



THE OPEN DOOR MAGAZINE

December 2025



24 - 25 Dec

All Saints' Christmas Service

CHRISTMAS EVE:
6:30PM - CHILDREN'S NATIVITY SERVICE
11:00PM - MIDNIGHT MASS (WITH INCENSE)

CHRISTMAS DAY
10:00AM - CHRISTMAS SUNG EUCHARIST

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Parish Council

Gillian Deppeler
Sandra Chapman
Julie Crees
Cathy Cameron
Stephen Yewdall
Paul O'Connor
Harriett Lawrence
Nathan Behrens
Anne De Bono

The Vicar's Letter

'It's the most wonderful time of the year' as the seasonal song goes. It truly is! Especially at All Saints and in Geelong with all its events and church services.

Christmas is time to live out lifelong traditions: from looking after Santa with a mince pie and a glass of sherry or something stronger: to meeting up with family for Christmas dinner: to gifting presents with love to our nearest and dearest.



Scrooge on Christmas morning.

Not the vicar!

Wouldn't it be the 'most wonderful time' if it were to be lived out by every one of us each and every day. I don't mean that we should all celebrate everyday with presents, mince pies and lavish family dinners, nice thought that maybe.....for a few days anyway!

No, what I mean is we can make it Christmas every day if we hold that sense of peace and wonder that often comes at Christmas in our hearts everyday. Charles Dickens wrote in "A Christmas Carol", "*I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all year long.*" Even mean old Scrooge realised that what he felt in his heart for the first time on that Christmas morning, following his experience of those ghostly visitations, had to be held onto. And it transformed his life, along with all those

around him. You see, It IS Christmas every single time you let God love others through you.

So make a New Year's resolution to keep your Christmas-heart open all the year round. Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the home and the generous flame of charity in the heart. Mother Theresa once said, 'It's not how much we give but how much love we put into the giving.' As long as we know in our hearts what Christmas ought to be, then Christmas is!

Christmas blessings

Fr Stephen

MAX

Losing a pet is one of the most profound experiences of grief we can face. My first experience of this was as a young lad: our family pet dog died and I was inconsolable. For many, our animals are more than just companions – they are members of our family and when they die, the silence they leave behind can feel overwhelming.

But that heartbreak isn't something we should so readily push aside – it's a reflection of a deep, irreplaceable bond. The grief we feel is real, valid, and just as deeply felt as when we lose members of our human family. Their love is unconditional. Their presence is constant. And their loss can shake us to our core.



We were so privileged to have been given the opportunity of caring for and loving Max for 5 and a half years. Sadly, his battle with epilepsy finally got the better of us and he passed on Friday 14th November.

Angela and I would like to thank all of you who sent messages of love and condolences. Max was a regular at church and was very much a part of the church family at All Saints.

With love

Fr Stephen & Angela



SERVICE TIMES

December 2025

Sunday 30th November
ADVENT 1

8am Said Eucharist
9am Contemporary Eucharist
10.30am Sung Eucharist

Sunday 7th December
ADVENT 2

10am Combined Service

Sunday 14th December
ADVENT 3

8am Said Eucharist
9am Contemporary Eucharist
10.30am Sung Eucharist

Sunday 21st December
ADVENT 4

8am Said Eucharist
9am Contemporary Eucharist
10.30am Sung Eucharist

CHRISTMAS EVE

6.30pm Children's Nativity
11.00am Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS DAY

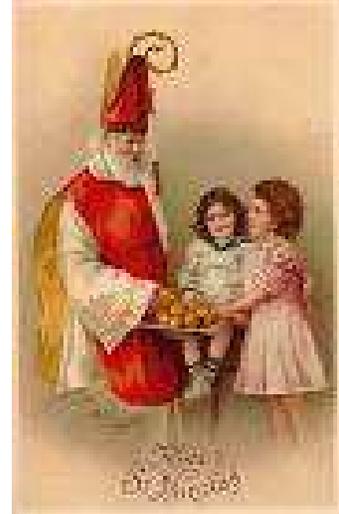
10am SUNG EUCHARIST

Sunday 28th December
1st after Christmas

8am Said Eucharist
9am Contemporary Eucharist
10.30am Sung Eucharist

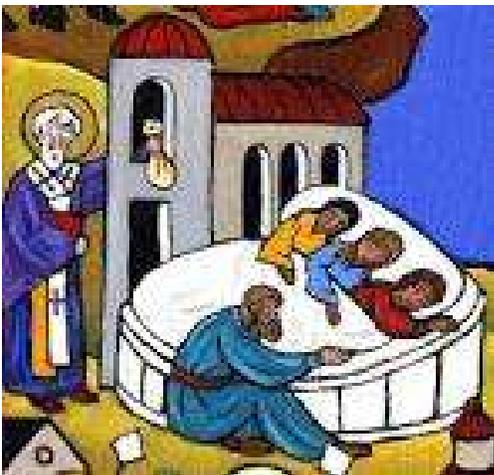
Who is Santa Claus?

The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara in modern day Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young.



Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas very soon became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his dedication to protect children, and his concern for sailors and ships.

Through the centuries many stories and legends have been told of St. Nicholas' life and deeds. These accounts help us understand his extraordinary character and why he is so beloved and revered as protector and helper of those in need – and why he is the inspiration behind Santa Claus.



One story tells of a poor man with three daughters. In those days a young woman's father had to offer prospective husbands something of value – a dowry. This poor man's daughters, without dowries, were therefore destined to be sold into slavery. Mysteriously, on three different occasions, a bag of gold appeared in their home-providing the

needed dowries. The bags of gold, tossed through an open window, are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. This led to the custom of children hanging stockings or putting out shoes, eagerly awaiting gifts from Saint Nicholas.

Another story tells of three students, travelling on their way to Athens. A wicked innkeeper robbed and murdered them, hiding their remains in a large pickling tub. It so happened that Bishop Nicholas, travelling along the same route, stopped at this very inn. In the night he dreamed of the crime, got up, and summoned the innkeeper. As Nicholas prayed earnestly to God the three boys were restored to life and wholeness.

In France the story is told of three small children, wandering in their play until lost, lured, and captured by an evil butcher. St. Nicholas appears and appeals to God to return them to life and to their families. And so St. Nicholas is the patron and protector of children.

Nicholas died December 6, AD 343 in Myra and within a century of his death he was celebrated as a saint. The anniversary of his death became a day of celebration, St. Nicholas Day, December 6th. Widely celebrated in Europe, St. Nicholas' feast day, December 6th, kept alive the stories of his goodness and generosity. In Germany and Poland, boys dressed as bishops begged alms for the poor. In the Netherlands and Belgium, St. Nicholas was said to arrive on a steamship from Spain to ride a white horse on his gift-giving rounds. December 6th is still the main day for gift giving and merrymaking in much of Europe.

Then in 1823, a popular poem called "A Visit from St. Nicholas", which we now know as "The Night Before Christmas", first described St. Nicholas as bringing toys and sweets to children on Christmas Eve. The legend of Santa Claus was born.

Carol Curiosities

“In the bleak mid-winter”

Although we blithely sing this carol in the Australian summer, we don't really know at what time in the year Jesus was born, and there's little if any evidence that it was in winter. The



celebration of His birth on 25th December (winter in the Northern Hemisphere) probably began in Rome in the early centuries when a pagan festival was celebrated a few days after the winter solstice, to mark the coming of more sunlight day after day. The early Christians “hijacked” this festival and converted it into a celebration of the coming of the “Light of the World”. (John 8:12)

“The little Lord Jesus no crying He makes” (Away in a manger)

Really? There's no evidence in the gospels that Jesus was a non-crying baby! This carol comes from the Victorian era when the “sentimentalisation” of Christmas was fully underway.

Yes, it is a carol for children, and exceptionally well-known and well-loved, but it does somewhat undermine the message of the Incarnation, that Jesus was a normal human being.

“Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb” (O come, all ye faithful)

In these seven words from the second verse of “O come, all ye faithful” there are hints of two important Christian doctrines:

- a) The Incarnation: Jesus was born of a woman (Galatians 4:4) . The risks and challenges of a natural childbirth did not deter God in His determination to bring Jesus into the world.
- b) The Virgin Birth: Mary’s pregnancy was not initiated by a man in the “usual” way. (Luke 1:34- 35; Matthew 1:18). It was purely at God’s initiative.

“Good King Wenceslas looked out”



A carol that mentions neither God, Jesus nor Christmas! But it refers, as in other carols, to the mid-winter theme: the “Feast of Stephen” is 26th December. Wenceslas was a real person in mediaeval Bohemia (current-day Czech Republic). He was a saintly figure known for his compassion for the poor. From the 19th century onwards generosity to those in need came to be specially associated with

Christmas (see Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol”).

“We Three Kings”

The gospel story (Matthew 2) tells of gifts to the Christ-child from some “magi”, considered to be well-respected, and wise, astrologers from “The East”. Three gifts, yes, but the number of magi is not specified. There might have been more than three. The idea that they were kings comes from Old Testament references. (Psalm 72:10; Isaiah 60:3)



All Saints Remembrance Service

By Stephen Yewdall



All-Saints' Remembrance Service was held on Sunday 9 November and appeared to be well received by all those who attended and participated at the City of Newtown Memorial Cairn, located in Moorak Park Newtown.

The Service commenced at 10am with local resident, Hannah Phung piping Flowers of the Forest followed by an Acknowledgment of Country. Fr Stephen delivered Prayers and a spiritual message suitable to the occasion, followed by the Ode from Vietnam Veteran Nigel Wilson along with the Last Post and Reveille.

Over 30 floral tributes were laid with special recognition from past/former nurses of All Saints acknowledging the 6 Nurses listed on the

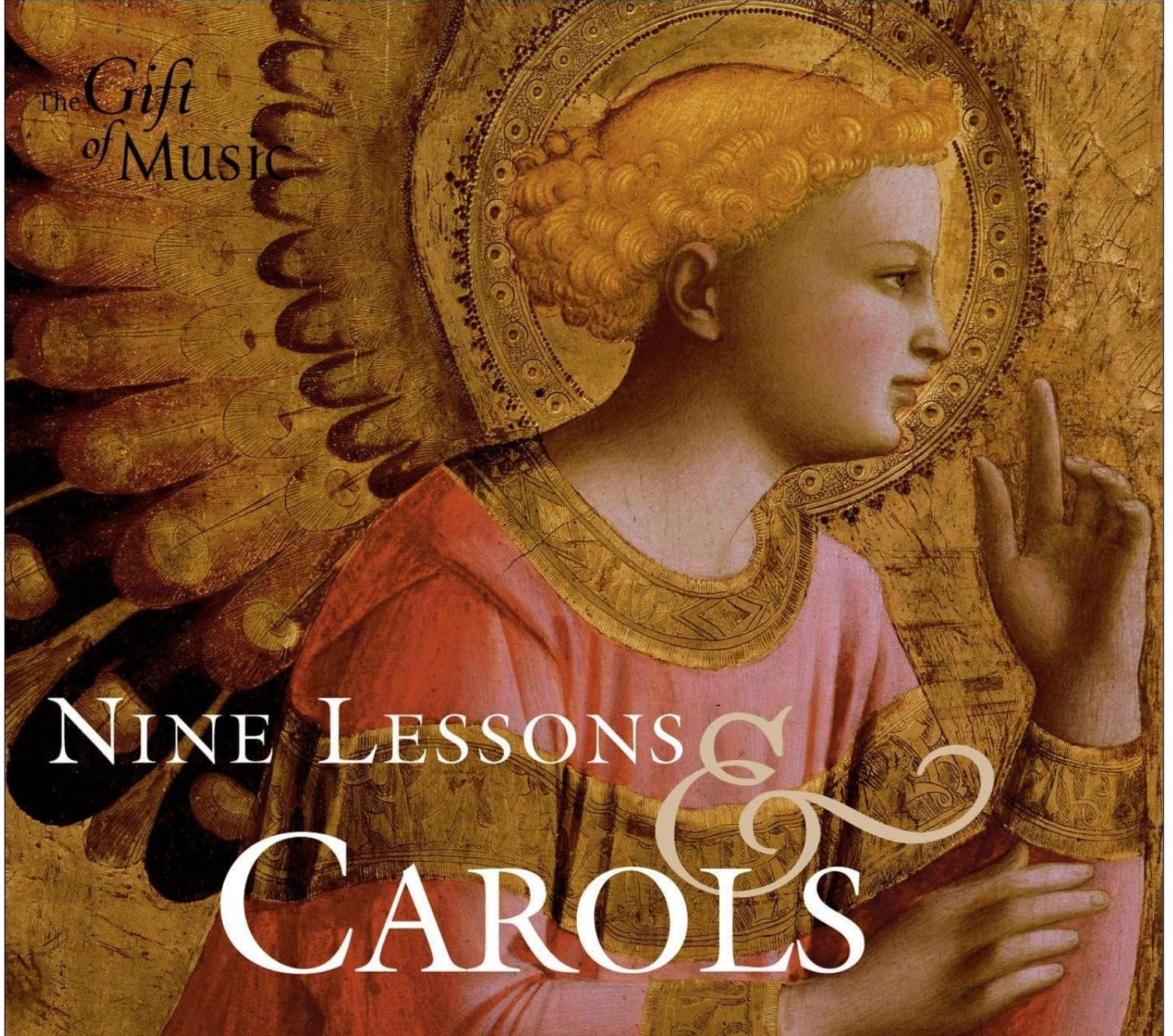
All-Saints WW1 Honour Board. The Service closed with Hannah piping Amazing Grace.

With over 1,000 flyers delivered to homes around the area prior to the service, a good number of local residents attended both the Remembrance Service and the church service that followed.

Inside All Saints, the Honour Board was draped with a river of red poppies and a poppy featured banner added impact at the lectern, thanks to the initiative of Julie Crees.

Despite the inclement weather the service was well received with a hope that it may continue into the future.





Sunday 14th December 7.30pm
ALL SAINTS CHURCH NEWTOWN
Featuring All Saints Church Choir
Directed by Terry Norman

MUSIC AT THE BASILICA

Sunday 7th December 2025 4pm

Basilica of St Mary of the Angels
136 Yarra Street, Geelong

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

*The combined forces of
The Windfire Choir and The Geelong Chorale,
together with distinguished soloists and orchestra,
perform Handel's immortal masterpiece.*

LEE ABRAHMSEN, soprano
AUSTIN HAYNES, counter tenor
ROBERT MACFARLANE, tenor
MANFRED POHLENZ, bass
JOSEPH HIE, conductor

Tickets \$60|\$55|\$50 from www.trybooking.com/DCLAM

Children and school students free

Seating is unallocated and bookings are essential

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**SPARROW PARK BRASS
PRESENTS**

CHRISTMAS Concert

Sunday December 7th 2025
2pm

**All Saints Anglican Parish
113 Noble Street, Newtown.**

Come join Sparrow Park Brass for an afternoon of classic
Christmas cheer and brass band brilliance.

Tickets available at the door
Adult: \$10
Concession: \$5
Child: Free

Hospital Chaplaincy

at University Hospital, Geelong



What does a Hospital Chaplain do?

They meet people where they are and listen to their values and beliefs as a way of understanding their pain and suffering.

As Spiritual Care Practitioners, they aim to connect them with their strengths and sources of hope, and create and enable a spiritual environment – a sacred space that gives the patient and their family permission to share stories, express feelings, pray, grieve, cry and hope.

Meet Sheridan Hannah

Sheridan is a Spiritual Care Practitioner who works at University Hospital, Geelong, as a Hospital Chaplain. She speaks with patients, family and staff who are in need of support during their time at the hospital.

In a typical week, Sheridan will contact 36 patients/families and 6 staff, respond to 8 referrals, provide team morning reflection once a week and lead a weekly mindfulness session at the Andrew Love Wellness Centre for Wellness Services.

Tax Deductible Donations to
Melbourne Anglican Chaplaincy Fund



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