

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 23-25 DECEMBER 2023 Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Day



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

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03 9531 6120; shsc@shscparish.org.au
www.shscparish.org.au

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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.

Sometimes It is More Blessed to Receive than to Give

[An extract from an article by Margaret Cessna, Sisters of the Humility of Mary, in Global Sisters Report, a Project of the National Catholic Reporter, <https://www.globalsistersreport.org/> 19 December 2023.]

We have been schooled for centuries to accept this as best behavior. Be a giver. But think about it. At that first Christmas, a helpless baby in a crib, in a stable, did not give anything. He had angels singing in the sky, lowly shepherds visiting, kings bearing gifts. His parents enjoying the music, the visit from the shepherds, the gifts of the kings. Accepting gifts offered. He was not able to give anything in return. Not then. Is he not our teacher? Teaching on that special day, with an unexpected twist. Getting can be as good as giving. Both are good. Both appropriate.

Today, in our lives, no angels are singing in the sky, but maybe we meet some angels walking down the hall. Or waiting for a bus. On the TV. Maybe a call from home. Or at the grocery store... Maybe driving down the road.

In our search for holiness, for wholeness we often focus on our own behavior and how we can bring peace to a fractured world. A worthy effort. But it might be time to take the internal camera lens off our own behavior. Maybe it's time to focus during any holy season on the folks that surround us. People who hope and work for peace, for holiness, for wholeness on any holy night or ordinary day. Neighbors who give with no expectation of return.

Ordinary day. Yes. He carried my heavy grocery bag to the elevator for me. No questions asked. No singing. Providing rest for my formerly broken shoulder. He didn't know that. He was just one of the young men, a boy really, from the apartment down the hall. No singing. Not even any conversation. Just, "Let me take that bag for you." He had no idea that he was an angel at work. I secretly praised his mother who taught him about magic moments in life. I was running late for an important meeting. In the wrong lane. She waved me over. No wings in sight. But a heavenly favor... Really simple moments. The clerk in the grocery store with a smile on his face and a kind word, packing my order carefully with all the frozen items in the same bag. How simple can gifts get while looking for angels?

... There are big gifts to celebrate as well in the great big part of the world. Beyond our neighborhood perhaps, but worth supporting. Habitat for Humanity. Food banks. Salvation Army's red bucket and bell. Giving tree. Art. Music. Developing vaccines. Special Olympics. Firefighters and police officers. Teachers. Nurses. All worthy of gratitude.

Are we blessed or not? To live in a place where goodness is all around. Where gifts are offered and if we honor our teacher, we accept what is offered. With a grateful heart. And soon, a grateful heart is full enough to overflow. And then, only then, can we give...

But then, there is Christmas. And Easter... I think we all need holidays to take a moment to remember that the baby in the crib developed into the savior that gave us a model. That the man who died on a cross won the final round when he rose into heaven in a glorious way. He paved the way, our teacher, to understand both giving and receiving.

So there are times when it is better to give. But also times when it is just as appropriate to receive. As we make our way through the sometimes rocky road of our everyday lives, we learn to balance. To give generously and to receive with gratitude. In the meantime, celebration is in order. Ordinary people in ordinary times do need holidays. To step into joyful celebrations with family and friends to give and receive reminders of love and generosity that made us who we are. Simple people with generous hearts, ready to give and receive. Sharing hugs and memories and our very being with those who are an intimate part of our journey. ..

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.

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.

BREAK OPEN THE WORD 2024 (BOTW)

There are still copies of Break Open the Word 2024 available for purchase. BOTW is 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.

ADVENT APPEAL TO SUPPORT UKRAINE

In response to the continued conflict in Ukraine, Archbishop Peter A Comensoli launched 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.

A Christmas card from Archbishop Comensoli in response to the continued conflict in Ukraine, 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.

A CHRISTMAS BLESSING

May there be peace in your family and joy in your coming together.

May you grow in gratefulness and simplicity.

May the wonder and awe of children be awakened within you.

May you greet each person like another Christ.

May the hope of this sacred season settle in your soul.

May the coming year be one of good health for you.

May you go often to the Bethlehem of your heart

and visit the One who brings deep and sustaining peace.

Amen.

ARCHBISHOP'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

In his Christmas message for 2023, Archbishop Peter A Comensoli reflects on the beautiful words of the prophet Isaiah, who speaks of 'the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation'.

Dear friends, we hear these words from the ancient prophet Isaiah (52:7):

*How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation ...*

These are beautiful words—old words, first spoken in old days, yet so sorely needed in our day!

Amid this time of conflict, suffering and exile, Isaiah speaks to us words of peace and the good news about the Prince of Peace. Our hearts ache for reconciliation of peoples; respect for our shared humanity; care for our crying planet. Our world and its people seem to be groaning and railing against pathways to true peace.

Yet we experience the hope of God through simple words of joy, mercy and peace. The shepherds experienced this. So did the Magi. Mary and Joseph knew it intimately. God knew we needed his Son to come amongst us, to show us the way ahead.

As we come to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord this year, might we be attentive to the broken people across the world who are held captive by the tragedy of war and old hatreds. Might we also remember those exiled in other ways—bereft of knowing God; lost and searching for identity and purpose.

We too can be the messengers whose footfalls bring light into the world, announcing mercy, bringing joy, offering Good News. God has come among us, simply, humbly and hopefully in a little child, his Son, our Brother. May the peace that comes through this child, the Prince of Peace, be with you this Christmas. And with every footstep, may you take His message, and life, out into the world.

Happy Christmas to you all!

Archbishop Peter A Comensoli

2024 COLUMBAN CALENDARS

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

SACRED HEART MISSION CHRISTMAS LITURGY

A heartfelt celebration was held last Monday at Sacred Heart Church. The theme was 'Peace' and the mission age care community created a tree with words they associate to with peace. Words include calm, light, pause, kinship, still, oneness, connection, silence, sympathy, hear, harmony, content, friendship... to name a few. Naming these qualities in offering hanging them on the tree for everyone to take away and bring into their lives. Thank you very much to everyone who attended. A special thanks to Karen Englebretsen for all of her work and care.



VATICAN RULING ON BLESSINGS OF SAME SEX AND UNMARRIED COUPLES

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith document *Fiducia Supplicans* (*Supplicating Trust*): "On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings", on same sex unions and unmarried couples was, this week, approved by Pope Francis. This now allows priests to bless gay and unmarried couples as long as it is not a formal liturgical blessing and does not give the impression that the Church is blessing the unions as if they were a marriage.

The Dicastery stated that the request for a blessing can express and nurture "openness to the transcendence, mercy and closeness to God in a thousand concrete circumstances of life, which is no small thing in the world in which we live. It is a seed of the Holy Spirit that must be nurtured, not hindered."

Cardinal Fernández, prefect of the Dicastery stated that the declaration "Remains firm on the traditional doctrine of the Church about marriage, not allowing any type of liturgical rite or blessing similar to a liturgical rite that can create confusion," but it also explores the "pastoral meaning of blessings" in a way that opens "the possibility of blessing couples in irregular situations and same-sex couples without officially validating their status or changing in any way the Church's perennial teaching on marriage".

The new document said Catholics should "avoid the risk of reducing the meaning of blessings" to their formal, liturgical use because that "would lead us to expect the same moral conditions for a simple blessing that are called for in the reception of the sacraments".

The declaration insisted that the Mass is not the proper setting for the less formal forms of blessing that could include the blessing of a gay couple, and it repeated that "it is not appropriate for a diocese, a bishops' conference" or other Church structure to issue a formal blessing prayer or ritual for unwed couples. The blessing also should not be given "in concurrence" with a civil marriage ceremony to avoid appearing as a sort of church blessing of the civil union.

A MESSAGE FROM HANG VO, CEO SACRED HEART MISSION

My first year as CEO of the Mission has flown by. This year, we have housed more people than we did last year, despite the severe lack of affordable and special housing in Victoria. This was possible thanks to the hard work of our teams, partnerships with the state government and like-minded organisations, and especially thanks to the continued support from you and other members of the community. Below we are sharing some key milestones we achieved together in the past financial year - and I encourage you to take a moment to reflect and be proud of the impact you have made. Over the past twelve months I have seen first-hand what a brilliant community we have at Sacred Heart Mission. I've had the privilege of meeting many of you, and I am blown away by the support you continue to show people experiencing disadvantage. Thank you for making my first year at Sacred Heart Mission one I will always remember.

Here's what we accomplished together in 2022-23:

- We supported 509 people into stable housing and 412 people into temporary accommodation.
- We served 92, 822 meals to members of the community.
- Our Pathways Workers provided compassion, support and care on 1, 766 occasions.
- There were 529 presentations at the Women's House for support and material aid.
- We provided 1,666 therapy appointments, attendance at group activities and 'pop up' events at the Wellness Place.
- 374 people received support from Sacred Heart Mission's outreach programs.

Sacred Heart Mission Services during the Festive Season

The **Dining Hall** will operate as usual, except for Monday, 25 December when we will host a Christmas lunch from 10.45am to 1.30pm. (On this day, we will not serve a separate breakfast.)

- **Sacred Heart Central** will be the point of contact for clients, operating daily from 8.30am to 2.30pm. (On 26 December and 1 January, opening hours will be from 9am to 1pm.
- **Women's House** will be closed from 23 December to 1 January, and re-open on Tuesday, 2 January.
- **Wellness Place** will be closed from 21 December to 9 January, and re-open on Wednesday, 10 January.

Our **op shop** holiday hours are as follows:

- ▶ 24 and 31 December - all stores open until 4pm
- ▶ 25 December and 1 January - all stores closed
- ▶ 26 December - all stores closed except Chapel Street
- ▶ 27-30 December - all stores open with usual trading hours

CARITAS AUSTRALIA GAZA APPEAL

Around 1.8 million people, almost 80% of the population, have been displaced in Gaza with immediate food, shelter, health, and psychosocial needs.

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.

LITURGY OF THE WORD – CHRISTMAS MASSES

First Reading: Isaiah 9: 1-7

Responsorial Psalm:

Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Second Reading: Titus 2: 11-14

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!

Good News and great joy to all the world:
today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Alleluia!

Gospel: Luke 2: 1-14

OUR LITURGICAL CALENDAR

MONDAY 25 December - SUNDAY 31 December 2023

MONDAY	9.00am CHRISTMAS DAY MASS at St Columba Church 11.00am CHRISTMAS DAY MASS at Sacred Heart 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	9.00am MASS at St Columba Church 11.00am MASS at Sacred Heart Church (this mass is also live streamed) Gospel: Mark 6: 1-6

MONDAY 1 JANUARY 2024: NEW YEARS DAY MASS
10.00AM St Columba Church

COLLECTIONS: Last weekend

Church Account Collection	Presbytery Account Collection	
Envelopes	\$35.00	Total \$197.40
Loose cash	\$298.20	
Total	\$403.20	
Average for 50 weeks	\$353.36	Average for 50 weeks \$226.56

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](https://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 cash or EFT giving.

Just a reminder that our First Collection at mass supports the running of the parish, such as pastoral support & various ministries and administration costs – phones, utilities etc. Our Second Collection supports Fr John and covers his stipend and living expenses."

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

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

Pope Francis

All Recently Deceased:

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.

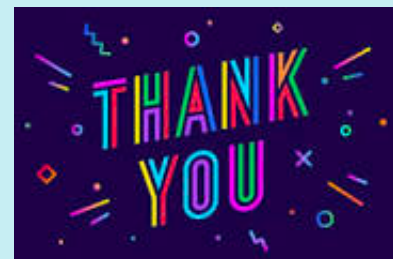
We periodically start our sick list again. If you have someone you would like on the sick list please contact Jane at the office. 9531 6120 or jane@shscparish.org.au

ROSTERS FOR NEXT WEEKEND

30 / 31 December: The Holy Family of Jesus

St Columba Welcomes

This time of the year a lot of people are away and we are very grateful for any volunteers that can step up during mass to fill the various ministry roles of Eucharist Minister, Commentator / Lector and helping with Set Up.



Sacred Heart Welcomes

11am Mass:

M: Anne Dexter, Nancye Dexter

C / L: Margaret Barry

Set up: Legion of Mary

Prayer of the Faithful: Liturgy Team