest Lord, thy sacred head
 with thorns was pierced for me;
 O pour thy blessing on my head
 that I may think for thee.

2. O dearest Lord, thy sacred hands
 with nails were pierced for me;
 O shed thy blessing on my hands
 that they may work for thee.

3. O dearest Lord, thy sacred feet
 with nails were pierced for me;
 O pour thy blessing on my feet
 that they may follow thee.

4. O dearest Lord, thy sacred heart
 with spear was pierced for me;
 O pour thy Spirit in my heart
 that I may live for thee.

Henry Ernest Hardy (Father Andrew) 1869-1946
 KETLEY (TIS 352)

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 & BENEDICTUS

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

... songs of never ending praise *or* ... 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

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 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 receive the bread only that is perfectly appropriate. Gluten free wafers are available on request. A blessing only is also available, please simply ask one of the clergy at the altar rail.

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 'From heaven you came, helpless babe'

Gr. Capo 3 Cm(Am) G(E) Ab(F) Bb(G) Eb(C)

1 From heaven you came, help-less babe, en-tered our world, your
glo - ry veiled; not to be served, but to serve,
and give your life that we might live. *Refrain* This is our
God, the Ser-vant King, he calls us now to fol - low
him, to bring our lives as a dai - ly off - er -
ing of wor-ship to the Ser-vant King.

1. From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled;
not to be served, but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

4. So let us learn how to serve
and in our lives enthrone him;
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God, the Servant King ...

Graham Kendrick 1950-
SERVANT KING (TiS 256)

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE 'Andante maestoso' (founded on an old Irish church melody)
No. 5 from Six Short Preludes & Postludes, Op. 101, Set 1
Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

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)

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

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

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



Wednesday Night Service

You are invited to join us each week, Wednesday at 7pm,
for Eucharist in the Chapel of St. Michael and All Angels.
The service is usually followed with supper and fellowship.
All are welcome. We hope to see you there!



CURRENT NOTICES

Stewardship September

The Vicar, Wardens and Parish Council are currently planning the 2026 budget, which funds every aspect of our church life together. To assist in this, you will find a letter in the Narthex asking you to make a financial pledge of support for the coming year. Please consider this prayerfully and return the enclosed response form by *Gift Day, Sunday 28 September*. Instructions are enclosed with your letter.



Confronting Extremism - a conversation with Dr Mark Duckworth

Thursday 18 September, 12.30-1.30pm, Wesley Church, Lonsdale Street. Join this important conversation on the rise and resurgence of violent extremist movements in Australia. Robyn Whitaker sits down with Mark Duckworth from Deakin University, an expert on violent extremism and counter measures, to discuss the theology and ideology of such extremist views as well as how we can helpfully combat them. This is part of The Wesley Centre's "Conversations that Matter" series. Find out more at thewesleycentre.org/conversations-that-matter

Sunday 28 September, Safe Ministry Group Training Session

We will be holding a Safe Ministry Group Training Session on Sunday 28 September following the 10am service (11.30am) in Buxton Hall. If you are a volunteer and you have not completed Safe Ministry training or it has been 3 years or more since you last did your training please sign-up [here](#) or in the Narthex. If you are not sure if you need to complete training OR If you are unable to attend this session, but need to complete training, contact the parish office.

'Exploring Psalm Therapy': Quiet Day, Saturday 4 October, 10am-4pm

This Quiet Day, at St Joseph's Spirituality Centre Williamstown, will explore the ways in which we can allow the Psalms to comfort us, challenge us, and bring us to prayer and praise. Revd Dr Wendy Crouch will use her experience as both priest and psychologist to present some ways to do this - how to bring to the psalms, our experiences in the world, and in our own lives, engaging in deep listening to what we find there, and responding in prayer. Between the guided reflections you can take time to enjoy a walk along the beach or through the Botanic Gardens, which are right next door! For any questions about the day, or to register your interest and make payment, contact Revd Dr Wendy Crouch assistantpriest@saintjohnstoorak.org OR the Parish Office 9826 1434 enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org BYO Lunch - Tea & Coffee Provided. \$20 per person. *RSVP Sunday 28 September (limited spots remaining!)*

Confirmation & Reception into the Anglican Church, Sunday 26 October

If you are interested in taking this significant step in your faith journey, please contact the Parish Office or speak to a member of clergy. Classes in preparation will begin on Sunday 21 September at 11.30am, followed by classes on October 5, 12 and 19. Attendance is required for those planning to be Baptised, Confirmed or Received on the Sunday 26 October. Also, any who wish to learn more about the Christian faith, including the Bible, are welcome to join in these classes.

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 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 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.

The Melbourne Anglican (TMA) and Prayer Diary

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

Contribute to Worship Services

All our ministries at St John's are supported by our wonderful volunteers. The rosters for this month 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.

Parish Council

Parish council meets monthly, and minutes are available on request.

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:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86212089431?pwd=ZEN2M2xWRHRhMVhxTWWhwcmVwTzFEEdz09> Meeting ID: 862 1208 9431 | Passcode: 541347

Prayer Requests

Prayer requests can be sent to prayers@saintjohnstoorak.org. The clergy check emails for prayer requests daily, and pray in solidarity with anyone who would like prayers said for them.

Clergy Days Off

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

Prayers for Victims of War: Give comfort, O Lord, to all who are torn away from their homes and their loved ones, by war, by famine, or by cruelty; give the world your peace and turn the hearts of those who will to war; grant that we who dwell secure in this insecure world may be generous in caring for our displaced brothers and sisters, of all faiths and none. We ask this in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From the Anglican Cycle of Prayer: The Anglican Parish of Gisborne (Scott Mudd, Debra Saffrey-Collins); Religious Orders serving within the Anglican Church of Australia; Defence Force Chaplains (Bp Grant Dibden, Chaplains & Members of the Defence Forces); The Anglican Church of Southern Africa (Abp Thabo Makgoba); Anglican Parish of St Stephen and St Mary, Mount Waverley – Pastoral service (Bp Kate Prowd); Christ Church St Kilda – Pastoral service (Bp Genieve Blackwell); St Mark's Forest Hill – Pastoral service (Bp Paul Barker) & All Saints' Newtown – Pastoral service (Bp Brad Billings);

For the Anglican Church: The Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, The Most Revd Geoffrey Smith; Archbishop-elect of the Diocese of Melbourne, The Rt Revd Dr Richard (Ric) Thorpe; Administrator and Assistant Bishop of Melbourne, Marningatha Episcopate, The Rt Revd Genieve Blackwell.

For those who lead us in Government: His Majesty King Charles III; Governor General Sam Mostyn AC; Prime Minister Anthony Albanese; Federal Member of Parliament for Kooyong, Dr. Monique Ryan; 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 our Neighbours: Our partner churches in the Toorak Ecumenical Movement, St. Peter's Catholic Church, Toorak Uniting Church, and The Swedish Church; and our friends at the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation.

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 Natalie Charles; and Toorak Primary School Principal Suada Dzaferovic.

For the sick and all in need: Rex, Nichole, Joanna, Ivan, Anthea, Joan, James, Karen, Trisha, Emma, Thomas, Rod, Robyn, Stephen, Stella, Louis, Nina, Bissie, Jane, Naomi, Rosie & John.

For those in aged care and those who are housebound: Beverley, Angela, Elizabeth, Russ, Sue & Nancy.

Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week: David Mattingly (2016); Mary Barnaby (1989); Ken Clements (1997); Ian Holyman (2015); Henry Somerset (1995); Blanca Ladd (1998); Wollie Gavin (2001); Louise Durack (2012); Maurice Carter (2004); Grace Palmer (1985); June Drake (2006); Leslie Gough (1995) & Ainslie Meares (1986)

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

Numbers 21:4b-9

The people of Israel are now in the desert in the Sinai peninsula, probably near its northeastern edge (southwest of the Dead Sea.) During their journey from Egypt to Palestine, the Bible tells us of eight rebellions: six of the people against their leaders and God, and two of their leaders against God. In today's reading, the people rebel against Moses and God. The people are "impatient" (v. 4) or *short-tempered* because Moses has refused to engage Edom in battle and, (after being attacked) Israel, with God's help, has won a military victory over the local Canaanites. In criticizing "this miserable food" (v. 5), i.e. manna, they are resenting what God gives them freely. So God sends "poisonous" (v. 6, or fiery) "serpents" – fiery possibly because the bites become inflamed before the victims die. The people do repent, and ask Moses to intercede for them ("pray to the LORD", v. 7). God replies that he will heal through a symbol, a bronze snake on a pole. Those who believe in God will be healed. The rebellion stories tell of a lack of trust in God – which led to all those of the generation that left Egypt (including Moses) dying before Israel entered the Promised Land – a punishment for lack of faith, and an example for later generations. These stories also tell, very frankly, of the issues of human leadership: its qualifications, manifestations and limitations. Moses really has to struggle to be an effective leader. The bronze serpent was preserved and worshipped until, because it had become a symbol of worship separate from the worship of God, it was smashed to bits during the reign of King Hezekiah, in the late 700s BC (see 2 Kings 18:4).

Psalms 98:1-6

Worshippers are invited to sing "a new song" marking new evidence of God's rule. With truth ("right hand") and power, he has won the "victory", i.e. salvation, saving acts, for his people Israel. He has triumphed over all who try to overthrow his kingdom. All peoples can see that Israel is right in trusting him ("vindication", v. 2). Then v. 3: as he did when the Israelites groaned under oppression in Egypt (Exodus 2:24), he now remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – to lead them and protect them. All peoples will see his saving acts. (These verses are in the past tense, but the reference is to a future event.) Vv. 4-8 call on all creation ("earth", "sea", "floods" and "hills") to acknowledge and be joyful in God's rule. Per v. 7b, people of all lands are invited to join in. God's coming to "judge the world" (v. 9) will be a truly marvellous event. He will judge us, but his judgement will be perfectly fair and equitable, for he is righteous.

1 Corinthians 1:18-24

In the preceding verses, Paul has urged the Christian community at Corinth to be "in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose" (v. 10). He has heard from members of Chloe's household that there are "quarrels" (v. 11, or *contentions*)

“among you”. Some claim that they “belong to Paul” (v. 12); others that they belong to Apollos, to Cephas, or to Christ. Paul is thankful that he baptised very few members of the community, because “no one can say that you were baptised in my name” (v. 15), for Christ sent him to Corinth to “proclaim the gospel ... so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power” (v. 17). You can’t have a community in which Christians are at cross-purposes with each other. Then v. 18: the message of the cross makes sense to the faithful: to us, it is the revelation of God’s power, but to others, it is nonsense (“foolishness”, vv. 18, 21). In v. 19, Paul recalls a verse from Isaiah referring to events that occurred when Assyria was threatening Judah. The king’s counsellor (a “wise” man, one versed in popular philosophy) advised alliance with Egypt, but Isaiah told the king to do nothing but trust in the Lord: God would save Israel and bring to nothing the “wisdom of the wise” and the “discernment” (intelligence) “of the discerning”. From other sources, we know that there were many “wise” citizens of Corinth, each of whom had their own solutions to the world’s problems. The Greek philosopher and the Jewish scribe count as nothing before God; Paul says: God’s wisdom is different: you can’t “know” (v. 21) it in a philosophical way. Knowing God is an experiential matter in which one renders him homage and obeys his will. Jews and Greeks seek knowledge in their cultural ways (v. 22), but we proclaim something different: to those Jews and Greeks who are called, the cross makes a lot of sense. In v. 31, Paul tells his readers: “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord”. Paul is speaking of the cross as a symbol of our faith in our hearts rather than a physical symbol, e.g. one carried in procession. Early Christian art portrays the cup, the fish, and the Greek letters Chi-Rho (Christ); it was in the 300s that, thanks to Constantine, the cross became a physical symbol.

John 3:13-17

John intersperses stories about Jesus with teaching material. In the preceding verses, he has told us about Nicodemus, a powerful and wealthy man, and “a teacher of Israel” (v. 10). Nicodemus is eager to understand this man from God, but to be “born from above” (v. 3) of “water and Spirit” (v. 5) is beyond his comprehension. (This is probably a reference to baptism.) Jesus tells him that some things cannot be understood in human, natural, terms. He continues: if you can’t comprehend things that happen on earth, how can you possibly understand “heavenly things” (v. 12), super-natural truths. In v. 13, Jesus says: he who comes down from heaven has gone up again. Moses’ bronze serpent preserved from death those who trusted, through this symbol, in God. Note “lifted up” (v. 14): Jesus foreshadows the Crucifixion. In a similar way, whoever believes in Christ will have “eternal life” (v. 15), life in the age to come. Those who willfully refuse to believe will “perish” (v. 16). That’s the whole point of Jesus’ coming: through him, we have salvation, not condemnation.

Need time for prayer? Some quiet space?

The church is open every day from 9am until 5pm for you to come and pray, meditate, or sit quietly. There are prayer books and prayer booklets in the Angel Chapel and the Narthex for use, the latter of which you can also download [here](#).

MUSIC COMMENTARY

PRELUDE 'Prelude on Rockingham'

Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)

A chorister at Wakefield Cathedral, Kenneth Leighton studied with Bernard Rose in Oxford, thereafter holding teaching positions at Leeds, Edinburgh and Oxford. He returned in 1970 to become Reid Professor of Music in Edinburgh, a position he held until his death.

POSTLUDE 'Andante maestoso' (founded on an old Irish church melody)

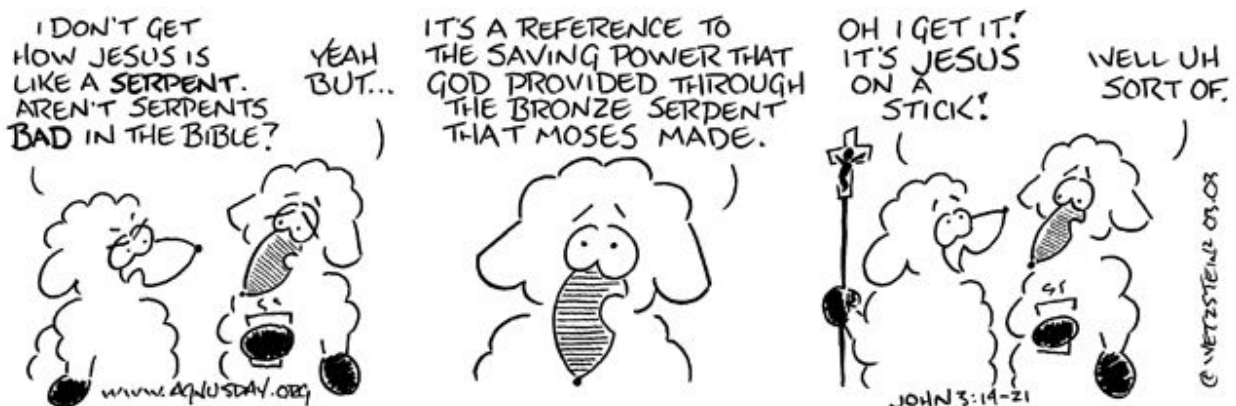
No. 5 from Six Short Preludes & Postludes, Op. 101, Set 1

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

Stanford was one of the leading musicians of his generation and had a profound effect on the development and history of English music as a performer, conductor, composer, teacher and writer. He was appointed Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music in London in 1883 (a position that he held for more than forty years) and Professor of Music at Cambridge in 1888. He subsequently held appointments as Conductor of the Bach Choir in London, the Leeds Philharmonic Society and the Leeds Festival.

ART COMMENTARY

Today also recalls the historical event of Saint Helena (mother of Emperor Constantine), finding the True Cross. According to tradition, first mentioned by Saint Cyril of Jerusalem in 348AD, Saint Helena, nearing the end of her life, decided under divine inspiration to travel to Jerusalem in 326 to excavate the Holy Sepulchre and attempt to locate the Cross on which Jesus died. She found three crosses. According to one tradition, the inscription *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum* (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews) remained attached to the True Cross. Another tradition (which is illustrated in our fresco painting of today) says that the True Cross was identified when a dead youth who was being carried past on a stretcher was brought to life again after the three crosses, one after the other, were laid over him. The third cross, the true cross, was the one which raised him from the dead. In celebration of the discovery of the Holy Cross, Constantine ordered the construction of two churches at the site of the Holy Sepulchre and on Mount Calvary. Those churches were dedicated on September 13 and 14, 335 AD, and shortly thereafter the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross began to be celebrated on the latter date. The feast slowly spread from Jerusalem to other churches, until, by the year 720, the celebration was universal.



This Week

SUNDAY, 14 September 2025

Feast of the Holy Cross

8am Said Eucharist

10am Sung Eucharist

Baptism of Amelia Malon, Camila Richardson,
Rosie Pirvu & Omar Chmaisse

WEDNESDAY, 10 September 2025

7pm Eucharist, in the Angel Chapel



Next Sunday, 21 September

Feast of St Matthew:

Apostle, Evangelist & Martyr

8am Eucharist

First Reading: *Proverbs 3.1-6*, Volunteer

Required

Second Reading: *Ephesians 4.1-14*, Volunteer

Required

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 9.9-13*

Intercessor: Jason Pennell

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

10am Eucharist

First Reading: *Proverbs 3.1-6*, Anthony

Mannering

Second Reading: *Ephesians 4.1-14*, Leanne

Blankenberg

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 9.9-13*

Intercessor: John Horan

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

Morning Tea: Volunteers Required



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

Parish Office

Open 9am - 5pm | Monday - Friday

9826 1765 or 9826 1434

enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org

Wardens

Mr Keith Beecher OAM,

Mr Adriaan den Dulk

Mr Jason Pennell

Parish Council

Mr Rob Condon, Mr Richard Uglow,

Mr Craig Cooper, Mr John Horan,

Ms Hsinhui Huang, Mr Anthony Gissing

Vicar

The Revd Dr Peter French

vicar@saintjohnstoorak.org

Assistant Priest

The Revd Dr Wendy Crouch

assistantpriest@saintjohnstoorak.org

Director of Music & Organist

Mr Zachary Hamilton-Russell

Parish Administrator & Child Safe Compliance

Ms Alicia Groves

enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org

Child Safe Officer

Mr Clive Wright

Archivist

Professor Geoff Quail OAM

geoffrey.quail@monash.edu