

**Lent** Lent Bible Studies - 7pm, every Thursday to 21 Mar, at church;  
[‘Remembering the Poor’](#), a study  
Passover Seder - 7pm, Thurs 28 Mar  
Good Friday - **9am**, Fri 29 Mar - **note early service time**  
Stations of Cross - 10am, Fri 29 Mar - Stiggant Reserve

**Stations of the Cross Choir** Warrandyte Community Church will organise a choir for this Good Friday event, to sing a bracket of songs. One rehearsal will take place: 12noon 24<sup>th</sup> Mar (Palm Sunday) at WCC.

**ISCAST seminar AI x Christianity: Gospel Wisdom for an AI World.**  
An introduction to Artificial Intelligence and its implications for Christians. Sat 16 Mar, 7 to 9.15p.m., The Scots' Church, Melbourne. **ISCAST** (the Institute for the Study of Christianity in an Age of Science and Technology) is a local Melbourne think tank helping Christians engage in constructive conversations about the roles of science and faith. More details: [iscast.org](http://iscast.org)

#### Coming events

Sat 27<sup>th</sup> July Jumbunna Episcopate - Day of Prayer  
Saturday Morning Coffee: 16 Mar, 20 Apr, 18 May, 15 Jun, 21 Sep,  
19 Oct, 16 Nov

#### 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](mailto:ststephenswarrandyte@gmail.com)  
website: [www.ststephenswarrandyte.org.au](http://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 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024

On my day-off this week I had an opportunity to visit a farm near Benalla. It's constant hard work to make a living on a rural property. On top of the usual difficulties, the district has had a recent problem with cattle duffing (i.e. theft). It seems that murky characters come in the night with a horse float and dogs, open a gate and quickly go in to nick a couple of steers before making a quick getaway.

In the light of day, I watched the farmer use his dogs to shift stock between paddocks, using natural whistles to direct the pack this way or that. Apparently, the duffers use 'silent' dog-whistles, which are metal whistles which emit ultra-sonic notes audible only to their dog and not to humans. In this way the murky characters can get their pack to do their bidding without being heard by the sleeping farmer.

The church is like a shepherd seeking to direct a group toward some wholesome ends, like holiness in life and eternal salvation. But there are other groups aiming to achieve societal change, for good or ill, like political parties and the popular press. Contrast the church's open call (toward love, generosity and personal restraint) to the craven dog-whistles (toward fear of released immigration detainees).

Today's Bible readings have something to say about discerning the Wisdom of God in the crucifixion of Christ, which sounds like foolishness, but which has power to defeat the wiles of the Evil One. Which message is more life-giving - a call toward the disciplines of love and generosity, or enticement toward fear and wilful insecurity?

**Exodus 20:1-17**

God spoke all these words:

'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.'

'You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.'

'You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.'

'Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.'

'Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.'

'You shall not murder.' 'You shall not commit adultery.' 'You shall not steal.' 'You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.'

'You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.'

**1 Corinthians 1:18-25**

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written:

'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.'  
(*Isaiah 29:14*)

Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles - but to those whom God has called (both Jews and Greeks) - Christ! the power of God and the wisdom of God!

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

**John 2:13-22**

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So, Jesus made a whip out of cords and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, 'Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!'

His disciples remembered that it is written:

'Zeal for your house will consume me.' (*Psalms 69:9*)

The Jews then responded to him, 'What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.' They replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?' But the temple Jesus had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person.