

Memorial service - late Daniel Wilson NOTE CHANGE 10am, Fri 17 Nov

St Stephen's Women's Coffee Mornings 10am to 11.30am Sat 18 Nov.
Stonehouse Café in Warrandyte. Partners and children are welcome. Sue Curllis will be in contact closer to the next date.

Dates for your diary

- Sun 26th Nov parish Annual General Meeting
 - after worship, approx. 11am
 - Now is the time to ask friends to nominate for election
 - Nomination forms and Electoral Enrolment forms available from Vicar
 - Reports gladly received: Churchwardens, Treasurer, Market Stall etc
- 13th Jan 2024 parish day out at beach, hosted by Hodgson Family

Resources for ministry

Giving can be made directly to our Bendigo Bank Warrandyte account
BSB: 633-000 Acct Number: 140334277.

Church Contact Details Rev'd. Mark Hanson (Vicar) 0430 141 006
ph (general admin): 0491 185 983
email: ststephenswarrandyte@gmail.com
website: www.ststephenswarrandyte.org.au



*A welcoming Christ-centred community
seeking and working together
through the power of the Holy Spirit
to worship God, share His good news
and grow as disciples of Jesus*

Sunday 12th November 2023 Diwali - a Festival of Light?

Originating in southeast Asia, Diwali, also known as the 'festival of lights' is celebrated during the Hindu lunar months of Ashvin and Kartik, which typically fall in October and November. This year, celebrations start on 12 Nov and continue for five days.

The words Diwali or Deepavali mean "a row or series of lights" and festivities include decorating public spaces and homes with lights, fireworks displays, cultural activities and the sharing of food and gifts. Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs celebrate the spiritual victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance.

Hindu legend traces lights to a story about Lord Rama, a descendant of the Hindu god Vishnu. Rama returned to his kingdom in the ancient Indian city of Ayodhya after 14 years in exile and won a battle against a demon king. To celebrate his victory, people lit up their houses.

'Many people who are not Indian, and who are not Hindu, celebrate Diwali now. Perhaps to learn about Indian culture, they see it as a wonderful expression of Indian culture and perhaps they also think that the message of Diwali is for all people,' explains Professor Ian Woolford from LaTrobe Uni. "It's significant of the victory of truth over evil, over lies. Victory of light over darkness. This is one thing that it signifies and of course perhaps this is become so popular even among non-Indians. This is the message that all of us can appreciate."

1 If a child is in **immediate danger** at any point **CALL 000**

2 All suspicions or reports of child abuse must be reported to:

Who can report neglect and abuse of a child under the age of 18?	What sorts of things must be reported?
Children, Parents, Staff, Volunteers, Anyone.	All child safety concerns must be reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disclosure of past and present abuse and harm• Allegations, suspicions or observations• Breaches of the Code of Conduct

CONTACT NUMBERS:

POLICE 000	CHILD PROTECTION SEE BELOW	KOOYOORA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS 1800 135 246
----------------------	--------------------------------------	--

Diwali Festival organiser in Melbourne, Arun Sharma, [told SBS News](#) the ritual of using lights, known as Diyas, can be an opportunity to meditate, concentrate on this light and illuminate soul. "Diwali does have a massive significance behind it. It's not just for fun, just come and enjoy and walk away with nothing. The light we generate from Diya: it's for enlightening of self. It's removing all the darkness which is very significant, not just in your home but in your hearts as well.

Christianity also has a teaching about light. Jesus described himself thus: "*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.*" (John 8:12).

Certain people, willing to turn to God, appreciate the light of goodness – David wrote: '*The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear?*' (Ps 27:1). God's unfolding promise of salvation brings light to willing souls: '*People walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned*' (Isa 9:2). The apostle John affirmed that Jesus personally was the embodiment of this saving light: '*In him was life, and that life was the light of all humankind. The light shines in darkness and the darkness has not overcome it*' (Jn 1:4-5).

However, the Bible also observes that humanity prefers darkness over light: '*This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil*' (Jn 3:19). Finally, the apostle Paul confirmed that we live amidst a struggle of ideas and loyalties: '*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*' (2Cor 4:4).

How do you regard the contrast between good and evil? Are they balanced, or is there a personal dimension to our allegiance to Jesus?

Song for the Season

Since 2021 we have enjoyed numerous new songs. These have expanded our repertoire and given us opportunities to worship God in ever-changing ways. Singing songs in church services can express praise or give voice to lament. But they also shape our emotions. It's a two-way process. So, choosing songs is not just a haphazard mix of whatever might appeal, but a careful exercise of shaping our emotions so that we're freed to engage with the theme of the service.

For this Advent season we'll learn a song which declares the praises of Jesus' birth:

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens there shone a Holy light
Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born

The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo! above the Earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth
Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born

Down in a lowly manger our humble Christ was born
And brought us all salvation that blessed Christmas morn
Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!