

SAINT THEODORE'S TIDINGS



Lent-Easter issue *February – May 2025*

The Anglican Church of St Theodore
Cnr Swaine Avenue and Prescott Terrace
Toorak Gardens, S.A

Website: www.theodores.org



St Theodore's Anglican Church recognises that we meet on the traditional lands of the Kaurana people. We express our gratitude for the sharing of this land; our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing; and our hope that we may walk together in harmony in a spirit of reconciliation.



A Reflection on Faith

Rev'd Dr Matthew Anstey

Philippians 2 offers a haunting and mysterious and upending hymn about the divine mystery of God's self-emptying, God's 'giving-up-of-everything', God's endless momentum of love towards others:

*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
assuming human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a human,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death —
even death on a cross.*

This scripture speaks of the mystery of God's humility, the humble stance God adopts towards all. And so, the faith we seek and for which we hope is shaped decisively not by a divine despot, or an all-powerful divinity, but by the Quiet One's self-emptying in an act of love. Faith requires then the cultivation of such humility – the hard, onerous, slow task of self-emptying oneself to God and God's world, just as Christ emptied Godself for us.



Faith thus is the fostering of a way of life, a way of *being* – being in God, in God's world, story, and people. It is not about information, but formation and transformation, it is about discovering oneself loved by the One in whom are all things beautiful, good, and true.

Faith is at its heart contemplative; it is inhabiting the Sabbath rest of God, in which we finally learn to listen. As St John says, "When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven" (Rev 8:1). In the quiet of discernment and waiting, God's Spirit hovers over our lives wherein God finds all that is needed to fashion our world. Yet in this posture of attentive listening, we hear not only angels but also anguish, gladness and

grief, sacrament and sacrilege. Faith, then, doubly attuned to beauty and the brokenness, is at times a place of bitter weeping (as Revelation 5.4 puts it). We weep bitterly for the wounds we cannot heal, the lives we cannot mend, the deaths we cannot undo, the disheartening limits we cannot transcend. We weep bitterly because no one among us can be found to unravel the strangulation of Sin, the shadow cast by Death. Not the particular sins of you and me, but the darkness and negation that grips the cosmos without reprieve, that unhinges “the world grown weary with the burden of itself” (David Bentley Hart).

Faith thus requires familiarity with suffering, solidarity with the marginalised. It beckons us to attention to “the abyss in which the truth of our lives is found” (Walter Brueggemann). Faith, in the aftermath of such silence and sorrow, entails the cultivation of particular forms of language. It entails the articulation of both “Look! I give you everything” of Genesis (1:29), and “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), to be whispered lovingly into every nook and cranny of the cosmos.



It is the cultivation of such language that evokes, imagines, shapes, and summons all to share in the life and love of God. Faith is hence Eucharistic – the enveloping of our entire lives in the sweeping sacramental movement of God’s Spirit in the taking, blessing, breaking, and giving (Luke 24:30) of all things unto God. It is partaking in the liturgy of church and life, in which God’s drama is enacted in catholic faithfulness to Scripture and tradition, yet ever sensitive to local idiom and culture. And in being Eucharistic it is at core both hospitable, creating space for one another to flourish, and hopeful, singing together that “Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.”

Faith is centred on Christ, inscribed in the pattern and paradox of death and resurrection, incarnation and ascension. It is the pondering of the peculiarity of God in Christ, born as a poor Jewish Palestinian peasant, rejected and tortured, who fully participated in human life, even to death. Faith is about being caught up in the resurrection of the Crucified One, which is God’s unconditional guarantee of creation’s goodness and ultimate wellbeing, and of Jesus’ way of nonviolence, the peaceful and peace-making reign of God. The wholeness and union with God that we yearn for is now possible through the Spirit.



Faith is oriented to hope, whereby the surprising inbreaking of God’s loving presence is unpredictable from and unimaginable in the present and its possibilities. It is pursued in the tension between the presence and gift of God, and the yet-to-be-fulfilled longing of creation for consummation. Faith is about learning to inhabit this tension, to discern its pastoral significance, to resist any shortcuts to certainty or completion. Faith is about learning to live with the unanswered questions that inhabit its centre.



Thus faith can only be pursued fulsomely and robustly in community.

For inevitably, we return always to questions of ‘being’, to the question of *Being*. This God – Creator, Redeemer, Consummator – is Being-in-relation, and so when every single one of us is named anew – as the image of God, as children of God – we enter the communal shape into which we are called, a shape haltingly we apprehend as being more fully ourselves than that for which we had ever hoped. Faith invites the giving over of our whole being to the vastness of God and God’s world, to the wild vision of God’s *shalom*, irrespective of utility, uninhibited by detractors, unwavering in its humility, unconstrained in its imagination.

And this loving contemplation and emptying of one’s self – as a humble way of life, for the sake of God’s hope to befriend all creation, in the midst of the agony and pain of creation’s brokenness – is the life-giving centre of gravity to which faith must cling tenaciously, regardless of the cost. Amen.

From ‘The Parallel Sayings – Jesus & Buddha’ {Marcus Bord (Ed.); Ulysses Press, Berkeley, CA, USA; 2002}. . . on “The Future”:

JESUS: “In a little while the world will be no longer be able to see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19)

BUDDHA: “And the Lord said: it may be that you think ‘The Teacher’s instruction has ceased, now we will have no teacher!’. It should not be seen like this, for what I have taught and explained to you will, at my passing, be your teacher” (*Digha Nikaya 16.6:1*)

Spirit matters

A meditation by Fr Philip Carter

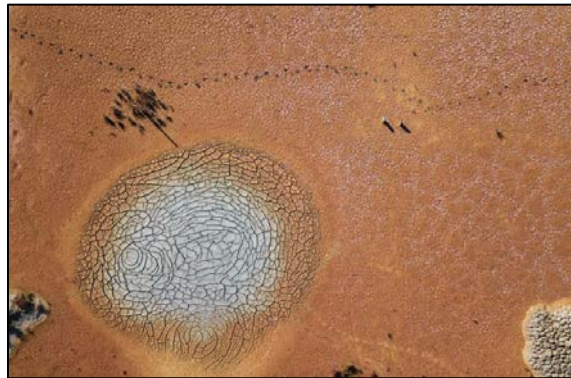
Philip Carter is a retired Anglican priest. He is the inaugural president of the Australian Ecumenical Council for Spiritual Direction (AECSD). He ran the Julian Centre in Adelaide, an independent and ecumenical centre for spirituality, from 1997-2009.

Philip provides a regular spiritual Blog for St Mary Magdalene's Anglican church in the city, and has very kindly given *The Tidings* permission to use his reflections as a basis for meditations in our newsletter . . . thank you Fr Philip, we are very grateful.



The following is taken from a series of meditations entitled "Spirit Matters"

Spirituality of the desert: a condition of complete simplicity



A condition of complete simplicity

T.S. Eliot



Whatever you find in your heart to do,
that do, and remain within yourself in Him

Abba Anthony

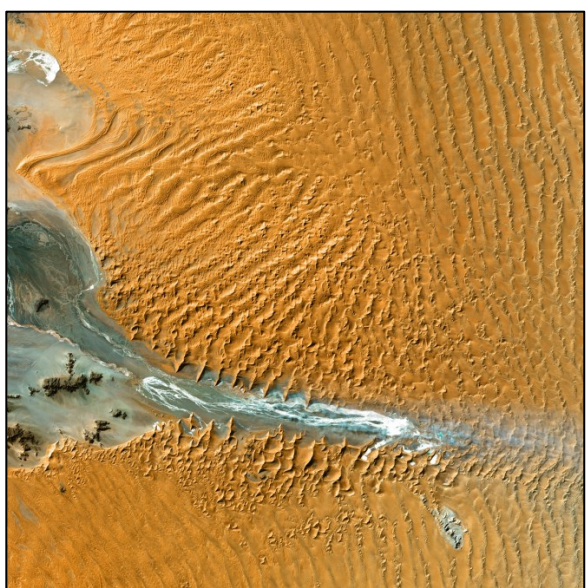
I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness
and speak tenderly to her

Hosea 2:14

The desert is the place of personal integrity, without masks or pretensions. All effort – prayer, fasting, paying attention – is simply a means to an end, which is "to stand unprotected in the presence of God".

The desert – in our tradition – is a special, privileged place of encounter. Yet for many, if not for all of us, we begin by getting in touch with those places of involuntary displacement, when things 'happen' to us which we do not necessarily like. The desert comes to us uninvited, and raises in a sharp way, the issue of control. "We live the given life, not the planned" (Wendell Berry)

What does your 'desert' do to the way you think and feel about yourself, and about God?



In order to be true to God and to ourselves we must break with the familiar, established and secure norms and go off into the unknown

Thomas Merton

"Judge things at their true value". The desert – without the familiar props – is painful, but is the place where we can truly begin to see things as they are.

*Sometime this week perhaps you can choose to clear a space and make a little desert in your life
– an act of voluntary displacement –
– a 'deserted' place –
where you can begin to recognise what your thoughts, behaviours and choices
might tell you about your motivations, values and attitudes towards life.
Becoming more aware of where your heart is, where your thoughts run to every day –
allows you to ask yourself how satisfied you really are.*



Do not give your heart to that which does not satisfy your heart.

Abba Poeman

LENTEN STUDIES 2025

Exploring Symbols of Hope

Our Lenten Studies for 2025 are 'home grown' . . . they have been written by Peter Burke, assisted by Rev'd Matthew Anstey and Angela Hazebroek.

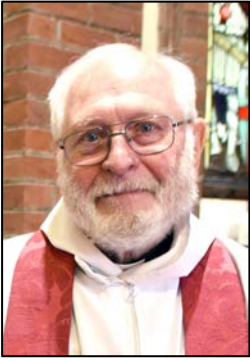


The overall theme – *'Exploring Symbols of Hope'* – is intended to enable reflection and conversation on where we find hope in our daily lives. The symbols of hope which will be explored include the **Rainbow** (Lent 1); the **Anchor** (Lent 2); the **Butterfly** (Lent 3); the **Cross and Empty Tomb** (Lent 4); and **Light** (Lent 5). The basis of each study will be an essay designed to enable exploration and discussion of each theme, and some questions for personal reflection and group conversation.



The exact details of the studies are yet to be confirmed, but it is planned to have three different study opportunities for parishioners of St Theodore's, and our neighbouring parish of All Souls', St Peters. This is likely to include the usual Sunday studies from 11.30 am to 12.45pm; Wednesday evening Zoom studies from 7.30pm to 8.45 pm; and daytime studies during the week, with the day and time yet to be arranged. Please refer to Pew Sheets for further information.





Fr Peter Anson

OUR NEW ICON

At our Patronal Festival this year, Archbishop Geoffrey Smith blessed the Icon of the Madonna, Mary and the Child Jesus, and the Rev'd Matthew Anstey placed it in its position on the wall opposite the Icon of St Theodore, our Patron. The new Icon is a memorial to long-term parishioner Judith Lang, who died in July 2023.

An Icon is not just a picture but rather a symbol with several messages 'written' into it. Some of those messages are written in Greek as you can clearly see if you go up close to the Icon. Other messages are not so obvious in as much as they are hidden in the picture itself.

At the top left hand corner are two words. The first word appears to be in the letters MP but they are not exactly that. Hidden between the M and the P is another letter – H. They are in Greek, of course, so the M = M, the H = E and the P = R are making the word MER . . . which is an abbreviation of the word "MATEP(A)" which means 'Mother'.

This word is followed by the letters ΘΥ. The Greek θ = TH (in English) and the Y = U which when added together = THU, another abbreviation of the word 'THEOU', meaning 'of God'.

Placed together we get the title 'Mother of God'.



This is technical. The title conferred upon Mary was apparently first used by St. Origen (ca 185 AD – ca 254 AD) followed by other people after him. It was officially confirmed by the Councils of Ephesus (431 AD) and Chalcedon (451 AD) as a defence against The Arian Heresy and others which denied the divinity of Jesus. It has been generally accepted since then. At the centre left of

the Icon is a group of letters which would be tedious to transliterate but which translated means 'The loving kiss'. Put simply, it points to the subject of the Icon.

Almost hidden and partly obscured in the halo of Jesus are the letters ΩΝ (ŌN in English). This is a masculine present participle of the verb "to be" and roughly translated means 'He who is' – that is, that this child is 'The eternal and divine Logos'.

The letters IC and XC are to be seen on the lower right which are abbreviations of the words Jesus Christ.

Other messages can be seen in the traditional Icon colours and decoration of the clothing. Mary is wearing a red outer garment trimmed with gold. The red colour indicates life-giving energy and love but also it is a reminder of her royal status and, for some, her glorification as 'Queen of Heaven'. The three stars on her outer garment represent her virginity before, during and after the birth of Jesus. This last, however, is widely disputed by scholars.

Her inner garment is coloured blue indicating her true human nature. She is not to be seen to be an angel or some other supernatural being. She is a human just like all of us.

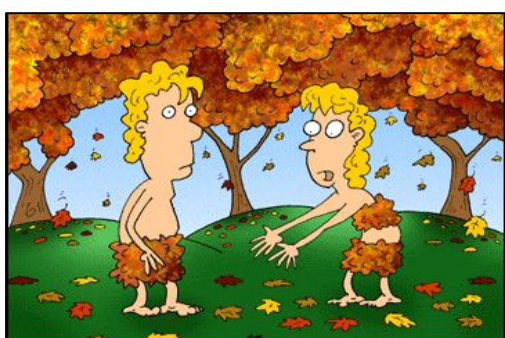
Jesus is depicted wearing a blue 'shirt' emphasising his true human nature and so defending the belief of the divine and human nature existing in the one person – even in Jesus as a child.

Overall, in this Icon we have an intimate homely scene. Jesus is lovingly held by his mother while he is gently holding her hand, looking up to her and appears to be about to kiss her on the cheek.

This contrasts with many other icons of a similar nature where Jesus is portrayed looking out at us (and perhaps the whole world) with his hand raised in blessing.

Our Icon is indeed aptly entitled '*The Mother of God of Loving Kindness*'.

I am grateful to Nick Kosmadopolis of The Icon School of St Luke for helping me to understand this Icon.



Would you please pick up all your clothes?



St. Theodore's – Contacts

Parish Priest: Rev'd Dr Matthew Anstey
(Office – 8333-1567)

Associate Priests: Fr Peter Anson
Fr David Thornton-Wakeford

Priest's Warden: Ian Campbell

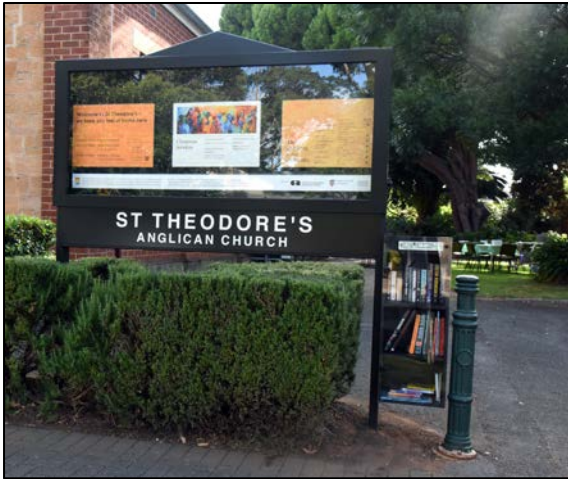
Peoples' Warden: Angela Hazebrook

Parish Council (2024) – Rev'd Dr Matthew Anstey, Peter Burke, Ian Campbell, Lee Fulton, Angela Hazebrook, Angela Jones (Secretary), John Needs (Treasurer), Fiona O'Neill

"The Tidings" Editor: Dr Richard Keene (ph. 0416-275-161)

“It’s a sign !” . . . and a Street Library

The new St Theodore’s outdoor sign has been completed and erected: it was blessed by Rev’d Matthew and Fr Peter between the 8 am and 9.30 am services on Advent 4 (December 22nd) so that both congregations could attend. It provides a new means of the parish’s communication and connection with the community, supporting our hirers and letting people know that – apart from welcoming them to our services – we are a hub for all kinds of activities. We have a team responsible for designing future posters to be placed in the new noticeboard – Rev’d Matthew, Peter Burke, Angela Hazebroek and Nick Williams.



The new outdoor sign,
with the Street Library on the right



The congregation with Rev’d Matthew and Fr Peter – all with champagne or orange juice in hand – toasting the sign and Library after the blessing

A major project undertaken at the Church requires many dedicated hours and volunteers to realise the end result, and our new sign and street library were no exception. It involved a committee to initiate the vision of a new sign and its benefits to the parish; development of plans by a designer, and contractor quotations; various approvals from Burnside Council, Heritage, Synod and Parish Council . . . together with project liaison with the designer and contractors during the development and installation of the sign. And of course, the impact of the sign in the future will depend on the creative use of the display space. A huge thank you to those who provided their expertise and time to create an attractive sign and street library and a valuable communication medium for our local community.



Accompanying the sign there is also a book library, for passers-by and parishioners to exchange books. As part of the blessing of the new signage, our People’s Warden, Angela Hazebroek, spoke about the Street Libraries.

Our St Theodore’s library is one of approximately 4,500 registered libraries in Australia, and is registered as number 7302 (they are obviously not numerically assigned!). In South Australia there are 334 Street Libraries, and you can access a map of all such registered libraries on the website [‘Streetlibrary.org.au/find/’](https://streetlibrary.org.au/find/), which also provides an explanation of how the libraries work.

We have a Library Committee comprising Jackie Williams and Angela Jones (both trained librarians) and Angela Hazebroek, who will take the responsibilities of monitoring use of the library and replacing books as needed.

Tim Winton is the Australia Street Library Patron . . . and makes the comment “The thing about Street Libraries is their openness, their democratic nature”. It is good for the parish to be part of that movement.

Street Library #7302 at St Theodore’s Church

It is a pleasure to acknowledge and thank the parishioners and friends of St Theodore’s who responded to our Appeal in 2024, which provided money towards not only to the sign but also to other major works in the parish. The noticeboard and Street Library were funded outside the budget in that manner

Lent and Holy Week Meditations . . .

“Ashes and Eggs” is a wonderful publication by the Wild Goose Worship Group – a subsidiary of the Iona Community in the U.K. – containing liturgical resources for Lent, Holy Week and Easter. It is edited by Ruth Burgess & Chris Polhill.

There is a series of liturgies, prayers and meditations etc. for the various days of Holy Week and Easter: I give some examples . . .



Richard Keene

A reflection for Holy Week . . .

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

*Jesus,
as we start once again
to follow you
on the way of the cross,
we are apprehensive.
For we are not sure
of ourselves.
On our journey
we have often been afraid,
often sought safe options,
often fudged the sharp solution.
On our journey
we have often tried to hide
our real selves
from others,
from ourselves
and from you.
We, who dare to say
we are following you,
know how faltering are our footsteps,
how delicate our discipleships,
how feeble our faith.
Yet you still call us
by name
and invite us into your company
and onto your road.
So give us the courage
and the commitment we need:
help us to look out for one another on the road;
show us how we may share the duty
and the joy
of discipleship,
knowing that, in the end,
it is you who have blazed the trail,
you who accompany us all the way,
you who will meet us on the road,
and say our name. Amen.*

Two prayers for Good Friday . . .

THE DENIAL OF YOUR IMAGE

*Forgive us, Father,
for all the times we label others,
forgetting each one is made and loved by you.*

*Forgive us, Jesus,
for the little choices that blind us
to the pain we cause others to suffer.*

*Forgive us, Holy Spirit,
for our collision with the systems
that deny justice and human need,
serve politics or convenience first.*

*Living God, forgive our inhumanity,
the denial of your image set within us;
pour your grace on this, our sorrow,
that we may find courage to change
and honour your love for us. Amen*

OUR INHUMANITY

*God forgive us for the inhumanity
that makes us bomb and blast
and see people as collateral damage.*

*God forgive us for the inhumanity
that imprisons, disappears or kills
those who do not fit our point of view.*

*God forgive us the inhumanity
that makes slaves of other cultures
to put food or flowers on our table.*

*God forgive us the inhumanity
that put Jesus on the cross.
And God forgive us
even when
we know what we do. Amen*

A Good Friday meditation . . .

GOD HELP US!

*There is a time for asking questions
but there is also a time for decisions.*

*There is a time to discuss who Jesus is,
but there is also a time to take up your cross and follow him.*

*There is a time to weigh the issues carefully,
but there are issues that will not wait until tomorrow.*

*If we wait until we understand everything
we will wait forever.*

*If we do not follow the light which we do see,
we will receive no more light.*

*If we, today, miss this opportunity
then God help us.*



The famous question is asked for the first time



If God wanted me to be thankful for vegetables, why did He make them taste like vegetables?



AN INVITATION

Hearth Gatherings: more encounters with mystics to light our way

Angela Hazebroek invites you to join others who are seeking to deepen their relationship with the One who creates, restores and sustains us.

We can learn so much from those men and women who have travelled this way before us. Give yourself some quiet time to reflect on their lives and teachings and how these might influence your spiritual journey. *Registration details are provided below.*

Dates: Saturday 1st February – 11.00 am to 2.00 pm
Saturday 1st March – 11.00 am to 2.00 pm
Saturday 5th April – 11.00 am to 2.00 pm
Saturday 3rd May – 11.00 am to 2.00 pm

Venue: St Theodore's Anglican Church and Quiet Garden, 46 Prescott Terrace, Toorak Gardens

February **Light in the Dark Ages?**
Brigid of Kildare *Rekindling the Flame* 451-525 AD
Hild of Whitby *Trusting in the Knowledge of God* 614-680 AD
Cuthbert of Lindisfarne *Following a Vision* 634-687 AD

March **Rhineland Mystics: Paving the Way for the German Renaissance**
Let us remember the women – Hildegard, Gertrude the Great and Mechtilde of Magdeburg (1098-1285 AD) – who influenced Meister Eckhart, Johannes Tauler and Henry Suso between 1260 and 1366 AD.

April **Medieval English Mystics: Lessons for Ordinary People and Beginners on the Way**
The Cloud of Unknowing, probably written about 1370 AD was the 'earliest instance in any vernacular literature of a direct, practical instruction in the entrance and progress in the contemplative life understood as the life of mystical, infused prayer.'
This book influenced both Walter Hinton (1330-1396 AD) and Julian of Norwich (1342-1416 AD).

May **St Thomas Aquinas: Theologian and Mystic?**
Thomas Aquinas was born in the south of Italy in 1225 AD and died less than 50 years later already recognized as a great philosopher and theologian. But could the man whose writings explored the relationship between the mind of man and the mind of God, reconciling the teachings of Aristotle proving God's existence through logic and reason also be a mystic?

- Costs for Individual reflections \$30/\$20 (Pensioner/ Student);
- Payment by card or cash (or by EFT with your initials and HG);
- Registration: Contact Angela one week prior to the session: SMS to 0407 600 124 or angelaandjack@gmail.com
- BYO Lunch if required. Coffee, tea, and snacks provided.
- **Zoom Reflections** Cost \$20 for individual reflections: EFT – Angela Hazebroek; BSB 065115; Acct 10190750
Please register one week prior to the session so I can send you the materials and Zoom link.

These sessions will be offered on Zoom:

Tuesday 11th February – 9.30 am to 12 noon
Tuesday 11th March – 9.30 am to 12 noon
Tuesday 8th April – 9.30 am to 12 noon
Tuesday 13th May – 9.30 am to 12 noon

SELECT DATES



During Lent and Holy Week, we will be having a number of services and activities – and Lenten Studies - held jointly between the parishes of St Theodore's, Toorak Gardens and All Souls', St Peters. These events are shared between the two venues - in this diary list, they are indicated in blue, with the venue nominated. Members of both parishes are welcome.

The listings in black are St Theodore's services.

March 04 **Shrove Tuesday** – 10 am: Pancakes at [All Souls' Church](#).

March 05 **Ash Wednesday**

- ❖ 10.00 am Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes at [All Souls'](#)
- ❖ 7.30 pm Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes at [St Theodore's](#)

April 13 **Palm Sunday**

- ❖ 8.00 am Holy Communion
- ❖ 9.30 am Sung Eucharist with Procession

April 15 **Holy Tuesday**

- ❖ 7.30 pm Stations of the Cross (at [St Theodore's Church](#))

April 17 **Maundy Thursday**

- ❖ 7.30 pm Mass of the Last Supper with Foot Washing, Stripping of Sanctuary and the Watch

April 18 **Good Friday**

- ❖ 9.30 am Liturgy of Christ's Passion with Veneration of the Cross

April 20 **Easter Day**

- ❖ 8.00 am Holy Communion
- ❖ 9.30 am Sung Eucharist



ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

Our Annual Vestry meeting for 2025 will be held on February 16th, 2025 at 10.45 am in the church, immediately following the Sung Eucharist.

In Anglican polity, the Annual Vestry functions like an AGM. It hears reports, receives the financial statement for the previous year and passes the budget for the year ahead. There is the opportunity to ask questions from the reports; also items/motions for discussion and debate can be listed – *Motions need to be submitted in writing with Rev'd Matthew by January 26th, 2025.*



From the Church Times

The annual Vestry Meeting was held straight after the 9.30 am Sung Eucharist

It is also the meeting where parish officers are elected. This year the following positions fall vacant:

- ❖ People's Warden
- ❖ Parish Councillors (6)
- ❖ Auditor
- ❖ Nomination Committee [3]
- ❖ Synod Representatives [2]

Nomination forms will be available in the month prior, and *nominations close on February 9th, 2025.*

We endeavour to run efficient meetings, so generally the Vestry runs for no more than 45 minutes. Because of its importance in the administration and care of the parish, Vestry is a meeting all parishioners are encouraged to attend. If you have any questions please ask Matthew, one of the Wardens or a member of Parish Council.

"The Tidings" is the newsletter of the parish of St Theodore's Anglican Church, Toorak Gardens. It is published three times each year – the first issue in January, and includes Lent and Easter; the second in June, and includes the Patronal Festival of St Theodore; and the third in December, and includes Advent and Christmas.

The Editor is **Dr Richard Keene** (ph: 0416-275-161; email: frkeene@me.com)

Comments/compliments/criticisms/contributions are always welcome!