

## Christmas Events and Times

- Christmas Eve = Sun 24<sup>th</sup> Dec: 10am Service and 5pm Carols
- Christmas Day = Mon 25<sup>th</sup> Dec: **9am Carols and Communion**
- New Years Eve = Sun 31<sup>st</sup> Dec: 10am prayers
- January service times: 10am Sundays - no rostered duties

**Parish day out at beach** hosted by Hodgson Family: 13<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024

**Working Bee** 9am-12noon, Sat 20<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024

## 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  
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email: [ststephenswarrandyte@gmail.com](mailto:ststephenswarrandyte@gmail.com)  
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*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 17<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

## Advent 3 : Joy

Advent is five Sundays leading to Christmas to consider how a Saviour is God's gift to humanity. Our Advent Candles represent five great features of Christian faith: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and the Grace of God's gift.

Christian hope is certain and assured, based on two unchangeable and rock-solid certainties: the fulfilled promise of God to send the Messiah, and: the proven resurrection of Jesus by which he demonstrated His authority and capacity to do what he promises.

Peace is not the mere absence of violence in this passing age, but eternal Peace between a just God and diminished humanity. God gives us opportunity to work for physical peace in this age, but supremely has established a path of eternal peace for those who will trust on Jesus. Real Peace is peace between God and person: *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Jesus, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.* (Colossians 1:18-20)

Joy is the theme of this third week in Advent. The penitential waiting for God's promise, symbolised by purple candles in the previous two weeks, is lifted to joy, symbolised by pink, in this week, because the expected gift of God is near:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice!  
Let your gentleness be evident to all. For the Lord is near.

*(Philippians 4:4-5)*

**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:

All suspicions or reports of child abuse must be reported to:	What is Child Abuse?	Who can report neglect and abuse of a child under the age of 18?	What sorts of things must be reported?
Police Child Protection Kooyoora Professional Standards	Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to: <b>Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Family Violence, Sexual Abuse, Grooming and Neglect.</b>	Children, Parents, Staff, Volunteers, Anyone.	All child safety concerns must be reported: • Disclosure of past and present abuse and harm • Allegations, suspicions or observations • Breaches of the Code of Conduct

**CONTACT NUMBERS:**

<b>POLICE 000</b>	<b>CHILD PROTECTION SEE BELOW</b>	<b>KOYOORA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS 1800 135 246</b>
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## Song for the Season

As we enter Advent and prepare ourselves for Christmas, our new song of the season reminds us that Jesus coming to earth is good news for all people. The song, *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, is an African-American spiritual based on Luke's record of Jesus' birth being announced to the shepherds. It draws on an image from the prophet Isaiah, who says, 'How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns! (Isa 52:7 NLT). And it evokes the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20, in which Jesus authorizes his followers to go and teach his ways to all the world and gather people into God's family.

Jesus is God's good news to us! This season we celebrate together who he is and what he means for us all. Our song of the season inspires us to share with joy the good news about Jesus to everywhere to everyone.

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!

**Isaiah 61:1-4, 7-11** The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours.

'For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.'

I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the soil makes the young plant come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

**Luke 1:41-55** At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!'

And Mary said: 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants for ever, just as he promised our ancestors.'