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**Child Safe Church** The Parishes of St Columba's, St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat and St John the Baptist Beaufort 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 Diocesan or Parish website or on the foyer notice board. If you have any concerns whatsoever—please contact the Parish Offices, one of our priests or Safe Guarding Officers at <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/>

**Christmas Mass Volunteers please**  
A sign-up sheet is at the church foyer for those who are happy to help out at our:  
\*Christmas Eve, 5:30pm mass and/or  
\*Christmas Day 10:00am mass  
Thank you.

**Our Diocesan Community Issue 3** The final edition of ODC for the year is available at our church foyer. Please feel free to take copies to the homebound, nursing homes, hospitals, etc., to spread the good news of the diocese.

**Pope's Prayer for December - For Christians in areas of conflict:** Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope. Lord, hear us.

**OLHC Parish Wendouree Christmas Day Lunch** OLHC Parish Wendouree volunteers are hosting a free lunch on Christmas Day in the Parish Hall, 482A Gillies Street North, Wendouree from 12.00noon to 2.00pm. Bookings are essential as seating is limited, ph. 0491 029217.  
Thank you to all the very wonderful volunteers for all their work in making the Christmas Day lunch at OLHC so special over all the years it has been held. We welcome all those who would like to be with us as a guest or a volunteer on the day, and we are especially looking for a few fit people who might commit to two hours of their time between 2.00pm – 4.00pm to clean up/pack up. To volunteer, please phone 0467 683504.



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Parishes of St Columba's and St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat

Communities of Ballarat North, Ballarat Cathedral, Beaufort

[www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au) (select Parish)

Office: 306 Gregory St, Ballarat Nth Phone: 5331 1012  
Email: ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Office: 3 Lyons St South, Ballarat Phone: 5331 2933  
Email: ballarat@ballarat.catholic.org.au

School Co-Principals: Shaun Mohr & Bambi Afford  
School Phone: 5332 4894

Staffing

**Administrator:**  
Fr Edward Moloney  
**Assistant Priests:**  
Fr Francis Kureeckal MST  
Fr Abraham Thomas MST  
Fr James McKay

**Finance Officer:**  
Jackie Wrigglesworth  
**St Columba's Parish Coordinator:**  
Lia Andanar Yu  
Wed-Friday 10:00am – 2:00pm  
(closed on school holidays)

**Safeguarding Officer:**  
Anthea Hinchey  
**MASS TIMES (This week)**

**St Columba's**  
Sunday 10.00 am  
Wednesday 10.00 am  
[Reconciliation 10.30am]

**Beaufort**  
2nd & 4th Sunday 8.30 am

**Readings for Next Weekend**  
Baruch 5: 1-9  
Ps 125 R. v. 3  
Philippians 1: 3-6, 8-11  
Luke 3: 1-6



1st December 2024 ~ First Sunday of Advent Year C

Focus on the Scriptures

**An On-Going Cosmic Event** Today's gospel passage, with its vivid description of the end-time signs, may seem a strange choice of reading for Advent and the beginning of the Church year. Its depiction of global devastation has a particular resonance in our changing world order. Some may be tempted to interpret "apocalyptic" events of today as the judgement of an interventionist God. This is far from the truth. Our mindless exploitation of planetary resources has brought its own judgement and we must struggle together to save our planet from further destruction.

Advent and Christmas are about the coming "in power and great glory" of the One who brings the liberation of God. The earliest Christians believed that Jesus would soon return and bring everything to completion. Some decades after Jesus' death, Luke's community had come to realize that the "final" coming of Christ was not just around the corner as they had expected. They needed to be reminded that a delayed return was no excuse for lack of vigilance. Luke warns against activities and attitudes that de-sensitize the heart or the human spirit.

For Luke, the proper stance for the Christian believer is an attentive heart and constant prayer for the strength to withstand whatever comes. An attentive heart will be attuned to the cry of the earth and the cry of those rendered poor by those who exploit the goods of the earth. The image of Christ coming on the clouds belongs within an ancient understanding of the structure of the world in which God and God's heavenly court are located in the heavens above, rather than permeating all of creation. It might function in our times as a reminder that the Incarnation, "God's becoming material" (Karl Rahner), is an ongoing cosmic event, not just a once-off event limited to one place and one time.

We might do well to read this gospel passage against the backdrop of today's first reading from Jeremiah that looks to the fulfillment of God's promise of the "virtuous branch for David". The organic metaphor of the branch reminds us of the interconnectedness of God's people and of all being across the ages. The virtue of the expected descendant of David finds expression in honesty and integrity, literally "justice and righteousness/right relationship". Justice in the Hebrew tradition is about redress in the law courts for the most vulnerable. Righteousness is about right relationships as well as the equitable sharing and proper use of Earth's resources. Justice and righteousness are two sides of the one coin. Where they are absent, there is no liberation. Our prayer and practical action this Advent might embrace the plight of the earth itself and the concerns of those who yearn for liberation from various forms of oppression. We might remember especially those who seek the justice of a dwelling place secure and a nourishing meal each day. Our Advent could make a difference to their Christmas.  
-Veronica Lawson RSM

**Responsorial Psalm:** (R.) To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation. Alleluia!

**Recently Deceased: We commend to God:** Margaret Mullane

**Anniversaries: We remember:** Fr. Gerard Dowling, Donna Flynn, Michael Rix, Terry Carman, Mary McCauley, Dorothy Vaughan, Fr John Martin, Carmel Caligari, Trevor Jeffreys

**We pray:** for all in areas of conflict, war, natural disasters, for those who are sick and all in need of our prayers.

**Next Centralised Baptism Preparation Session** Parents planning to have their child baptised are required to attend a Baptism Preparation Session. Next sessions are at the MacKillop and Glowrey Rooms, St. Patrick's Cathedral Hall, 3 Lyons St South, Ballarat, **Thursday, December 5, 2024**. You may attend either the 10.00 am or the 5.30 pm session.

**International Volunteer Day 2024: Thursday, December 5** Within our parish communities are many volunteers who provide their talents and time to contribute to the mission of our churches. We thank God for these people who continue to strive to make our parishes a place of welcome and prayer.

**A special mention and heartfelt thank you to our wonderful volunteers here at St Columba's! We appreciate you and your generous sharing of your time and talents. We pray for God's continued blessings upon you.**

**Blessing Prayer (taken from the Order of Blessings):**

God of glory, your beloved Son has shown us that true worship comes from humble and contrite hearts.  
 Bless our volunteers who have responded to the needs of our parish and wish to commit themselves to your service.  
 Grant that their ministry may be fruitful and our worship pleasing to you.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Making a Scene at Christmas** Over 500 Christmas Nativities from more than 60 countries will be displayed at the Bridge Mall Ballarat from Wednesday, December 4 to Friday, December 20, 2024. You can see and smell real frankincense and myrrh; see coins minted around the time the census was called that brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem; see hand crafted cultural nativities from Australia, Africa, Asia, North & South America, & Europe (and one that went to Antarctica) and nativities that prize social justice and the environment. Entry is a gold coin donation. Everyone welcome!

St Columba's Dec 8 (next week) Sunday 10.00 am	
LEADER OF SONG	Tony Beggs
COMMENTATOR	Mitch Chalmers
MINISTER OF THE WORD	Min Myers
COMMUNION MINISTER	Colleen Wakefield
DIGITAL PROJECTOR	Vicki Moroney
SACRISTAN	Norah Moloney

**Collections last week** Thank you for your contributions  
 Presbytery: \$ 367.65 Parish: (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 995.00

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*The Parish of St. Columba's Ballarat North recognises the traditional owners of parish lands. We acknowledge their ancestors with respect and we are committed to working for justice and reconciliation.*

**Tea and Coffee after Mass every first Sunday of the month at St. Columba's** Our next tea and coffee is **today**. Please come and join us after mass. It will be lovely to catch up!

**Ballarat Committee for the World Day of Prayer AGM** World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement held annually on the first Friday in March. It is held to welcome people everywhere to gather together, joining in prayer, and seeking action for peace and justice. Through placing a spotlight on varying countries and cultures each year, our understanding increases, enriching our Christian faith as it grows deeper and broader in an international, ecumenical expression. This year, the Annual General Meeting of the Ballarat Committee for the World Day of Prayer is to be held Tuesday, **December 3 at 2.00pm** in the Vestry of the Skipton Street Uniting Church, 525 Skipton Street (Corner of Skipton and Darling Streets) Redan. An invitation is extended to representatives from your congregation and any other members of your church to this meeting. Anyone unable to attend but would like to receive communications regarding the World Day of Prayer Services may submit their apology to [lozza63@hotmail.com](mailto:lozza63@hotmail.com). Each church is invited to contribute a \$20 annual subscription for 2025. These funds go towards the work of the World Day of Prayer. This may be paid at the meeting.

**International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) - December 3** The day is held annually on December 3 all over the world. It celebrates and raises awareness of people with disability. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Disability Projects Office has prepared a range of helpful media resources for celebration of International Day of Persons with Disability: <https://www.catholic.au/s/article/International-Day-of-People-with-Disability>

**Simbang Gabi Christmas Mass Times for 2024** Simbang Gabi is a Filipino Christmas tradition and it is also a spiritual preparation for Christmas and commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a series of nine Masses on the days leading up to Christmas, which will be held at **St James' Parish Church Sebastopol**. Mass times are: Sunday, December 15 at 7.00pm; Monday, December 16 at 7.00pm; Tuesday, December 17 at 7.00pm; Wednesday, December 18 at 7.00pm; Thursday, December 19 at 7.00pm; Friday, December 20 at 7.00pm; Saturday, December 21 at 7.00pm; Sunday, December 22 at 7.00pm; Monday, December 23 at 7.00pm & dinner. Please bring a plate to share. If you have any questions/need further information, please contact Fr Eladio, ph. 0450 017 007 or Dion, ph. 0427 876 553. Everyone welcome to attend.

**Adult Faith Formation: The Eucharist (Communion)** St Patrick's Cathedral Parish Ballarat is offering a day of Adult Faith Formation on the importance of the Eucharist (Communion) on Sunday, December 8, 2024 from 2.00pm – 4.30pm at the MacKillop - Glowrey Rooms Cathedral precinct. This day is aimed at all members of the Church lay community: Congregation; Ministers; Sacristans. The day will Focus on the Eucharist, enhancing understanding of the Eucharist and highlighting our need for reverence for the Eucharist. There will also be time to review the role of the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at Mass and when taking Communion to the sick and housebound. Current Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion please note that this formation day will fulfil your requirement to undertake formation tri-annually.

**Anniversaries at St Alipius' Ballarat East** 2024 is a significant year for St Alipius' Church in Ballarat East. With the broader community we are remembering the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Eureka rebellion including the involvement of Fr Patrick Smyth and the Catholics of the Ballarat Goldfields. 2024 is also the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the existing St Alipius' Church in Victoria Street. Mass was first celebrated on the Ballarat Goldfields at Brown Hill in 1851 before relocating to the existing Victoria Street site in 1853, where the tent-church-school (as captured by artist Eugene Von Gerrard) was erected. These anniversaries are providing parishioners with opportunities to acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of our history as well the opportunity to look to the future with hope and healing. All are welcome to gather at St Alipius Church for 6.00pm Mass on Saturday, December 14, 2024. Following the Mass we will gather for a BYO picnic tea in the Church grounds with a bbq available. Hot and cold drinks will be available. Photographic displays from across the years are being collated as well as 'people of St Alipius' being recorded. For more information please contact the parish office, ph. 5332 6611. For catering purposes, we would ask that you RSVP to the parish office no later than December 7.

**Caritas Australia- Free Advent 2024 resources for parishes and individuals** This free Advent resource invites parish prayer groups and individuals to journey through the four weeks of Advent, reflecting on the Gospel and sharing in the stories of our sisters and brothers around the world. Each week, one of the Advent themes of hope, peace, joy and love is explored. Resources available at <https://www.caritas.org.au/resources/parish-materials/advent-parish/>

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