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**ST THEODORE'S, TOORAK GARDENS**

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**ADVENT 3  
GAUDETE SUNDAY  
15 DECEMBER 2024**



## **WELCOME**

St Theodore's is an active, caring and supportive community which values liturgy, prayer and preaching to sustain our daily lives, as we seek to foster love, hope and justice to all. You are welcome here as you are, embraced within God's boundless love. It is good to have you here today and we hope that you will feel at home.

## **PRAYING WITH CANDLES AND STONES**

As you enter our church, there are two stations for prayer. One is an invitation to light a candle, symbolising our praying for each other before God. The other is an invitation to drop stones into a bowl of water, symbolising letting go of something (or someone) weighing us down.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF COMMUNION**

All are welcome to receive Holy Communion and/or receive anointing for healing at the back. Due to Covid precautions, intinction (dipping) into the wine is prohibited.

*If you do not wish to drink the wine, we invite you to pause briefly before the chalice to acknowledge the sacramental presence.*

## **LIVE-STREAMING**

Our 9:30am Sunday Service is live-streamed on Facebook Live. During administration of communion, the camera is adjusted so that no one coming forward is visible online, but this cannot be guaranteed.

## **HEARING ASSISTANCE SYSTEM**

We have a Hearing Assistance System available on Wi-Fi, usable with or without hearing aids. Please ask the stewards for assistance.

Please email [office@theodores.org](mailto:office@theodores.org) to join our mailing list.

*Please stand if you wish*

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN CP 29 "HILLS OF THE NORTH, REJOICE"**

- 1 Hills of the North, rejoice,  
river and mountain-spring,  
hark to the advent voice;  
valley and lowland, sing.  
Christ comes in righteousness and love,  
he brings salvation from above.
  
- 2 Isles of the Southern seas,  
sing to the listening earth,  
carry on every breeze  
hope of a world's new birth:  
In Christ shall all be made anew,  
his word is sure, his promise true.
  
- 3 Lands of the East, arise,  
he is your brightest morn,  
greet him with joyous eyes,  
praise shall his path adorn:  
your seers have longed to know their Lord;  
to you he comes, the final word.
  
- 4 Shores of the utmost West,  
lands of the setting sun,  
welcome the heavenly guest  
in whom the dawn has come:  
he brings a never-ending light  
who triumphed o'er our darkest night.
  
- 5 Shout, as you journey home,  
songs be in every mouth,  
lo, from the North they come,  
from East and West and South:  
in Jesus all shall find their rest,  
in him the universe be blest.

Charles Oakley © CP 2001

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As we gather in worship, we acknowledge the Kurna People as the traditional owners and custodians of this land.

**May we walk together in harmony in a spirit of reconciliation.**

## INVOCATION AND GREETING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

† Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.**

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins,

**whose mercy endures forever.**

## WELCOME

### ADVENT 3

John the Baptist, by his preaching  
and by water poured,  
brought to those who heard his teaching  
news of hope restored:

“Keep your vision strong and steady,  
and be ready for the Lord’

Mark Earey © SP 2010

*A candle is lit on the Advent Wreath as the priest says:*

Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors:  
to you be praise and glory for ever!

You have called your people through the ages  
to live by the light of faith

and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfillment.

**May we be obedient to your call  
and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ,  
a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;  
for you are our light and our salvation.  
Blessed be God for ever.**

## **OPENING SENTENCE**

Do not fear. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love. (Zephaniah 3.16-17)

## **PRAYER OF PREPARATION**

Let us pray.  
**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **KYRIES**

**Lord, have mercy  
Christ, have mercy  
Lord, have mercy**

## **CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

The Lord comes, bringing to light things now hidden in darkness, and disclosing the purposes of the heart.

*Silence may be kept*

Let us open our hearts and prepare for his coming, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Merciful God,  
our maker and our judge,  
we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
and in what we have failed to do:  
we have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;  
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.  
Father, forgive us.  
Strengthen us to love and obey you  
in newness of life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God,  
who has promised forgiveness  
to all who turn to him in faith:  
† pardon you and set you free from all your sins,  
strengthen you in all goodness  
and keep you in eternal life,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Almighty God,  
you sent your Son into a world  
where the wheat must be winnowed from the chaff  
and evil clings even to what is good:  
let the fire of your Spirit purge us of all corruption,  
so that, purified, we may wait eagerly for him  
whose coming is certain, whose Day draws near,  
your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*Please be seated*

**FIRST READING: ZEPHANIAH 3.14-20**

<sup>14</sup> Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!

<sup>15</sup> The LORD has taken away the judgements against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

<sup>16</sup> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;  
do not let your hands grow weak.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing

<sup>18</sup> as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,  
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

<sup>19</sup> I will deal with all your oppressors  
at that time.

And I will save the lame  
and gather the outcast,  
and I will change their shame into praise  
and renown in all the earth.

<sup>20</sup> At that time I will bring you home,  
at the time when I gather you;  
for I will make you renowned and praised  
among all the peoples of the earth,  
when I restore your fortunes  
before your eyes, says the LORD.

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

**PSALM: A SONG OF ISAIAH**

**Response: Shout aloud and sing for joy for great is the Lord**

'Behold, God is my salvation:

I will trust and will not be afraid;

'For the Lord God is my strength and my song  
and has become my salvation.' **R**

With joy you will draw water:  
from the wells of salvation.

On that day you will say

'Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name; **R**

'Make known his deeds among the nations:  
proclaim that his name is exalted.

'Sing God's praises, who has triumphed gloriously:  
let this be known in all the world.

'Shout and sing for joy, you that dwell in Zion:  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.' **R**

**SECOND READING: PHILIPPIANS 4.4-7**

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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

*Please stand if you wish*



## GRADUAL HYMN: CP 33 "O DAY OF GOD, DRAW NIGH"

- 1 O day of God, draw nigh  
in beauty and in power;  
come with thy timeless judgment now  
to match our present hour.
- 2 Bring to our troubled minds,  
uncertain and afraid,  
the quiet of a steadfast faith,  
calm of a call obeyed.
- 3 Bring justice to our land,  
that all may dwell secure,  
and finely build for days to come  
foundations that endure.
- 4 Bring to our world of strife  
thy sovereign word of peace,  
that war may haunt the earth no more,  
and desolation cease.
- 5 O day of God, draw nigh  
as at creation's birth;  
let there be light again,  
and set thy judgments on the earth.

R.B.Y. Scott @ CP 2001

## THE GOSPEL

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**The spirit of the Lord / is upon me,  
Because he has sent me to bring glad tidings / to the poor**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

The Lord be with you  
**And also with you.**

The Holy Gospel according to Luke 3.7-18  
**‡ Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

<sup>7</sup> John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup> Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

<sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' <sup>11</sup> In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' <sup>12</sup> Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' <sup>13</sup> He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' <sup>14</sup> Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.'

<sup>15</sup> As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup> John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

<sup>18</sup> So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## SERMON

*The sermon is followed by a time of silence for reflection.*

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray for the world and for the Church.

### *Response:*

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

### *Conclusion:*

Compassionate 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

*Please stand if you wish*

## THE GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ.  
**His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**And also with you.**

## OFFERTORY HYMN: CP 32 "O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL"

- 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.*

- 2 O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free,  
thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell thy people save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave. *Refrain*
- 3 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight. *Refrain*
- 4 O come, Key of David, come  
and open wide our heavenly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
and close the path to misery. *Refrain*
- 5 O come, O come, thou Lord of might,  
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times didst give the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain*

J.M. Neale @ CP 2001

## PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

As the grain once scattered in the fields  
and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside  
are now united on this table in bread and wine,  
so, Lord, may your whole Church soon be gathered together  
from the corners of the earth  
into your kingdom.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,  
mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary  
and lived as one of us.

By his death on the cross  
and rising to new life,  
he offered the one true sacrifice for sin  
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

We thank you that when he shall come again  
in power and great triumph to judge the world,  
we may with joy behold his appearing,  
and in confidence stand before him  
who redeems us from sin and death  
and makes us heirs of everlasting life.

Therefore with angels and archangels,  
and with all the company of heaven,  
we proclaim your great and glorious name,  
for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**† Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Merciful God, we thank you  
for these gifts of your creation,  
this bread and wine,  
and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit,  
we who eat and drink them  
may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;  
and when he had given you thanks  
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,  
'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup,  
and again giving you thanks  
he gave it to his disciples, saying,  
'Drink from this, all of you.  
This is my blood of the new covenant  
shed for you and for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded:  
proclaiming his offering of himself  
made once for all upon the cross,  
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,  
and looking for his coming again,  
we celebrate, with this bread and this cup,  
his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice  
for the sins of the whole world.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

† Renew us by your Holy Spirit,  
unite us in the body of your Son  
and bring us with all your people  
into the joy of your eternal kingdom;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
with whom, and in whom,  
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
we worship you, Father,  
in songs of never-ending praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power  
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray,

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

### **BREAKING OF THE BREAD**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.  
We who are many are one body,  
**for we all share in the one bread.**

### **AGNUS DEI**

**Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The gifts of God for the people of God.

**May we who share these gifts be found in Christ and Christ in us.**

This is the table of communion with the earth,  
in which Christ became incarnate

So come to this table, those who have much faith  
and those who would like to have more;

those who have been here often

and those who have not been for a long time;

those who have tried to follow Jesus;

and we who have failed.

Come.

*Please stand if you wish*

## POST-COMMUNION SENTENCE

**Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.**

(Phillippians 4.5)

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God for whom we wait,

we thank you that you have fed us

with the bread of life

and the cup of salvation.

As we joyfully await your Son,

keep us ever watchful

that we may be ready to stand before him

on the day of his coming.



## PRAYER OF SELF-OFFERING

Let us pray.

**We thank you, Lord,  
that you have fed us in this sacrament,  
united us with Christ,  
and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet  
prepared for all peoples.  
Amen.**

## BLESSING

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;  
and the blessing of God almighty, † the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

*Please stand if you wish*

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

**RECESSIONAL HYMN: CP 591 "THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS JUSTICE AND JOY"**

- 1 The kingdom of God is justice and joy;  
For Jesus restores what sin would destroy.  
God's power and glory in Jesus we know;  
And here and hereafter the kingdom shall grow.
  
- 2 The kingdom of God is mercy and grace;  
The captives are freed, the sinners find place,  
The outcast are welcomed God's banquet to share;  
And hope is awakened in place of despair.
  
- 3 The kingdom of God is challenge and choice:  
Believe the good news, repent and rejoice!  
God's love for us sinners brought Christ to his cross:  
Our crisis of judgement for gain or for loss.
  
- 4 God's kingdom is come, the gift and the goal;  
In Jesus begun, in heaven made whole.  
The heirs of the kingdom shall answer his call;  
And all things cry "Glory!" to God all in all.

Bryn Rees @ CP 2001

**POSTLUDE: RAWSTHORNE: VENI EMMANUEL**

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Where there is a † in the liturgy, you are invited to make a sign of the cross if you wish. When the Gospel is read and we say “† Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ”, you are invited to make three tiny signs of the cross, on the forehead, on the lips and on the chest. This symbolises the Word of God in our minds, our words and our hearts.

The sermon is preceded by a short Children's Talk if there are children present.