

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH
PARISH OF BURNLEY



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
14th December 2025
10:00 a.m.

Before the service, speak with God; during the service, let God speak to you; after the service, speak to one another.

Dear parishioners and friends,
Advent and wilderness.

The presence of wilderness is present on many occasions throughout scripture. The wilderness experience runs deep with the people of God as scripture describes the journey of the people of Israel through the desert to the Promised Land. In Australia we are fighting to preserve what we describe as wilderness, both rugged mountain ranges with their rivers and foliage, and the vast open spaces of wilderness deserts. Today we are increasingly recognizing the importance of wilderness as spiritual spaces as well as of sustenance and renewal in our rapidly expanding urban environment.

Following his Baptism by John, Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness where he is tested, rejects the call to embrace power, status and wealth and instead proclaims his mission to the outcast, the disadvantaged and all who are shunned or rejected.

In the wilderness we are able to take stock, reflect and refuel ourselves on many fronts. I like to travel into the outback and sit under the stars and marvel at the beauty of creation and the wonder of the Milky Way. I find it restores my soul, cynicism and disillusionment with many aspects of contemporary society and restores my hope.

What place does wilderness have in your life? Are you able to find a wilderness time and space for your own reflection and preparations at this busy time of the year? Are you able to find the time to prepare the way of the Lord? Yes we are all fragile and less than perfect but also have the capacity for others to see good in our lives and the possibility of the new heaven and earth. The wilderness can provide the space and the occasion for this experience.

Shalom
Fr. Ray

INTROIT HYMN,

1. Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin's Son, make here your home.
Marvel now, O Heav'n and Earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.

2. Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God
Was the Word of God made flesh:
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.

3. Wondrous birth! O wondrous child
Of the virgin undefiled!
Though by all the world disowned,
Still to be in Heav'n enthroned.

4. Lo, he comes! The Lord of all
Leaves his bright and royal hall;
God and man, with giant force,
Hastening to run his course.

SENTENCE. Strengthen the weak hand, and make way the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart," Be strong, do not fear! Here is your
God. "

COLLECT FOR THE DAY

Sustain us, O God with the power of your love on our journey to meet the
one who is coming: strengthen our weak hands, make firm our feeble knees,
and open our blind eyes to the dawning of your kingdom, so that our hearts
may rejoice as we behold the majesty of our God. We ask this through your
son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God forever and ever. **Amen**

1ST READING, Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
'Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.'

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,*
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,*
but it shall be for God's people;*
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.
⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

For the word of the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Song of Mary

1. My soul proclaims the| greatness • of the| lord: my spirit re|joices
in|God my|saviour;
2. for he has looked with favour on his|lowly|servant: from this day all
gener|ations • will|call me|bless-ed;
3. the almighty has done|great things|for me: and|holly|is his|name.
4. He has mercy on|those who|fear him: in|every|gener|ation.
5. He has shown the|strength • of his|arm:
he has scattered the|proud in|their con|ceit.
6. He has cast down the mighty|from their|thrones: and has|lifted|up
the|lowly.
7. He has filled the hungry with|good|things: and the rich he has|sent
a|way|empty.
8. He has come to the help of his|servant|israel: for he has
re|membered his|promise • of|mercy,
9. the promise he| made • to our| fathers: to abraham| and his| children
• for| ever.

Glo|ry to|God: Father|son and|Holy|spirit;

SECOND READING James 5.7-10

7 Be patient, therefore, beloved, * until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. * ⁹Beloved, * do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, * take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring good news to the poor.
Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia

The Lord be with you.

And also, with you.

A reading from the Gospel according to St Matthew

Matthew 11.2-11

2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah* was doing, he sent word by his* disciples ³and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' ⁴Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers* are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone* dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? * Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you."

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

For the Gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

FOR THE NEEDS OF THE WORLD: Peace in the Middle East, Sudan, Congo and Ukraine. For the Richmond Churches Food Centre and all those in need. FOR THE SICK, RECOVERING, AND THOSE WHO GRIEVE Bruce, Sharon, John Ross, Jack, Neil, Craig, Helen, Nanette and Liam. FOR THOSE RECENTLY DECEASED: Gavin De Mello, Kaye Gooch FOR THOSE WHOSE YEAR'S MIND OCCURS THIS WEEK: Tilley Czech, Glen Clement, Cynthia Garner, Timothy Conboy, Alfred Kober, Thomas Saviage, Robert Heatley, Bryan Patten, Rose wall,

Offertory Hymn: AM 47 The people that in darkness sat. {Omit verse 3}

Recessional Hymn: AM 39 Hills of the North rejoice.

Joint Christmas **carol service** at St Stephen's Richmond on tonight at 5pm.

Mark in your diaries now.

Christmas Services

24th December 9pm Carols ,9.30pm Festival Eucharist

25th December 9.30am Christmas Eucharist

28th December 10am Choral Eucharist

Invite a friend to one of our Christmas services.

Parish Working bee 17th January, 9am to 12noon with great morning tea. Please mark in your diary now. Many hands make light work.