



31st December 2023

Epiphany



Hymns: 314 309 256 315

Sentence

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
(*Isaiah 60:1*)

The Collect

Lord God of the nations, we have seen the star of your glory rising in splendour: may the brightness of your incarnate Word pierce the night that covers the earth, signal the dawn of justice and peace, and beckon all nations to walk as one in your light. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, in the splendour of eternal light, God for ever and ever.

Amen.

First Reading

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 60, beginning at verse 1.

‘Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ‘Lift up your eyes and look about you: all assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.

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

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 72

R: The Lord judges with equity, and rescues the children of the poor.

Give the king your judgement, O God: and your righteousness to the son of a king, that he may judge your people rightly: and the poor of the land with equity. May he

give justice to the poor among the people: and rescue the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor. **R...**

In his time shall righteousness flourish: and abundance of peace, till the moon shall be no more. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring tribute: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. All kings shall fall down before him: and all nations do him service. **R...**

He will deliver the needy when they cry: and the poor that have no helper. He will pity the helpless and the needy: and save the lives of the poor. He will redeem them from oppression and violence: and their blood shall be precious in his sight. **R...**

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter to the Ephesians, chapter 3, beginning at verse 1.

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles – Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all the Lord’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

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

The Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia! **Alleluia!**

Out of Bethlehem will come one who will shepherd my people.

Alleluia!

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew, chapter 2, beginning at the first verse.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.' When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written: "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.' After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

For the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Prayers of the People

Heavenly Father, the coming of your Son into this world not only drew the attention of non-believers, but put their authorities on their knees in homage. We pray that your light continues to break into this darkened world, to make kings of beggars, and beggars of kings.

We pray for an end to all wars; for nations to be free of corruption and misuse of people and resources; for total demilitarisation of the world, and for tyrants to repent of their sins. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for justice in this world; for an end to decadence, indifference, and love of wealth that erode morality and common decency; and for a world without poverty, discrimination or abuse. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for opportunities for both young and old to live holistic and meaningful lives; for accountability to replace entitlement; and for generosity of spirit among all people. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the mission of your holy church to enlighten the lost, correct the self-satisfied, and nurture the inquisitive; when the world leads your flock astray, may your church rise to shepherd the vulnerable. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for children and their families during this holiday period; for an increase in mutual love, learning and growth of spirit; and for their courage to seek your help and the support of faith communities in difficult times. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are sick or in pain; for those in hospital or rehabilitation, and those whose illness makes them a prisoner of their own body or mind.

We remember those who have asked for our prayers: *Lyn Overend, Jonathan and Limor Rose, Jeanne Jones, Bill Edge, Sharon and John Simpson, Anni Grimwade, Madeline Allen, Elaine Haddock, Belinda Shannon, Jim Chatz, Barry and Val Watts, Gwen Bushell, Debbie Chilcott, Beryl and Geoff Kirby, Fiona Mctier, David Valentine, Peg and Ken Raeburn, Bishop John Parkes, Edie Simpson, Bruce Seaman, Thomas De Sousa, Mary Cassar, Vince Fazio, and Adeline Bickley.* Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the faithful departed, that they might find rest in your eternal kingdom; and for their example to edify our lives. We pray especially for the repose of the soul of Donna Baker, and for her family as they grieve her loss. We remember those whose year's mind occurs at this time: *Edie Hannam, Vera Robinette, Lewis Nyman, Leonard Lang, Kathleen Smith, Elva Montgomery, Arthur Dean, Alan Still, Andrew Lawson, Kathleen Chapman and Patty James.* Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

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.**

Notices

Notice of Annual Leave

Fr. David will be away on leave from the 8th to the 25th of January 2024. Services will be lay-led during this time, and any issues, please refer to the Wardens of members of parish council.

Op Shop

A reminder that the parish op shop will be closed until Thursday January 4th.

Thursdays at St Matthew's

There will be a Mass on Thursday January 4th 2024 before Fr. David goes on leave, but no other masses until January 25th 2024.

Aged Care

Aged care services are paused until the first week of February 2024.

Bible Study

Our bible study group is in recess until February. We can continue the Tuesday evenings, but in the new year, we will also be looking towards daytime groups for people who have expressed interest. Stay tuned for more information.

Direct Debit /EFT Offerings – Account details: BENDIGO BANK – Account Name 'Anglican Parish of Kilmore;' BSB 633-000; Account Number 158946921.
Reference: Offertory. An EFTPOS machine is available at Kilmore.

Next Sunday: The Baptism of Our Lord – January 7th: Genesis 1:1-5; Ps 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11		
Christ Church, Kilmore	9.00am	Holy Eucharist
St Matthew's, Broadford	11.00am	Holy Eucharist
St Stephen's, Tallarook	11.00am	Morning Prayer
Transfiguration, Pyalong	---	---

Weekly Scripture Readings

	Morning Prayer	Evening Prayer
Monday 1st January	Ps 113	Ps 115
<i>Naming and Circumcision of Jesus</i>	Deuteronomy 30:6-20	Deuteronomy 10:12-11:1
	Colossians 3:12-17	Acts 3:1-16
Tuesday 2nd January	Ps 20; 21	Ps 46; 87

<i>St Basil and St Gregory of Nazianzus</i>	Isaiah 64	Isaiah 30:15-28
	Ephesians 2:1-10	John 3:22-36
Wednesday 3rd January	Ps 9	Ps 10
	Isaiah 65:1-16	Isaiah 32:9-33:4
	Ephesians 2:11-22	John 3:22-36
Thursday 4th January	Ps 11; 12	Ps 13; 14
	Isaiah 66:1-9	Isaiah 33:5-24
	Ephesians 3:1-13	John 4:1-14
Friday 5th January	Ps 15; 16	Ps 19
	Isaiah 66:10-16	2 Samuel 22:47-51
	Ephesians 3:14-21	Romans 15:8-21
Saturday 6th January	Ps 24; 29	Ps 63
	Isaiah 66:18-23	Joshua 3
	Ephesians 4:1-16	Mark 10:32-45

Parish Contacts

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Facebook page link: <https://www.facebook.com/AnglicanKilmore/>

or you can type in Anglican Parish of Kilmore Facebook into the search bar and it should come up. It's also on the link Services Online on the website.

Thoughts for the Week

There are those who do not appreciate the gospel truth because it's 'divisive' and 'ignores the complexities' of real life. That somehow, because it's written in a 3000-year-old book of allegedly 'questionable' validity, the truth then is not the truth now. Then allow me to briefly untangle some of the 'complexities'. The bottom line is, there was sin back then, and there is sin now. Murder, robbery, sexual assault, gambling, enslavement, abuse, polyamory, devil worship. The only complexity I see is that because of the Internet, it can all be committed in many more ways, given many more faces and excuses, it can be done under the cover of anonymity or broadcast to the world. The gospel truth identifies sin, highlights why it is problematic, and tries to get people to see that there is an alternative to immersing oneself in degrading and destructive narrative circles. We talk about salvation in church because Jesus is literally trying to save you from yourself. Churches are literally trying to bring together people and families who have been hurt by these listed above (and more), and form bonds of mutual support, growth and reconstruction of life and wellbeing. The truth is 'divisive' simply because misery is comfortable; we don't like taking action to better ourselves, because then our narratives fall apart, and we can elicit sympathy anymore. The irony is, we're not scared of sin, we're scared of letting go of it, because then no one will excuse whatever personality flaws we are masking with narratives of victimhood. The gospel truth is that Jesus is the one who has faith in us, even when everyone else, and even we ourselves lose it. We might say that God only loves 'conditionally' because church is so 'exclusive'. Wrong. The love of God is unconditional; it is the active process of faith that has all the conditions that we're hung up on. We don't mind paying gym memberships, or doing detox diets, or subscribing to inflammatory cultural tropes and jargon. Does it result in love? No. Faith is just the same as any contractual agreement, you have to actually hold up your end of the bargain. The results are unconditional. No fine print. God is not divisive; human beings are. Faith is not complex; we generate complexities the more we live without it. As for questionable: how about we question ourselves for once, and not the God who seeks to loves us?