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Child Safe Church The Parishes of St Columba's & Our Lady Help of Christians (including Lexton, Miners Rest and Waubra) follow the Child Safe Standards outlined by the Victorian Government and we also implement procedures and standards as directed by the Ballarat Diocesan Office. You can download our Code of Conduct and Child Safety Policy from the Parish website or on the foyer notice board. If you have any concerns whatsoever—please contact the Parish Office, Fr. Marcello or one of the Safe Guarding Officers at ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au or wendouree@ballarat.catholic.org.au

COVID Safe Plan
If you are feeling unwell or have any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough or sore throat) please do not attend Mass.
Please register with the Parish Office during office hours to attend a weekend Mass. You do not need to preregister for a weekday Mass. Please ensure you arrive 10 minutes before Mass; doors will be locked prior to commencement. Contact tracing is required for all Masses.
Ensure that you maintain appropriate physical distancing at all times (1.5 metres).
A face mask is optional whilst visiting the Church (your face mask may be removed when consuming Communion or reading, but must be worn again immediately afterwards).
Please use the hand sanitiser available upon entering the Church.
Please do not touch any surfaces unnecessarily.
Please remain in the designated area of the Church (in or near your seat at all times).
Once Mass has concluded, please leave the Church immediately afterwards to allow for cleaning of all surfaces.
We appreciate your assistance. The fines for non-compliance with Government Regulations may be imposed on the Parish are up to \$100,000.



Parishes of St Columba's and Our Lady Help of Christians

Communities of Ballarat North, Lexton, Miners Rest, Waubra, Wendouree
www.ballarat.catholic.org.au (select Parish)



Office: 306 Gregory St, Ballarat Nth **Phone:** 5331 1012
Email: ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ballaratnorthpastoral@ballarat.catholic.org.au
School Co-Principals: Bambi Afford & Shaun Mohr
School Phone: 5332 4894

Office: 480a Gillies Street, Wendouree **Phone:** 5339 2302
Email: wendouree@ballarat.catholic.org.au
P O Box 192, Wendouree
School Principal: Leigh Bradshaw
School Phone: 5339 4726

Parish Priest:

Fr Marcello Colasante
Staffing
St Columba's
Pastoral Associate:
Judith O'Sullivan
Tues-Friday 9:00am-1:00pm
Our Safeguarding Officer:
Peter Marquand

Our Lady Help of Christians
Parish Co-ordinator and Safeguarding Officer:
Maree Roache
Wed-Friday 9:00am-1:00pm

MASS TIMES
St Columba's
Saturday 5.00 pm
Wednesday 10.00 am

Our Lady Help of Christians
Sunday 8.30 am
Waubra 1st & 3rd Sunday;
Beaufort 2nd & 4th Sunday;
Lexton 5th Sunday
10.00 am Wendouree

Christmas Masses
Christmas Eve
St Columba's 5pm
OLHC 7pm
Beaufort 9pm
Christmas Day
Waubra 8.30am
St Columba's 10:00am

20th December 2020 ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent (B)

Focus on the Scriptures

We are all familiar with Luke's story of the annunciation, a story that has inspired artists through the ages. God's messenger, Gabriel, approaches a young Galilean Jewish woman, Mary of Nazareth, and greets her as God's graced one. The angel's greeting to Mary is unique. No other person in the Christian scriptures is addressed as "favoured one" or "graced one". The Greek form kecharitōmenē contains within it the notion of grace, charis in Greek. It can also mean "mercied one".

Mary is troubled by the angel's greeting, succinct as it is. After being addressed as "favoured or mercied one", she is told only that God is with her. She knows the traditions of her people. She knows that those said to be the graced or favoured of God (Noah and Moses and Gideon and Samuel) are called to be agents of God's saving action and to carry heavy responsibilities. Now a young woman is called to be God's agent. In a formula that forms part of angelic announcements of birth, the angel tells Mary not to be afraid and reassures her by stating explicitly that she has been graced by God. The angel then proceeds to announce the conception and birth of the child she is to name "Jesus". This child will reign forever. The prophecy of Nathan, recounted in today's first reading, is to be fulfilled in the conception and birth of Mary's son who is also, and especially, God's son in the line of David who in his turn was first of many "sons of God" called to rule with the justice and the wisdom of God. In the face of almost constant failure on the part of the kings, later prophets projected Israel's hope into the future and looked for one who would truly have the characteristics of God, who would truly be "son of God".

Mary's response to the angel, "How can this be...?" echoes the prayer of David in the continuation of today's first reading: "Who am I...and who are we that you have brought us to this point?" (2 Sam 7:18). Mary learns that God's dwelling place is her own human flesh and that this extraordinary event will be accomplished through the grace of God and the power of God's Holy Spirit. Mary is also to learn that her cousin Elizabeth with conceive a child despite her age "for nothing will be impossible for God." The mysterious workings of God in our world invite the response of Mary: "How can this be...?" As we approach the celebration of the ongoing comings of the Christ into our world, we might pause to wonder at the goodness of God at work in all that incarnates the grace and mercy of God. Let us give thanks in the spirit of today's gospel for the deep incarnation we celebrate at this time, even if pandemic continues to place limits on our communal celebrations.
Veronica Lawson rsm

Responsorial Psalm: (R.) For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I am the servant of the Lord: may his will for me be done. Alleluia!

Recently Deceased: We commend to God: All those who have died recently

Anniversaries: We remember: Kathleen McDaid, Guiseppa Raschila, Sarah Tonkin, Kerin Graham, David Fithall, Ronald Mark Edgar, Ronald Leslie Edgar, Stephen Head and Patrick Curran

We pray: Those in need of our prayers; all the sick in our Parishes, and all those struggling with the effects of Covid-19, for all those for whom Christmas is a difficult time,

Vinnies launches 2020 Christmas Appeal The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia is asking people in a position to do so to dig a bit deeper this year as the Society launches its Christmas Appeal after a very tough year. To donate go to https://donate.vinnies.org.au/christmas-appeal?_ga=2.45291745.433958477.1606174687-2061808706.1606174687

OLHC Christmas Lunch Due to the uncertainty of gathering in large groups for Christmas Day, OLHC Wendouree is offering a Christmas Day Take-away lunch. For those without transport, alternative arrangements can be organised. Bookings are essential. **Bookings:** 0419 975 914 or **Email:** christmaslunchwendouree@gmail.com

Gifts for others via Catholic Mission <https://catholicmission.org.au/gifts>

Christmas Giving Tree a St Columba's this year we will not have the giving tree in the foyer as in previous years, however the need in the community is greater this year than ever. We invite you to donate gift cards, grocery items or cash donations which we will distribute to the Parish St Vincent de Paul. You are also invited to purchase gifts suitable for the Mum's and Dad's. These can be left at the office during office hours or give to Judith after one of the Parish Masses.

Making a Scene In this year of COVID, travelling around the world is but a dream. Making a Scene at Christmas, a display of over 500 Christmas Nativities, can take you around the world and through time using the lens of hand-crafted Nativities. We will be displaying these in The Bridge Mall, Ballarat, from December 17 - 20. All are welcome

Ceremonies and Religious Gatherings The increase in numbers requires that each parish have a Quick Response (QR) Code for parishioners to register their attendance at Mass. Each Parish is registered for a QR code and these are on the doors or either side of the doors as you enter. Please use the camera on your smart phone to scan the QR code before you enter the Church. If you do not have smart phone signing in using pen and paper is available. It is recommended that you download the Service Victoria App on your phone before you arrive. Please ensure you arrive at least ten minutes before the commencement of Mass to complete entry requirements. Doors will be locked before Mass commences.

Christmas Masses unfortunately due to the current restrictions to Mass attendance numbers, you will only be able to attend a Christmas Mass if you have pre-registered. See below for booking details.

Christmas Mass Times

Christmas Eve: 5pm Ballarat North, 7pm Wendouree, 9pm Beaufort

Christmas Day: 8.30am Waubra, 10am Ballarat North

To register for these Masses please either phone or email the Parish Office or booking using the Trybooking Links below:

Christmas Eve 5pm: fully booked

Christmas Eve 7pm: fully booked

Christmas Day 10am: <https://www.trybooking.com/BNNRF>

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Thank God for Mass! Just as lockdown begins to ease and Churches open for prayer and the celebration of Mass, Sue Ellis has produced an interactive book that will help every family, school and church to inspire children to enjoy the many aspects of this key event in the life of every Catholic. More information available from the diocesan website "Liturgy resources" page

Diocesan Christmas Appeal There will be an opportunity to contribute to the Bishops Christmas Appeal during the Christmas Masses. Thank you in advance.

Laudato Si Advent Week 4: Reducing greenhouse gases requires honesty, courage and responsibility' Pope Francis June 2015. With day and night-time temperatures forecast to be warmer than average this summer, what personal choices do we make to reduce greenhouse gases as part of our responsibility to create a sustainable world for our children's grandchildren? <https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/You-and-your-home/Save-energy>

Ballarat Diocese Lay Pastoral Ministry Virtual Learning Program Low-cost online study and formation offered in partnership with Dayton University, for employed or volunteer lay workers in parish and other ministries. Study subjects over 5 weeks. Study Cycle 1 for 2021 begins 3rd January. Registrations open now until 21st December. For more information and to register go to www.ballarat.catholic.org.au or email djurdja.klaric@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ph. 5337 7121

Parish Office Please note that the Parish Offices will be closed from Wednesday December 23rd at 12noon until Wednesday 20th January at 9am. Emails and telephone answer phone will be checked and cleared regularly. For any urgent matters please call Fr Marcello at the Presbytery—phone 5332 4324.

Preregistering for Masses will not be necessary during January. Please tick your name off on the sheet in the foyer. If your name is not on the list kindly add your name and a contact number. Remember to use the QR code when you enter the Church.

Readings and Prayers for January will be uploaded to the St Columba's website for you to access for your weekend reflections.

Weekday Masses will continue during January: Ballarat North 10am Wednesday, Wendouree Thursday and Friday at 10am (includes New Years Day Friday 1st January)

Readings for 4th Sunday in Advent (B)

First Reading *First Reading* 2 Sm 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16 A reading from the second book of Samuel

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent'. Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.'



But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan:

'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."

Responsorial Psalm Ps 88:2-5. 27. 29. R. see v.2

(R.) For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord;
through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth.
Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever,
that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. (R.)
2. 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:
I will establish your dynasty for ever
and set up your throne through all ages.' (R.)
3. He will say to me: 'You are my father,
my God, the rock who saves me.'
I will keep my love for him always;
for him my covenant shall endure. (R.)



Second Reading Rom 16:25-27 A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Lk 1:26-38 A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

The Gospel of the Lord

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