

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 9 / 10 DECEMBER 2023 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



St Columba Church

cnr Glenhuntly & Normandy Rds
Elwood 3184

Sacred Heart Church

83 Grey Street, St Kilda West 3182

St Columba Primary School

24 Glenhuntly 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
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Pastoral Ministry Leader: Christine Mitchell
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Office Manager: Jane Hearnese
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SHM Pastoral Care Worker:
Karen Englebretsen
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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.

Am I Prepared Enough to be the Messenger?

[Source: Extracts from The Dome Blog: Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand and Sacred Space, Irish Jesuits].

This passage from the Gospel of Mark focuses on John the Baptist. The first few verses of this Gospel identify who John is. The opening verse of this Gospel names John as the one who was "sent from God." John's role was to testify to the "Light," not to be the Light! John is humble in the best sense of the word. He does not demean himself, nor does he exalt himself. John understood his role at this time in Israel's history: he was to point the way to the One who would come! The priests and Levites kept asking John: "Who are you?" John made it clear to them that he was not the Christ. They asked if he was Elijah or the Prophet. John simply responded to their question with three simple words: "I am not." John was a man who knew who he was and what he was called to do. He was not the Christ. However, he had an important role to play in Jesus' life and ministry. First and foremost, John was a "man of God." His role was to be the forerunner for Jesus. He was to point his followers to the way to Christ.

John must have been a mesmerizing preacher. People from all walks of life had heard about John. They wanted to see for themselves! Seekers from all areas of Judea as well as citizens of Jerusalem gathered to hear John preach. He was a powerful orator but he also had a powerful presence. First and foremost though, John was a "man of God." Many people came to him to be baptised. [They came to hear] John the Baptist preach forgiveness. This is one of the special gifts of God, and one of the big celebrations of Advent. We are a forgiven people, and we welcome the forgiveness of God in our repentance. This means we are firstly grateful for forgiveness - that we do not have to carry forever the burden of our failings. God covers them over in mercy. The second step of welcoming forgiveness is to try to do better in life - to move to a life of care, compassion, love and joy, and to make steps to forgive others.

John did not desire acclaim for himself. He knew that his call was to proclaim the coming of the Messiah. John told his listeners that "one mightier than I" would come after him. John also said that this man also would baptise but He would baptise with the Holy Spirit... One day Christ will come again! We don't need to wait for that day to come. Christ comes to us every day of our lives. Are we aware of His coming? Do we notice His presence as we go about our day? How can we be attentive: of Christ will come to us! How do I make his presence known? How am I his presence?

I know that on some days I "miss" Christ's coming. Perhaps I am too busy or my mind or heart is closed. Today is a good day to consciously and deliberately look for Christ as we move through our day. Christ is among us! However, we must be awake and alert for his coming! Or will we be too busy or too preoccupied to notice Him? I pray we have eyes to see Him and hearts to trust Him!

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.

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.

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.

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CAROLS CONCERT

Sacred Heart Church: Monday 11 December 7.00pm - 8.30pm

Don't forget to invite your family and friends to join us in this celebration of community and Christmas. This is a free event and refreshments will be provided; however, we ask people to bring non-perishable food items to donate to our local Vinnies.

ADVENT BOOKS

Copies of the Diocese of Wollongong's, *The Sign*, which offers scripture reflections during Advent and Christmas, are available for purchase from Anne at Sacred Heart or Christine at St Columba for \$5.

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.

PRAYER FOR THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Prepare the Way

Love would move through me

but for the rubble and clutter I cling to.

God, move aside what needs to be moved.

Clear a way for loveliness.

Fire up the gentle bulldozer of your grace.

Put your little orange stakes of mercy where the road goes.

Mark what needs to be cut, and cut it.

Fill with your presence my pits of fear,

my potholes of discouragement and despair.

Level my piles of self-importance.

Smooth out my bitterness, straighten what's bent.

Clear out what's in the way of love.

In that wilderness in me, prepare the way

for your mystery to unfold.

[Steve Garnaas-Holmes www.unfoldinglight.net]

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

MOTHER OF ALL NATIVITY SCENES



St Elizabeth's Catholic Church in Dandenong North celebrated 20 years of the Australian Nativity Scene (ANS), widely regarded as Australia's best and biggest traditional nativity scene. Created by artist Wilson Fernandez in 2003, the nativity scene has grown considerably since then, with Mr Fernandez introducing new elements every year. As of 2023, there are 891 figurines included in the piece, 222 handmade items, 130 trees and plants, and 480 kilograms of sand. Among the many things that make this nativity scene memorable are the materials Mr Fernandez has used to make the scene more authentic: soils, clay, straw, plants and bark have all been used to create the village of Bethlehem, with handmade huts, stables, mountains, rivers and much more. Another feature of Mr Fernandez' nativity scene is the story it tells every week in the lead-up to Christmas. To help communicate the true meaning of Christmas, the scene undergoes changes from the first week of Advent. Starting with the villagers going about their usual business, the story progresses with Mary and Joseph searching for an inn and staying in the stable, which then leads into the birth of Christ and the visitation of the shepherds and Magi, concluding with the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt.

The Australian Nativity Scene is open for viewing at St Elizabeth's Catholic Church in Dandenong North from 4 December 2023 to 12 January 2024. [Source: Melbourne Catholic]

PROPOSED CHANGES TO AGED-CARE SERVICES IN THE CITY OF PORT PHILLIP

The Australian Government has made changes to how it funds services for older people as part of its aged care reforms. The City of Port Phillip supports these reforms to make life better for older people, helping them stay independent at home while improving quality and safety. After reviewing their current services, Council have found it's not possible to meet the new requirements for in-home services. Council is proposing to continue to keep offering 'community-based' services like social programs, transportation, delivered meals, and the hop on hop-off bus service. 'In home' services such as cleaning assistance, personal care services, individual shopping assistance, respite care, property maintenance and home modifications are proposed to be delivered by specialist aged care providers appointed by the Australian Government. Additionally, Council is working on a new service called the 'Community Connector' service to help older people access and connect into various services, activities, and information they need to age well.

You can provide Council with feedback through a survey, or find more information (in 11 languages) here: [Supporting Positive Ageing in Port Phillip | Have Your Say Port Phillip](#).

Or visit the [Australian Government's website](#) on aged care reforms for more information about the changes.

GOOD SHEPHERDS ANNUAL COMMUNITY CAROLS

Come, listen and sing-a-long to the Good Shepherds Sisters Community Carols. It's a free event and all are welcome.

Venue: Good Shepherd Chapel, Abbotsford Convent Precinct., 1 St Heliers Street, Abbotsford

Date: THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER 6:30PM

RIP GERARD DOWLING OAM DE

Reverend Gerard Patrick Dowling OAM DE passed away at Justin Villa, Balwyn, on 26 November 2023. He was aged 91 years. 'Fr Dowling served the Church in a very positive and pastorally enriching manner, giving fine example and leadership to both his brother priests and the community for 65 years. In 1973, Fr Gerard began hosting an on-air radio counselling program, *The Family Counsellor*, which was broadcast every Sunday between 10pm and midnight on Radio 3UZ (now known as RSN 927). The program, which brought great comfort to many, celebrated its 50th anniversary of continuous broadcasting in September this year. In 1985, he was recognised for his social services work by being awarded the Order of Australia Medal.

In 1999, Fr Gerard was appointed Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne—an appointment that he held until his retirement in 2003. As Dean Emeritus, Father Gerard continued with his counselling work and writing while residing and providing pastoral assistance at Camberwell South Parish. He spent his final years at Justin Villa, having moved there in 2016.

BIG THANK YOU FROM THE NATIONAL HOMELESS COLLECTIVE

Last week we put a notice in our newsletter from the National Homeless Collective, who was calling for donations of children's toys or financial donations to purchase toys for 300 children in the Umoona Aboriginal community, as well as for children experiencing homelessness across Australia. The Collective has written to say a big 'thank you' as they have achieved their Christmas toy target in record time and every child on their list will receive a toy this Christmas!

PARISH CHRISTMAS BBQ

Please feel free to join us **THIS Sunday 10 December at 12.30pm** at the Parish House pergola for a chance to catch up with old and new friends. Meat and vegetarian BBQ options supplied as well as drinks. Parishioners are asked to bring along a salad or dessert to share. BYO alcohol. We are expecting a big turn out based on last year's success.

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 the diocese of Loikow, the Cathedral and the pastoral centre have come under attack and bishops, priests and parishioners have had to flee for their lives. In other 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.

FROM JESUIT AND IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY: PRAY AS YOU GO

Pray As You Go is a digital daily prayer session designed to go with you wherever you go to help you pray. A prayer session is produced every day of the working week and one session for the weekend. It is not a thought for the day, or a sermon or a Bible study but rather a framework to support your prayer life. Running between 10 and 13 minutes, it combines music, scripture and some questions for reflection, which allow for a quick but focussed time of prayer. There is also the option to go further with extra prayer tools or escape with a digital prayer retreat. For further information or to register, visit: www.pray-as-you-go.org

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-11

Responsorial Psalm:

Lord, let us see your kindness and grant us your salvation.

Second Reading: 2 Peter 3: 8-14

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight paths:
all people shall see the salvation of God.

Alleluia!

Gospel: Mark 1: 1-8

OUR LITURGICAL CALENDAR

MONDAY 11 December - SUNDAY 17 December 2023

MONDAY 11.00am MASS at Sacred Heart Community
101 Grey St, St Kilda West

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 9.00am MASS at St Columba Church

11.00am MASS at Sacred Heart Church
(this mass is also live streamed)

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

COLLECTIONS: Last three weekends

Church Account Collection	Presbytery Account Collection	
Envelopes	94.00	Total \$679.95
Loose cash	\$1294.80	
Total	\$1388.80	
Average for 48 weeks	\$351.24	Average for 48 weeks \$226.50

ST COLUMBA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our school celebrated this week with a Carols night and a poignant last assembly for the Grade 6 children.

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard and



participated in both events. We wish our wonderful school community all the very best for Christmas and we look forward to seeing them in 2024.



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

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

Pope Francis

All Recently Deceased: Gerard Dowling

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.

We periodically start our sick list again. If you have someone you would like on the sick list please contact Jane at the office 9531 6120 or jane@shscparish.org.au

ROSTERS FOR NEXT WEEKEND

16 / 17 December: Third Sunday of Advent

St Columba Welcomes

6pm Mass:

M: Luke Fulton-Tindal

C / L: Caroline Price

Set up: Mahtab Bahadorinejad

9am Mass:

M: Lou Bevilacqua, Maria Kovacevic

C / L: Lina Tesoriero, Dominic Tesoriero

Set up: Trevor Fletcher, Marcelle Garnier

Hospitality Roster: Raymond

Sacred Heart Welcomes

11am Mass:

M: Daniel O'Connor

C / L: Nancy Edwards, Anna Griffiths

Set up: Enastin

Prayer of the Faithful: Liturgy Team - Melissa