

Liturgy Rosters:  
Many thanks for your ministry to the Parish!

This Weekend: 8th & 9th December

**Saturday: 6.00pm**  
Reader: D Bennett  
Prayers: P O'Brien  
Minister: Volunteer Please  
Computer: A O'Brien

**Sunday: 10.30am**  
Reader: D Kierce  
Prayers: M McKenzie  
Minister: B McGennisken  
Computer: Volunteer Please

Next Weekend: 16th & 17th December

**Saturday: 6.00pm**  
Reader: D Kierce  
Prayers: P Howman  
Minister: K Howman  
Computer: A O'Brien

**Sunday: 10.30am**  
Reader: B Healy  
Prayers: A McIntyre  
Minister: D Arnott  
Computer: Volunteer Please

Following Weekend:

**Saturday: 6.00pm**  
Reader: G Priestley  
Prayers: P O'Brien  
Minister: D Kierce  
Computer: A O'Brien

**Sunday: Dec 24th 8.00pm Christmas Eve**

Reader: J Howman  
Prayers: M McKenzie  
Minister: P Howman  
Computer: K Howman

**Monday: Dec 25th 9.30am Christmas Day**

Reader: Volunteer Please  
Prayers: Volunteer Please  
Minister: Volunteer Please  
Computer: Volunteer Please

## All Saints Outreach Op-Shop:

(In Woolworth's Car park)  
Phone: 5521 1587

The Parish Outreach Op-Shop is always in need of good quality clothing, bric a brac or furniture.

### Donations during shop hours only.

Please ring Outreach for pick up if necessary. Thank you all for your ongoing support of Outreach.

### Outreach is open

Monday 1pm - 3pm  
Tuesday 10am - 1pm  
Wednesday 10am - 3pm  
Thursday 10am - 3pm  
Friday 10am - 4pm  
Saturday 10am - 12pm

Outreach is a significant fundraiser within the Parish and we regularly need Volunteers to give 3 hours in the mornings or afternoons.

**Please contact Kate Howman 0428 235 218 for further information.**

### LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

All Saints Parish has been present at most of the important milestones in your life: your Baptism, your First Communion, at times of great celebration and at times of great sadness. By leaving a gift to your Parish in your Will, you will leave a legacy of faith – a legacy to help ensure that the mission and pastoral outreach that has been important to you will continue both for today's needs and for those of our children, our grandchildren and beyond.

If you would like to receive a weekly copy of "The Spire" by email, please send us an email and we can add you to a list of subscribers.



10th December  
2023

2nd Sunday  
In Advent  
Year B



## Portland daily services 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of December

**Tuesday: 5.00pm Mass & Gospel Reflection**

**Wednesday: 11.00am End of School Mass**

**All Saints Church**

**4.30pm Rosary**

**Thursday: 10.00am Mass**

**Friday: 9.30am Adoration & Morning Prayer**

**10.00am Mass**

**5.00pm Evening Prayer**

**Saturday: 6.00pm Mass**

**Sunday: 10.30am Mass**

### Recent Deaths:

### Anniversaries:

Lorraine Bloomfield, Denise Shepherd, Sr Mary Muirhead IBVM, Margaret Cassie, Merle Grundy, Jessie Ward, Patrick Pye, Willy Paget, Lorraine Asling, Michael Twomey, Vic Wright, Margaret McMahon, Anne Pye, Angelo Sacco, Kathleen Thomas, Gwen Blackley, Sr. Myrene Erdman IBVM, Lorna Arnold, Leon Kelly, Magdalena Gerada.

### Prayer Requests:

Les Hildebrand, Lea-anne Bourke, Michelle Mutch, Deanne Atkinson

*If you have any prayer requests please contact Antonella at the Parish Office; for privacy reasons only Next of Kin may ask for names to be added: Thank you*

### Baptisms and Marriages

by appointment with Fr. Gregory Tait.

### Sacrament of Penance

1st Saturday of the month at 10.00am

or any other time by appointment with Fr Gregory

## Christmas Mass Times 2023

**December 23rd 6.00pm Saturday Vigil, Portland.**

**December 24th 10.30am Mass Dartmoor.**

**December 24th 7.30pm Carols Portland.**

**December 24th 8.00pm Mass Portland.**

**December 25th 9.30am Mass Portland.**

**\*Please mute your phone in the Church.\***



## "The Spire"

All Saints' Parish

Portland - Heywood - Dartmoor

All Saints Parish Office

Entrance via, 8 Henty Street Portland  
PO Box 210 Portland 3305

Phone: 5523 1046 Mobile 0475 512530

email: [portland@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:portland@ballarat.catholic.org.au)

[www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parishes/portland](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parishes/portland)

Rev. Gregory A. D. Tait, P.P.

email: [greg.tait@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:greg.tait@ballarat.catholic.org.au)

### Parish Office Hours

Tuesday to Thursday 9.00am till 3.00pm

Friday by arrangement with Fr Gregory

*All Saints Parish is committed to Child Safety - our Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct are on display on the Parish website and noticeboard in the Tower Entrance of the Church.*

*All Saints Parish Portland acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which our Parish Community meets, the Gunditjmarra people. We pay our respects to their Elders past present and emerging. We commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation and constitutional acknowledgement of first peoples.*



## Christmas Hamper:

Through our Parish Outreach and your individual contributions, we will provide meat tray vouchers to accompany the Christmas hampers that are being delivered in

December. If you would like to make a contribution to the cost of the meat for the hampers, please place your donation in an envelope marked "Meat Hampers", and **return via the collections by 17th December.**

**Total contribution to date: \$868.00**

### Ordination to the Diaconate:



One of our Seminarians, Cay Trinh will be ordained Deacon for the Diocese of Ballarat on Saturday, December 16, 2023 at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat at 10.00am.

Please keep Cay Trinh in your prayers as he enters into final preparations for his Ministry as a Transitional Deacon.

## Our Parish & Presbytery Finances

### Planned Giving for Parish Account

**Given last week, inc. EFT: \$1347.00**

**Target \$62,400**

**Total YTD 2023 \$28,231.60**

Direct deposit payments for planned giving and donations can be made electronically. Details are as follows:

**Account Name:** Portland Catholic Church  
**BSB:** 083 532  
**Account No.** 5159 81661

### Presbytery Account

**Priest support: inc. EFT \$795.35**

Direct deposit payments for the presbytery account can be made electronically. Details are as follows:

**Account Name:** All Saints Presbytery Portland  
**BSB:** 083 526  
**Account No.** 24476 6002

## Liturgy of the Word

First Reading Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

**40:1** Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.  
**2** Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. **3** A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. **4** Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. **5** Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' **9** Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, 'Here is your God!' **10** See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. **11** He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 84:9-14. R. v.8

(R.) Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

1. I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace, peace for his people. His help is near for those who fear him and his glory will dwell in our land. (R.)

2. Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth and justice look down from heaven. (R.)

3. The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit. Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps. (R.)

Second Reading 2 Peter 3:8-14

A reading from the second letter of St Peter

**3:8** But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. **9** The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. **10** But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. **11** Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, **12** waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of

which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? **13** But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation Luke 3:4. 6

Alleluia, alleluia!

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

Gospel Mark 1:1-8

From the holy Gospel according to Mark.

**1:1** The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

**2** As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way;

**3** the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight!"

**4** John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. **6** Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **7** He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. **8** I have baptised you with water; but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

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### **An Urgent Prayer for Peace:**

God of compassion, we turn to you with heavy hearts as we consider the needs of your family. Israelis and Palestinians, we are all your people, each of us loved by you and called to live in peace and justice.

We lament the dreadful loss of life, destruction of property and loss of human dignity.

We are pained by so much suffering.

We beg you to bring healing to this ancient place.

Help your people find a way forward.

Enable everyone to look each other in the eye, and embrace each other as sisters and brothers, as they find your image in every face.

We ask that courage and grace will help create a wiser and more gentle future, where everyone has a home.

God of wisdom, come to our aid. Amen.

## Gospel Reflection for 2nd Sunday in Advent by Greg Sunter.

This week's gospel captures beautifully the spirit of preparation and waiting that characterises the liturgical season of Advent. John the Baptist is portrayed as fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah and others as the one who comes before the Lord preparing the way. He is a messenger, sent by God to 'do the groundwork' preparing the people for the coming of the Christ. Although this passage is used during Advent as preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, we know that John was a contemporary (indeed cousin) of Jesus and the time of preparation was immediately prior to Jesus' public ministry.

John appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism for forgiveness of sins. It may seem odd to think of going to the wilderness to try to influence people. Today we might think that the city centre or street corner might be the better venue to preach something. What is it about the wilderness? Reference is made to the wilderness several times in scripture. It is used as a place of preparation and encounter with God. The wilderness referred to was a vast expanse of emptiness on the eastern side of the Jordan River. It was not uncommon for wandering preachers like John and Jesus to go out into the wilderness as a way of making a break from their previous life and getting themselves ready in body and spirit to begin their ministry. The wilderness to the east of the Jordan was also the place in which many of the rebels based themselves. There was a sense that challenge and unrest came out of the wilderness. In many ways that is what Jesus – heralded by John – brought out of the wilderness as well.

### Historical Context – A Baptism of Forgiveness.

The understanding that we generally have of baptism today has not always been the case. At the time of John and Jesus, the Jewish tradition used baptism as a ritual bath to cleanse a person who had become ritually unclean and make them able to participate in religious rituals. What John was preaching was a baptism for the forgiveness of sins – a new interpretation at the time. He emphasised that repentance was essential for forgiveness and that there needed to be a conscious returning to God. John's baptism was a symbolic act to signify the willingness of the person to renounce their sins and make a more conscious return to God.

### Scriptural context – Mark.

The gospel of Mark is sometimes portrayed as a 'no fuss' gospel. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in this week's passage. We have the first eight verses of the gospel and the author wastes no time in announcing the purpose, 'The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.' The gospel of Mark does not give any infancy narrative or genealogy like Matthew or Luke, nor a theological foreword like John. It jumps straight in with a declaration that Jesus is the Son of God and almost immediately begins to explore his ministry.

### Gospel Focus – Preparing the Way.

The gospel passage quotes the prophet Isaiah (although text combines Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3; and Exodus 23:20) and casts John the Baptist in the role of fulfilling the prophecy of the voice that cries in the wilderness, 'Prepare a way for the Lord'. The description of John in camel-skin and eating locusts and wild honey is designed to align him with Elijah, the great prophet of Jewish history. In a very short and sharp passage the gospel ties the coming of Jesus to the expectation of a messiah that has run through Jewish history and been foretold by the great prophets.

### Questions for personal reflection.

1. Can you recall a time when you have had to consciously prepare yourself for what you were about to do?
2. Why is the wilderness an appropriate image for preparation?
3. Why does the gospel writer go to such lengths to associate John with the prophecies of history?
4. How does this gospel passage relate to the Advent season?
5. How can we continue to prepare the way for the Lord?

### Leaning Moments.

Using an illustration or diary entry, suggest the reactions to John's preaching (v 7-8) that might have been felt by one of his followers or someone who had come to be baptised.

John and Jesus were cousins who must have known one another quite well as children and young adults. Write an imaginary conversation that may have taken place between the two young men before John's decision to go out into the wilderness.

© Greg Sunter  
Greg Sunter has worked in Catholic Education (Brisbane) for many years, most recently as a member of the Religious Education team and Mission and Formation team. He has extensive experience of praying with young people and forming others to lead prayer with young people. He is the author of books on adolescent faith, is a regular speaker at youth and evangelisation conferences, and is a retreat and reflection facilitator and presenter. His areas of interest include religious education, theology, scripture, spirituality, Catholic ethos, prayer, and ministry with young people.