



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859



Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
27 September, 2026
10am

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 green, the liturgical colour during what the Church describes as 'Ordinary Time,' that is, the time outside the major seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. Green symbolises life, hope and anticipation.

Cover Image

Parable of the Two Sons, Andrei N. Mironov (b. 1975),
2012, oil on canvas.

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 as the procession enters the church

PRELUDE 'Prelude No.1'
from Three Liturgical Preludes

George Oldroyd (1886-1951)

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 'Your hand, O God, has guided'

Gtr. Capo 2 D(C) Bm(Am) E7(D7) A(G)

1 Your hand, O God, has guided your
D(C) A7(G7) D(C) Bm(Am)

1 flock from age to age; the wondrous tale is
E7(D7) A(G) D(C) A7(G7) D(C)

1 written, full clear, on every page; your
F#m(Em) Bm(Am) C#7(B7) F#m(Em) C#7(B7)

1 people owned your goodness, and we their deeds re -
F#m(Em) A(G) D(C) G(F) A(G)

1 - cord; and both of this bear witness: one
D(C) A(G) Bm(Am) G(F) D(C) A7(G7) D(C)

church, one faith, one Lord.

1. Your hand, O God, has guided
your flock from age to age;
the wondrous tale is written,
full clear, on every page;
your people owned your
goodness,
and we their deeds record;
and both of this bear witness:
one church, one faith, one Lord.

2. Your heralds brought glad tidings
to greatest, as to least;
they bade them rise, and hasten
to share the great King's feast;
and this was all their teaching,
in every deed and word,
to all alike proclaiming
one church, one faith, one Lord.

3. Through many a day of darkness,
through many a scene of strife,
the faithful few fought bravely
to guard the nation's life.
Their gospel of redemption,
sin pardoned, earth restored,
was all in this enfolded:
one church, one faith, one Lord.

4. Your mercy will not fail us,
nor leave your work undone;
with your right hand to help us,
the victory shall be won;
and then by all creation,
your name shall be adored,
and this shall be our anthem:
one church, one faith, one Lord.

Edward Hayes Plumptre 1821-91 *alt.*
Basil Harwood 1859-1949
THORNBURY (TiS 459)

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 *sung*

Kyrie **2**



Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

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 *sung*

Gloria



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

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

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

Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on

us; you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer. For

you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord, — you a - lone are the Most High,

Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

COLLECT FOR THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Grant, O merciful God, that your people may have that mind that was in Christ Jesus, who emptied himself, and took the form of a servant, and in humility became obedient even to death. For you have highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, Jesus Christ, the Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in everlasting glory. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE FIRST READING Exodus 17.1-7 *read by Jenny Smith*

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?' But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?' So Moses cried out to the Lord, 'What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.' The Lord said to Moses, 'Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.' Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'

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

THE PSALM Psalm 78.1-4, 11-16 *sung by the choir*

Give heed to my teaching, O my people:

incline your ears to the words of my mouth;

For I will open my mouth in a parable:

and expound the mysteries of former times.

What we have heard and known:

what our forebears have told us,

We will not hide from their children,

but declare to a generation yet to come:

the praiseworthy acts of the Lord,

his mighty and wonderful works.

For he did marvellous things

in the sight of their ancestors:

in the land of Egypt, in the country of Zoan.

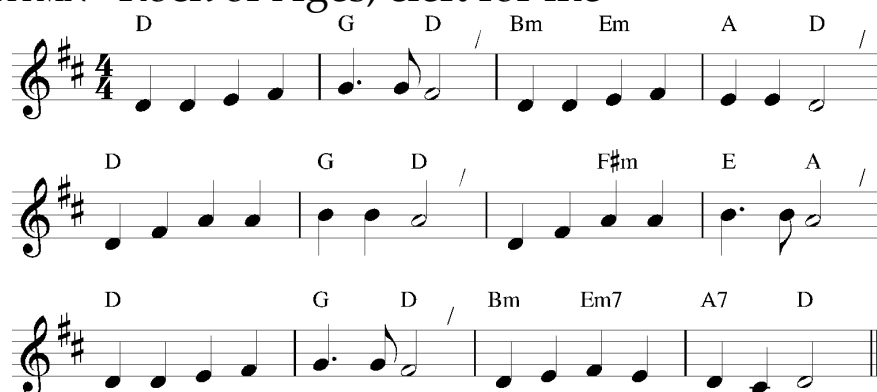
He divided the sea and let them pass through:
 he made the waters stand up in a heap.
In the daytime he led them with a cloud:
 and all night long with the light of fire.
He cleft rocks in the wilderness:
 and gave them drink in abundance
 as from springs of water.
He brought streams out of the rock:
 and caused the waters to flow down like rivers.
But for all this they sinned yet more against him:
 and rebelled against the Most High in the desert.
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 2.1-13* *read by James Griffith*

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of 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. Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

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

THE GRADUAL HYMN 'Rock of Ages, cleft for me'



1. Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy riven side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure,
cleanse me from its guilt and
power.
2. Not the labours of my hands
can fulfil thy law's demands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears for ever flow,
all for sin could not atone:
thou must save, and thou alone.
3. Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to thy cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Saviour, or I die.
4. While I draw this fleeting breath,
when my eyelids close in death,
when I soar through tracts
unknown,
see thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee.

Augustus Montague Toplady 1740-78
Richard Redhead 1820-1901 PETRA (TiS 222)

Please remain standing for the reading of the Gospel

THE GOSPEL Matthew 21.23-32

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

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

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?' Jesus said to them, 'I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?' And they argued with one another, 'If we say, "From heaven", he will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?" But if we say, "Of human origin", we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.'

So they answered Jesus, 'We do not know.' And he said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 'What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not"; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, "I go, sir"; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

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

THE SERMON Associate Priest, The Venerable Ray McInnes

THE ANTHEM 'O pray for the peace of Jerusalem'

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

THE NICENE CREED *said together, standing*

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *led by Jenny Smith*

The Prayers end with the following

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.

Grant that what we have asked in faith, we may by your grace receive, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PARISH NOTICES

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.**

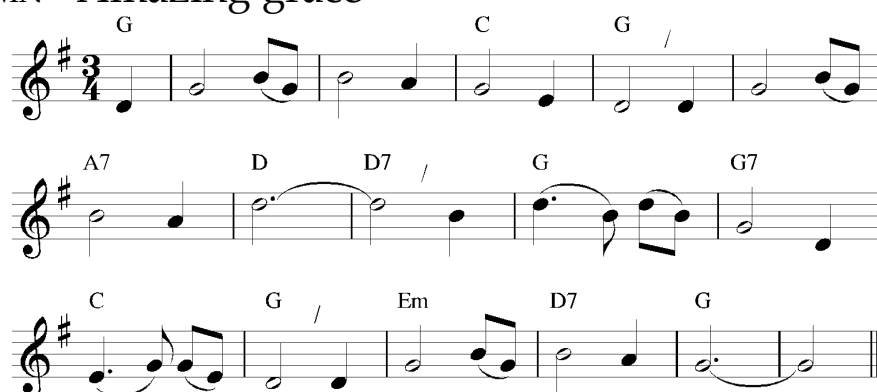
*All share with each other a 'COVIDsafe' sign of peace
Feel free to come and share peace with those people joining us on Zoom*

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 'Amazing grace'



1. Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.
2. As grace first taught my heart to fear,
so grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!
3. Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come:
God's grace has brought me safe
thus far,
and grace will lead me home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

John Newton 1725-1807
arr. Lawrence F. Bartlett 1933- (TiS 129)

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 singing:

Sanctus 2

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,

Hea - ven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Benedictus

Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the

Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - - est.

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer continues to the following

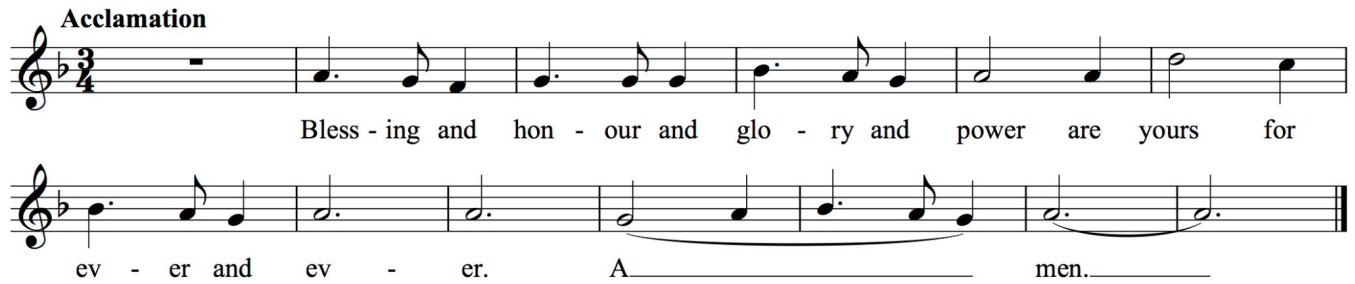
...Let us proclaim the mystery of faith

Acclamation

Christ has died, Christ is ris - en, Christ will come a - gain.

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer ends with the following

... songs of never ending praise.



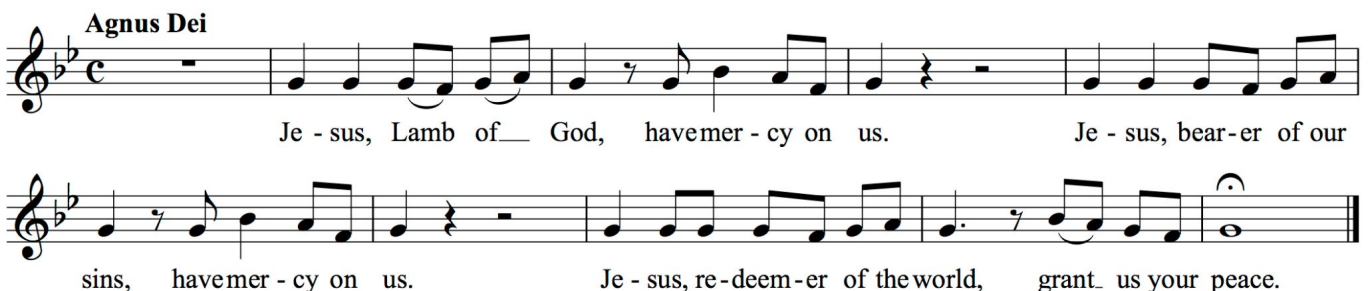
THE LORD'S PRAYER

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



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.

COMMUNION 'Teach me, O Lord'

Thomas Attwood (1765-1838)

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 'To God be the glory'

Gr. Capo 1 Ab(G) Db(C) Ab(G) Eb(D) Ab(G) Db(C)

Ab(G) Bb7(A7) Eb(D) Ab(G) Db(C) Ab(G)

Eb(D) Ab(G) Db(C) Ab(G) Eb7(D7) Ab(G)

Refrain Ab(G)

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear his

voice! Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the peo - ple re -

- joice! O come to the Fa - ther, through Je - sus the

Son, and give him the glo - ry! great things he has done!

1. To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life in atonement for sin
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory! great things he has done!*

2. O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to every believer the promise of God!
and every offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory! great things he has done!*

3. Great things he has taught us, great things he has done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.
Praise the Lord! ...

Frances Jane van Alstyne 1820–1915 *alt.*
Reproduced with permission

BLESSING

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE 'Introduction and March'
from Battle of Britain Suite

Sir William Walton (1902-1983)

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:

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

International transfers please include SWIFT code WPACAU2S.



CURRENT NOTICES

TODAY Sunday 27 September, 11.30am, Confirmation & Reception Preparation
Preparation classes (*catechism*) continue today, in the Whitney King Room. Attendance is required for those planning to be confirmed or received. Further sessions will take place on October 4 and 11.

TODAY Sunday 27 September, 11.30am, St. John's Guided Tour

Ever wanted to learn more about the rich history of our church? Ever admired the stained glass windows or appreciated the ornate wood carvings? Parishioner and volunteer archivist, Nick Cree, will be giving a tour of the church after the 10am service on Sunday 27 September. Please sign-up [here](#) or in the Narthex.

Sunday 4 October, 4pm, Blessing of the Pets

A favourite afternoon in the St. John's calendar is the annual blessing of the pets service, held in honour of St. Francis (the patron saint of animals). All are welcome - with their pets! - to gather on the South Lawn for a service of prayer and blessing. Volunteers are needed to help set-up chairs and tables prior to the service. Please contact the Parish Office if you can help!

Nepal Flood Disaster Appeal

On Wednesday 26 August, a sudden and powerful flash flood tore through Nepal's Bhote Koshi and Trishuli river systems. A surge of water, ice, rocks and debris swept through towns and remote mountain areas, destroying homes, roads, bridges and critical infrastructure. Early reports indicate that at least 389 lives have been lost and more than 677 people are missing. Search and rescue operations remain underway. Anglican Overseas Aid's partner, International Nepal Fellowship, is delivering emergency shelter, food relief, safe drinking water, and early recovery to those who need it most. To find out more information and donate to this cause visit tinyurl.com/anglicanoverseasaidnepal or scan the QR code.



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

A Prayer 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: Episcopal Area of Geelong - Bishop Nigel Pope; Archdeaconry of Williamstown; Werribee Deanery: St Thomas's Werribee, St Stephen's Karen AAC, Sojourners AAC, Epiphany Hoppers Crossing, Hope & Resurrection Community Church MP, St Eanswythe's Altona/St Clement Laverton, St Mark's Spotswood, Holy Trinity Williamstown, South Sudanese Dinka, Williamstown MP, St Peter's Jieeng AAC, Christ Church Newport, Christ Church Melton, Caroline Springs, Holy Trinity Bacchus Marsh, Emmanuel Karen Lara MP & Holy Trinity Lara.

For the Anglican Church: Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Revd and Rt Hon. Sarah Mullally; Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, The Rt Revd Dr Mark Short; Archbishop of Melbourne, The Most Revd Dr Ric Thorpe; and, Assistant Bishop of Melbourne, Marningatha Episcopate, The Rt Revd Alison Taylor.

For those who lead us in Government: His Majesty King Charles III; Governor General Sam Mostyn AC; Prime Minister Anthony Albanese; Member for Kooyong, Dr. Monique Ryan; Premier of Victoria, Ben Carroll; and, Member for Malvern, Michael O'Brien.

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 those celebrating birthdays: Jane Anderson.

For the sick and all in need: Nichole, Joanna, James, Karen, Trisha, Daphne, Thomas, Rod, Stephen, Stella, Louis, Nina, Bissie, Jane, Rosie, John, Alina, Maria, Diana, Briody & Hazel.

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

Give thanks for those whose Anniversary of Death is this week: Anne Isaacson (2016); Geoff Birtles (2023); Joan Woods (2023); Patricia Jamieson (2021); Lindsay Hosking (2025); William Stokes (2019); Jennifer Mitchell (2021); Ted Gleeson (2018) & Michael Hamson (2019).

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

Exodus 17:1-7

The Israelites travel “by stages” towards the Promised Land. As God showed his power during their slavery, winning their freedom by inflicting ten plagues on the Egyptians, he now tests the Israelites’ faith in him, as provider and ruler, ten times. If they trust in him, he will save them. This reading is about one of the tests, but who tests whom? (vv. 2, 7). Earlier, at Marah, the people had water but it was bitter; here, at “Rephidim” (v. 1, an oasis in the Negev or Sinai) there is no water at all; the well has run dry. The Israelites are serious: the Hebrew translated “quarrelled” (v. 2) is a legal term. They bring a case against Moses, but to him, their charge is against God: they doubt that he can feed them, be their god, in this hostile desert environment. As in other tests, God simply grants the people’s request, without rebuking them. He orders Moses to take representatives of the people, “some of the elders” (v. 5) to the “rock at Horeb” (v. 6). The elders see his show of power. The parallel with Egypt continues: the “staff” (v. 5) is the same one Moses used to poison the Nile. (“Massah and Meribah”, v. 7, come from words for *test* and *quarrel*.) In giving manna, bread from heaven, earlier, and now water (from an earthly rock), God shows his mastery over creation.

Psalms 78:1-4,12-16

This psalm, used at major festivals, tells the story of the people of Israel from the Exodus to the reign of David – as a way of teaching that God has continued his saving acts in history in spite of the unfaithfulness of his people. The Hebrew word translated “parable” (v. 2) has a wide meaning; here it means wise instruction – based not only on knowledge but also on long experience, of God’s ways. It is important that coming generations know about God and his marvellous interventions in human affairs (his military “might”, v. 4, and “wonders”); may his deeds of the past not be forgotten (v. 7); may all live by his Law. “Zoan” (v. 12) is Ramesses, the city from which the Exodus began. V. 14 recalls God’s presence in the wilderness: a pillar of “cloud” by day and one of fire (“fiery light”) at night, and vv. 15-16 the event described in today’s Old Testament reading. May future generations not be like their “stubborn and rebellious” (v. 8) ancestors, who were “not faithful to God”

Philippians 2:1-13

There is of course “encouragement in Christ”, so Paul urges the Christians at Philippi: through it, and moved by God’s love for them, may they to “be of the same mind[set], having the same love, being in full accord ...” (v. 2). May they “regard others as better than ... [themselves]” (v. 3), freely adopting a lowly, unassertive stance before others, replacing self-interest with concern for others. Vv. 5-11 are an early Christian hymn to which Paul has added v. 8b. He exhorts his readers to be of the same mindset as Jesus – one that is appropriate for them, given their existence “in Christ” (v. 5). Christ was “in the form of God” (v. 6): he

was already like God; he had a God-like way of being, e.g. he was not subject to death. He shared in God's very nature. Even so, he did not "regard" being like God "as something to be exploited", i.e. to be used for his own purposes. Rather, he "emptied himself" (v. 7), made himself powerless and ineffective – as a slave is powerless, without rights. He took on the likeness of a human being, with all which that entails (except sin), including death. As a man, he lowered ("humbled", v. 8) himself, and throughout his life in the world, was fully human and totally obedient to God, even to dying. (Paul now adds: even to the most debasing way of dying, crucifixion – reserved for slaves and the worst criminals.)

God actively responded to this total denial of self, his complete *living and dying for others*, by placing him above all other godly people ("highly exalted him", v. 9), and bestowing on him the name, title and authority of "Lord" (v. 11) over the whole universe ("heaven", v. 10, "earth", "under the earth"). This authority, before Christ came to us, the Father reserved for himself. Paul recalls God's words spoken through Isaiah: "From every corner of the earth [all are to] turn to me and be saved; for I am God ... to me every knee shall bow ... to me every tongue shall swear, saying 'In the Lord alone are victory and might ... all Israel's descendants will be victorious and will glory in the Lord'"; the Philippians shall worship him; confessing that "Jesus Christ is Lord" (v. 11) is proclaiming the victory and might of God. The ultimate goal is the "glory of God the Father", the reclamation of God's sovereignty, his power over, and presence in, the universe. So (v. 12) may they, using Christ's example of obedience and lowliness ("fear and trembling"), continue to "work out" their "salvation" with God's help in what they intend ("will", v. 13) and what they do ("work").

Matthew 21:23-32

In the final week of his earthly life, Jesus has just shown the importance of faith in understanding God's ways. Now, as he teaches in the Temple, representatives of the Sanhedrin ("chief priests and the elders") ask who has given him the power and "authority" to do all that he has done in his ministry. But he will only answer them if they first answer his question (v. 25), one which will show whether they have the requisite faith to understand his answer. His questioners are skilled in the Law, but it is of little help in deciding whether a prophet (in this case John the Baptist) is genuinely from God. If they say that John was from God, they should have repented as he urged; if they say he was not, they will lose face and status with the many who have come to Jesus (v. 26). The Sanhedrin judged such issues, so their answer (v. 27) shows their incompetence. Jesus tells them a parable about admission to the kingdom (vv. 28-30). People known for their evil ways ("tax collectors ...", v. 31) have turned to God (like the first son), while the authorities, (like the second son), have observed the *rules* (note "sir", v. 30) but have not acted on them. But they can still come to faith; even if they do, people considered to be disreputable will enter the Kingdom "ahead of you" (v. 31).

MUSIC COMMENTARY

PRELUDE 'Prelude No.1'

George Oldroyd (1886-1951)

from Three Liturgical Preludes

Oldroyd was an English organist, composer of organ and choral music, and a teacher of Anglican church music. He was organist of St. Alban's Church, Holborn from 1919 to 1920, and then of St Michael's Church, Croydon from 1920 until his death in 1951. In the 1920s he taught at Trinity College, London, and from 1933-1948 was Director of Music at Whitgift School in Croydon. From 1944 he was Dean of the Faculty of Music at London University, becoming King Edward Professor of Music from 1951, succeeding Stanley Marchant.

POSTLUDE 'Introduction and March'

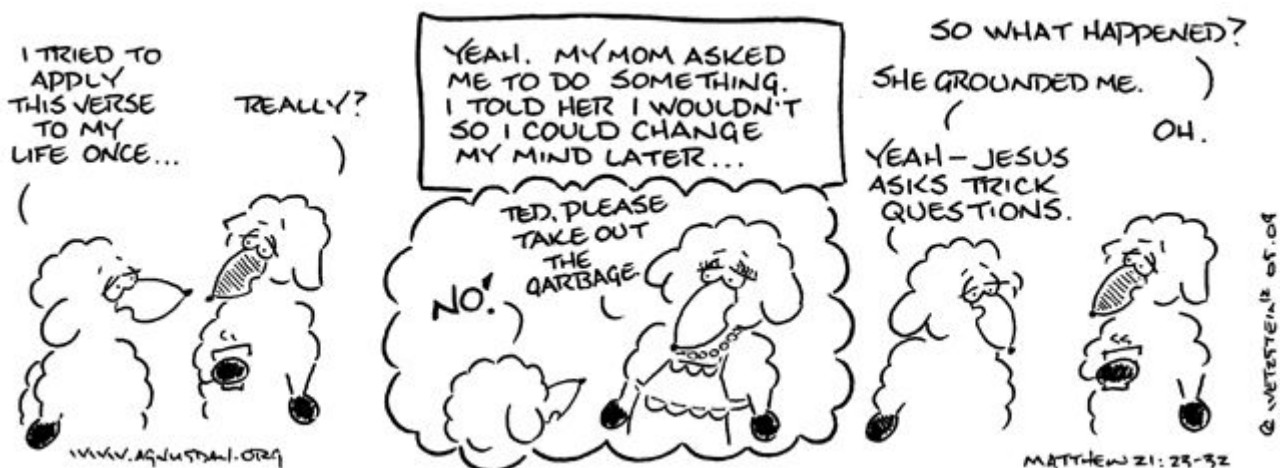
Sir William Walton (1902-1983)

from Battle of Britain Suite

During a sixty-year career, Walton wrote music in several classical genres and styles, from film scores to opera. His best-known works include *Facedil An Entertainment*, the cantata *Belshazzar's Feast* and his *First Symphony*.

ART COMMENTARY

Today's pewsheet features *Parable of the Two Sons*, by Russian artist *Andrei Mironov*. He is known mainly as a portrait painter, though he also works in the genre of religious painting. Mironov's painting illustrates the moment in today's parable where the father asks his two sons to go and work in the vineyard. One son initially refuses but later goes, while the other agrees outwardly but fails to go. The artwork emphasizes themes of true obedience, repentance, and sincerity versus superficial compliance.



This Week

SUNDAY, 27 September 2026

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

8am Said Eucharist

10am Sung Eucharist

11.30am Catechism, Whitney King Room

MONDAY, 28 September 2026

3pm Interment of Ashes of Peter Colin Richards

4pm Engagement Committee Meeting

WEDNESDAY, 30 September 2026

7pm Eucharist, in the Angel Chapel

THURSDAY, 1 October 2026

3.30pm Wedding of Matthew Heislers
& Qiuuo Huang

FRIDAY, 2 October 2026

2pm Wedding of Helena Proimos
& Flynn Richards



Next Sunday, 4 October
Nineteenth Sunday after
Pentecost

8am Eucharist

First Reading: *Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20*, Anthony Rose

Second Reading: *Philippians 3:4b-14*, Volunteer Required

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 21:33-46*

Intercessor: Volunteer Required

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

10am Eucharist

First Reading: *Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20*, Karin Rethwisch

Second Reading: *Philippians 3:4b-14*, Andrew Ankers

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 21:33-46*

Intercessor: Keith Beecher

Preacher: The Revd Dr Peter French

Morning Tea: Celia Langford & Fiona Singleton



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 Jason Pennell, Mr Richard Uglow

Parish Council

Mr Rob Condon, Mr Craig Cooper,
Mr Anthony Gissing

Vicar

The Revd Dr Peter French
vicar@saintjohnstoorak.org

Assistant Priest

The Revd Kathryn Watt
assistantpriest@saintjohnstoorak.org

Assistant Curate

The Revd Victoria Bakerov
curate@saintjohnstoorak.org

Associate Priest

The Venerable Ray McInnes
ray.mcinnis26@gmail.com

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