

The Catholic Parish of Sacred Heart & St Columba

Our Parish is a Christian community which welcomes all to walk together in a spirit of compassion, justice and hope.



PARISH NEWSLETTER 16 / 17 DECEMBER 2023 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

St Columba Church

cnr Glenhantly & Normandy Rds
Elwood 3184

Sacred Heart Church

83 Grey Street, St Kilda West 3182

St Columba Primary School

24 Glenhantly Road Elwood 3184
9531 6560; www.stcolumbasprimary.org

Sacred Heart Mission

87 Grey Street, St Kilda West 3182
9537 1166; www.sacredheartmission.org

PARISH HOUSE

2 Normandy Road, Elwood 3184
03 9531 6120; shsc@shscparish.org.au
www.shscparish.org.au

Parish Priest: Fr John Petrus
john@shscparish.org.au

Pastoral Ministry Leader: Christine Mitchell
christine@shscparish.org.au

Office Manager: Jane Hearnese
jane@shscparish.org.au

SHM Pastoral Care Worker:
Karen Englebretsen
kenglebretsen@sacredheartmission.org

St Columba Principal / REC:
Daniella Maddalena
dmaddalena@scelwood.catholic.edu.au

Deputy Principal: Bern Bradley
bernb@scelwood.catholic.edu.au

Parish Safeguarding Committee:
Fr John Petrus, Christine Mitchell,
Daniella Maddalena, Jane Hearnese

Parish Visiting Team: Lay Pastoral Care Group; Legion of Mary Groups
Call or email the Parish Office.

St Vincent de Paul President: Dominic Tesoriero
domtess1@gmail.com

Elwood and St Kilda Legion of Mary
Please contact the parish office.

A reflection on Sunday Gospel^[1]: Rejoicing In the Wilderness

The introduction of the various characters that shaped the original Christmas story, calls us to embody in our very selves the same sentiments and challenges of those caught up in the original events. Simple and confused folk like Mary or Joseph or Zachary and Elizabeth, ignorant and unpopular shepherds seeing things in the coldness of the night sky, angels singing an unheard song of glory and joy about an unknown child born in the shelter for animals - these are more than persona in an ancient story. There are exemplars of life for us today who claim to believe in Christmas.

Leading the pageantry and dominating centre-stage dance stands John the Baptist, the man of shocking demeanour, full of contradictions, proclaiming a message in words of fire, a voice booming, not from the power of any public or political stage, but from the lifeless emptiness of a desert. He walks out of the desert, powerless and uncouth and he fiercely exposes all forms of abuse, power, riches and self-righteousness. Finally, as soon as the One he has announced appears on the public scene, John disappears into silence, imprisonment and death. John's message is all fire and condemnation, and yet he proclaims the joy-filled fulfilment of long centuries of hope and expectations. In the midst of contradictions, John the Baptist stands alone as one whose faith and commitment to God's plan never wavered. No, He is not the expected Messiah foretold centuries before by wise prophets and longed for by the poor and the powerless. He makes that quite clear at the very beginning in answer to those who sought a revolutionary saviour or a political liberator. The onrush of God into the human story is not about domination or power, but about weakness, honest self-acceptance and trust-filled acceptance, of God as a living and all-embracing presence, even in the empty of the dark night of our lives. As the one who walks ahead to announce the imminent arrival of the King, John is the very embodiment of the person who longs for God's presence, and at the same time is driven by an irresistible compulsion to make this presence alive and active in the here and now, for each and every person, every day.

John's life and mission are not about himself, but about letting God take over in his life. For him, God is not some distant deity sitting in judgement, aloof in the heavens, but inescapable, inescapable reality very much here in this world and in this life. Although broken and unfit even to undo his sandals, nevertheless the person of faith cannot avoid such a One who stands in our minutes, unbeknown to us, to change and bring about radical transformation around us, compelling us to make room until there is enough space and scope for God to revitalise the whole world and each of us. However, for this to happen, one has to undergo a radical change in self-acceptance, perceptions, lifestyle and relationships. Then we can truly rejoice, yes, even in the desert of experiences, because the God who shared our human experience in Bethlehem, is now the living energy of our lives here today. John is challenging us to let God take over as Emmanuel, the God-with-us, so that we are to rejoice, hope and celebrate not just at Christmas, but in every instance of our living days.

^[1] A extract from, "Rejoicing in the Wilderness" in *Healing Presence: A Spirituality of Sunday Gospels (Year B)* by Fr Peter Varengo (2014) Morning Star Publications, Northcote, pp.25-26.

At 11.00am Mass this Sunday we will be honouring **Fr Malcolm Crawford**. We have been so lucky to have Fr Mal as part of our parish following his 'retirement'. Fr Mal has decided to move across to Clifton Hill to live amidst fellow retired priests. We wish him all the very best and look forward to him visiting. We also wish Fr Mal a very Happy 85th Birthday. Please join us for a special morning tea after mass.

WARM WELCOME

Welcome to all who celebrate the Eucharist with us today, to the church communities across our parish and a special welcome to all who happen to be visiting our Parish.

A special welcome to **Bertie, Henry and Tommy** who are baptised this weekend. We pray blessings for them as they grow in love and the faith of their family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Today we stand in footsteps millennia old. May we acknowledge the Elders, families and forebears of the Kulin Nations, who are the traditional custodians of our parish land, whose cultures and customs have nurtured, and continue to nurture, this land since men and women awoke from the great dream.

We acknowledge their continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

Our Parish supports the recommendations of the Royal Commission and all endeavours to bring healing to and justice for the victims of abuse. Our Parish Leadership & Development Team and Safeguarding Committee work proactively to ensure the safety of all children, young people and vulnerable adults in our community.

There are a range of important and interesting resources on the Church noticeboards and on our website supporting and highlighting Safeguarding in our parish.



We are so excited! A group of generous supporters have come together to create a matched giving fund of **\$68,587**.

This means, for every dollar you give to the Dining Hall before December 25, our matched giving fund will match it.

DOUBLE YOUR GIFT, DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT

Your gift will be doubled. Your impact will be doubled. Our community will thrive. You can provide people with a new beginning and hope by giving \$30 today, and it will be doubled to \$60. We warmly invite you to continue to stand in support of people experiencing homelessness.

Warm Regards, Hang CEO SHM

To donate please visit <https://www.sacredheartmission.org/get-involved/all-ways-to-donate/>

Volunteering at Sacred Heart Mission

Rewarding volunteer opportunities are available in Reception, the Meals Program and the Op Shops.

For further information on volunteering, go to

www.sacredheartmission.org

PRAYER FOR THE THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

For Yours Alone

Jesus,

True Light Came and Coming,

Your message is sacred

Holy, Set Apart, Treasured

Your message is eternal

Timeless, Lasting, a Firm Foundation

Your message is salvation

Deliverance, Wholeness, Grace

We bow before your commission to receive

and bear your message into the world.

Show us when to speak and give us the words never for our agenda, for yours alone.

Show us what to do and give us the strength never for our achievement, for yours alone.

Show others we are from you

by your power at work through us

Never for our glory, for yours alone.

(by Lisa Ann Moss Degrenia, <http://www.revlisad.com>)

VOLUNTEERING AT THE CHRISTMAS MASSES

With Christmas one week away, anyone who would like to volunteer for one of the Masses, please put your name and contact details on the sheet at the back of the church and Christine will contact you during the week. The Masses are:

Sunday, 24 December: Christmas Eve Family Mass

- St Columba: Carols at 5.30 p.m.; Mass at 6.00 p.m.
- Sacred Heart: Carols at 10.30 p.m.; Mass at 11.00 p.m.

Monday, 25 December: Christmas Day

- St Columba: 9.00 a.m.
- Sacred Heart: 11.00 a.m.

SVDP CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

Last Saturday, a collection of Vinnies workers and parish Volunteers gathered in the church to pack 80 Christmas hampers and then proceeded to deliver these to our companions in need.

The day was a great success with the companions very appreciative of the hampers

and hand-made Christmas Cards from the School Children.

A big thank you to our Parishioners, our St Columba School community, our sister Vinnies Conference at Gardenvale, Star of the Sea College and St James Primary School for the generous gifts of goods and money, which enabled this project to run so smoothly.

Anyone wanting to know more about Vinnies, can email me at dtco@bigpond.net.au

DOMINIC TESORIERO

President St Vincent De Paul Society Elwood St Kilda West



REDEMPTORISTS INVITATION TO CHRISTMAS

Common Home TV, a multimedia initiative of the Redemptorists of Oceania, is excited to announce the release of its multilingual Christmas message, "An Invitation to Christmas," narrated by Dr Elissa Roper. You can access this E Christmas card on their website: www.commonhome.tv

John Hodgson, Provincial Redemptorist Oceania, shares his perspective on the Christmas message: "In a world grappling with profound suffering, marred by injustice, fear, anger, hatred, and despair, the birth of Jesus Christ beckons us to embrace rather than ignore the complexities of life's enduring challenges. This Christmas E-Card is an invitation to join a transformative journey and be blessed by the hope and joy that arises when we face life's messiness together, walk with the marginalised, and unwrap the gift of God's healing through the profound power of love and compassion within us all."

The Redemptorists extend an open invitation to audiences globally to join in this celebration of Christmas, embracing the challenge to make the spirit of Christmas a year-round experience. Find hope, joy, and unity in the shared message of "An Invitation to Christmas."

MONDAY 17 DECEMBER

We have two of our special pre-Christmas events happening on Monday 18 December. The **Sacred Heart Mission Christmas Liturgy** will be held at **10.30am** at Sacred Heart Church. This year's theme is "Peace".

Our Parish **Communal Reconciliation** will be held at **7.00pm** at St Columba Church.

Please join us at these important events as we pray for peace in our world.

STAFF HOLIDAYS

Christine will be on a very well deserved break from Tuesday 26 December and will return on Monday 8 January 2023.

Jane will be on leave from Tuesday 26 December and will return on Tuesday 2 January 2023.

Fr John will be on leave from Wednesday 10 January and will return on Thursday 18 January.

2024 COLUMBAN CALENDARS

The iconic Columban Art Calendars are available for purchase from Anne at the piety stall at Sacred Heart or from Christine at St Columba. At only \$10 they are a beautiful gift for family and friends.

BREAK OPEN THE WORD 2024 (BOTW)

We have ordered copies of Break Open the Word 2024 and they are available for purchase. BOTW is a great resource for the liturgical year, particularly for those who volunteer as Lectors. We ask for \$15 to help with the cost. Please let Jane or Christine know if you'd like to have a copy.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA GAZA APPEAL

The sudden escalation of hostilities in Israel and Gaza since 7 October has seen unimaginable impacts, with the devastating human toll of over 16,000 deaths across Israel and Palestine. Over 15,000 Palestinians have been killed so far, nearly half of them are children, while more than 25,000 people have been injured in Gaza. Around 1.8 million people, almost 80% of the population, have been displaced in Gaza with immediate food, shelter, health, and psychosocial needs. Provide vital emergency support to the people of Gaza.

Caritas Australia echoes calls from Pope Francis for the violence to stop in the name of God and urges the church community to pray. To support Caritas Australia's Gaza Appeal, visit www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/gaza-crisis or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

ADVENT APPEAL FOR UKRAINE

Since the start of the war, millions of Ukrainians have fled their home country, with thousands of refugees coming to Australia.

In response to the continued conflict in Ukraine, Archbishop Peter A Comensoli is launching a special Advent appeal, the proceeds of which will go towards providing aid and practical assistance to those who have been displaced and are without basic supplies, especially as winter approaches. 'There are no winners in war, only families torn apart. Sadly, this is the painful reality facing so many at this time,' Archbishop Comensoli reflected.

'I'm inviting the faithful of Melbourne to offer whatever they can at this time. And I pray that, together, we can be a sign of God's nearness to those who need it most.'

A Christmas card from Archbishop Comensoli, including pledge details and a pre-paid return envelope, are available at the back of church. You can also visit <https://melbournecatholic.org/adventappeal> for more information and to see Archbishop Comensoli's address.

CALL FOR SUPPORT IN PRAYER

One of our parishioners, Sr Caroline Price, a Good Shepherd Sister, is calling for our prayer support for protection for the people, Religious and priests, and an end to the conflict and persecution of people of all faiths, in the country of Myanmar (Burma):

"The situation in parts of Myanmar (Burma) where Good Shepherd sisters and others work is very serious. In Kayah State, the smallest in Myanmar with a population of 300,000, in the town of Loikow, 80 per cent of residents have had to flee into the forest or try to find safe places to stay. The State is large and mostly dense forest.

In parts of Myanmar, particularly in the north, conflict between the military and Rohingya peoples is ongoing, causing many to flee for their lives. Thousands have fled to Indonesia. Your prayers for the people of Myanmar and for all the priests and religious serving God's people would be much appreciated."

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 61: 1-2, 10-11

Responsorial Psalm:

My soul rejoices in my God.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;

he sent me to bring Good News to the poor.

Alleluia!

Gospel: John 1: 6-8,19-28

OUR LITURGICAL CALENDAR

MONDAY 18 December - SUNDAY 24 December 2023

MONDAY	10.30am SHM Christmas Liturgy at Sacred Heart Church
	7.00pm Communal Reconciliation at St Columba Church
THURSDAY	11.00am MASS at Sacred Heart Church
FRIDAY	9.00am MASS at the Parish House, Elwood
SATURDAY	6.00pm MASS at St Columba Church
SUNDAY	NO 9.00am MASS
	11.00am MASS at Sacred Heart Church (this mass is also live streamed)
	Gospel: Luke 1: 26-38

SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY MASS

6.00pm Family Mass (5.30pm Carols) at St Columba Church

11.00pm Mass (10.30pm Carols) at Sacred Heart Church

MONDAY 25 DECEMBER CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES

9.00am Mass at St Columba Church

11.00am Mass at Sacred Heart Church

COLLECTIONS: Last weekend

Church Account Collection	Presbytery Account Collection	
Envelopes	\$55.00	Total \$258.15
Loose cash	\$350.35	
Total	\$405.35	
Average for 49 weeks	\$352.34	Average for 49 weeks \$227.15

SERVICE AND SUPPORT

Fr John and the parish team are so grateful for the wonderful support that continues to be given to him and the parish. You can contribute to the collections through Tithe.ly - click this link - [tithe.ly https://tithe.ly/give?c=911524](https://tithe.ly/give?c=911524) for once off or regular giving using your credit card or download the tithe.ly app. You can also contact Jane in the office to set up giving.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

"Prayer is what keeps the faith, without it, faith wavers"

Pope Francis

All Recently Deceased: Gerard Dowling, Wilma Ryan, Monty Sultana

1st Anniversaries: Graeme Corners, Mary Conney, Sean Deville, Bernadette Jennings.

Anniversaries: Ethan Carmichael, Stephen Keegan Ondrej Soukup, Roger Graham, Maurice Kay, Karl Roberts, Jason Curran, Ernie O'Keeffe 3.12.2019, Dorothy Corcoran, Raphael Ruske, Mrs Amad, Bob Collins Anthony Ellul, Merrill Lees, Pamela Pimento, Merrill Lees, Eva Bebjewsky, Thérèse Mitchell 6.12.2015, Norman Garland, Naser Azari, Lucas Santos Fraga, Robin Wheatley, Leslie Korosztos, Barry Scanlan, Bill Waucope, Rolando Chan, Bridie Spierings, Bartolo Canestra, Maria Terzita Canestra, Angelo Marcon 5.12.69, Mark Samuel-King, Peter Cescato, Royce Hagen, Stuart & Beryl Melville 5.12, Stephen Phillips, Domenico Cerasuolo, Millie Walker, Esther Dempsey 19.12, Julie Lyons-Vague, Rita Briglia, Carole Bilton 15.12, Rachel West, Helena Szeffler 17.12, D. Graham Bilton 29.12, Mak Czermak 2010, Maria Cafarella 26.12.11, Augusto Strangis 2.12.01, Bob Alexander, Agnes Castellano 8.12.10, Darryl Shand 16.12.10, Frank Ruberto 26.12.10, Charlotte Cooper 12.12.73, Clare O'Connor 29.12.05, Maria Basile, Mara Dale, Jackie Everett, Sandra Aerche, Gary Munari, Dorothy McEwan, Kolja and Peter Kovacevic, Pashko and Lena Djelovic, Michele Pescatore, Maria Pescatore, Maria Duca, Nicola Duca, Nicola & Maria Panella, Paolo & Maria Duca, Nunziata Panettieri, Denise McAlorum 24.12.03, Gavin Curran 23.12.11

Sick: All in or connected with our Parish who are unwell. Luke Dennis, Richard Davis, Eddie, Alison Barry-Jones (Qld), Tony Wright (Sydney), Chail and her husband Callum, Norma Childers (Texas - Becca's grandma), Patrick McCaffrey, Seamus Quinn, Sue McLennan

We periodically start our sick list again. If you have someone you would like on the sick list please contact Jane at the office.

ROSTERS FOR NEXT WEEKEND

23 / 24 December: Fourth Sunday of Advent

St Columba Welcomes

6pm Mass:

M: Volunteer needed

C / L: Karen Ramanair

Set up: Karen Ramanair & Sree Chelvakumaran

Sacred Heart Welcomes

11am Mass:

M: Anne Dexter

C / L: Adrian Cropley / Carlo Marcon, Toni Vatta

Set up: Legion of Mary

Prayer of the Faithful: Liturgy Team - Daniel

ST COLUMBA PRIMARY SCHOOL

We wish all the wonderful staff, students and families from our school the very best for the Christmas season and a safe and peaceful New Year. Thank you to everyone who has supported the school this year. The last newsletter for 2023 is available here: <https://newsletters.naavi.com/i/5wyAg7J/issue-12/page/cover>