



Fourth Sunday of Advent Year A 21st December 2025

The call to 'Encounter Jesus' is both an invitation and a mission.

We are an open, welcoming community that seeks to share the life and love of Jesus with every person we encounter.

As a community, we strive to create those spaces where anyone can freely encounter the person of Jesus.

We are further challenged to encounter Jesus in each other, in the world and in the life of the Church.

St Joseph's Catholic Church

140 Wangi Rd, Toronto 2283

4943 4153

stmarythecross@mn.catholic.org.au

www.torontoparish.org

Weekend Mass Times: Sunday 9am

Reconciliation:

Before Mass on Sundays

This Week at St Joseph's

Sun	21 st :	Mass - Toronto	9:00am
Tue	23 rd :	Mass - Booragul	9:00am
		Mass - Morisset	9:30am
Wed	24 th :	Christmas Eve	6:00pm
Thu	25 th :	Christmas Day	9:00am
Sun	28 th :	Mass - Toronto	9:00am

The Church will be open from
8:30am to 4:00pm Mon-Sat.

Parish Office Hours

St Mary of the Cross Parish Hub

Phone: 02 4943 4153

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9am to 3pm.

7 Milson Street, Charlestown.

Emergency after hours:

0493 969 362

Parish Priest:

Fr Darryl Mackie

Assistant Priests:

Fr Paul Kamau CSSp

Fr Peter Njau CSSp

Fr John Purnell

Parish Administration:

Maryanne Barry

Vimal Valiyaveetil

Bridget Voigt

Rosanna Suckling



We acknowledge the Awabakal
people as traditional custodians
of this place.

Dear Parish Family,

Emmanuel ... God with us!

Last Sunday as we lit our third candle, the Rose candle symbolising joy, our Jewish brothers and sisters were lighting the first candle on the Menorah as they began the Feast of Hanukkah also known as the Festival of Lights. Hannukah celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem about two hundred years before the birth of Jesus. After a military victory, a miracle occurred where a single day's oil miraculously burned for eight days in the Temple... hence the Menorah has eight candles. It is a joyful celebration usually for families to gather and to celebrate, somewhat like the Jewish version of Christmas! It's been a sad week after the tragic shooting at Bondi Beach. Having worked closely with Jewish communities in the hospital, I know the important meaning of this feast day. Jesus even celebrates it in John's Gospel (10:22). Amongst the tragedy we also saw the bravery of many people. Rabbi Jeffrey, a friend who was supporting those wounded and their families, sent me this which was from one of his teachers. By Sunday, the last candle will be lit on the menorah, may it be a reminder of the light that brightens our darkest moments - God with us! As we gather this weekend, we keep in our prayers those who have died, those who are injured, those who took a brave stand and for those hurting at this time.



In this final week of Advent, we light candle number four – representing love! God's love is about to be revealed. Isaiah our Advent prophet is again the focus of our first reading. War was on the horizon and Ahaz, the king asks Isaiah for a sign, whether he should ally with a neighbouring country and wipe out the hostile neighbour or not. Isaiah speaks to the sign that of a woman will be with child in the future and that this is a reminder not to give up hope that God is with us. But alas the king refuses to believe and Israel falls.

Our Gospel focuses on the birth of Jesus with the Advent figures of Mary and Joseph. Matthew when writing the Gospel wanted to go back to where it all began and highlight that both Mary and Joseph were followers of the Law of Moses. Mary shows this with her brave yes and the first thing we learn about Joseph is he focussed his life on living according to God's law. Have you ever thought about what would have happened if Joseph didn't say yes! Let's face it, Joseph probably had reservations about being the guardian of the Son of God – it's a pretty big ask! Maybe the thought of divorcing was because he thought someone else could do a better job? The dream was to change everything, assured that God is with us Joseph moved past his fears and embraced Mary, Jesus and the will of God. A great model for all during these times of uncertainty.

As we enter this fourth week of Advent, we build on the Advent themes that from hope, peace and joy grows love. What areas of my life need God's healing love the most? How can I bring love to others this Christmas? As we look at the light of this candle, we celebrate the love we find in each other and in Jesus Christ.

This week, many families will gather with us to celebrate Christmas. The Diocese has reminded us that the Christmas story is our invitation to reach out to others and to call our community gatherings – a place to call home. It is an opportune time to invite friends, families and neighbours to be part of our family. Many people will be humbled by your invitation. This is the start of a journey, and it begins with an invitation.... who will you invite?

Happy Advent everyone!

Fr Darryl Mackie

Parish Priest

First Reading

Isaiah 7:10-14

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The virgin will conceive.

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, ‘Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.’ ‘No’, Ahaz answered ‘I will not put the Lord to the test.’

Then Isaiah said:

‘Listen now, House of David:
are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men
without trying the patience of my God, too?
The Lord himself, therefore,
will give you a sign.
It is this: the maiden is with child
and will soon give birth to a son
whom she will call Immanuel,
a name which means “God-is-with-us”.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 23:1-6. R. see vv 7. 10

(R.) Let the Lord enter;
he is king of glory.

1. The Lord’s is the earth and its fullness,
the world and all its peoples.
It is he who set it on the seas;
on the waters he made it firm. (R.)
2. Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?
The man with clean hands and pure heart,
who desires not worthless things. (R.)
3. He shall receive blessings from the Lord
and reward from the God who saves him.
Such are the men who seek him,
seek the face of the God of Jacob. (R.)

Second Reading

Romans 1:1-7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, is the Son of God.

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures.

This news is about the Son of God, who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all, then, who are God’s beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 1:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

A virgin will give birth to a son;
his name will be Emmanuel: God is with us.
Alleluia!

Gospel

Matthew 1:18-24

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus was born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, a son of David.

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.’ Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,

a name which means ‘God-is-with-us’. When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

LAKESIDE		
CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2025		
Christmas Eve	5:30pm	St Mary’s Warners Bay
Christmas Eve	6:00pm	St Joseph’s Toronto
Christmas Eve	6:00pm	Morisset Showground
Christmas Eve	7:00pm	Our Lady Help Boolaroo
Christmas Day	8:00am	St Michael’s Booragul
Christmas Day	9:00am	St Mary’s Warners Bay
Christmas Day	9:00am	St Joseph’s Toronto
Christmas Day	9:30am	St John Vianney Morisset

Universal Prayer

Presider: Confident that God is with us, let us bring our needs before the God of all.

Reader: We pray that the Church, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, will proclaim the coming of Christ in word and deed. Lord hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: We pray that nations will bring about conditions where peace and goodwill can flourish. Lord hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: We pray that those who must make difficult decisions will be given strength and courage. Lord hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: We pray that those waiting for the birth of a child will be filled with joy at the wonder of God's creative love. Lord hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: We pray that those who are sick and housebound will be filled with Christ's healing presence. Lord hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: We offer up the prayers of this faith community: May we be comforted by the knowledge that our petitions are always heard by God. Lord hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Presider: God of peace, Joseph and Mary responded to your will be embracing your plan of salvation. Hear our prayers and plant within our hearts the living presence of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

PARISH OFFICE CLOSURE

ST MARY OF THE CROSS PARISH HUB OFFICE
WILL BE CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS FROM
25 DECEMBER 2025 TIL
4 JANUARY 2026.
YOU WILL STILL BE ABLE
TO CONTACT US VIA EMAIL.

**WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY
HAPPY AND HOLY CHRISTMAS AND
WONDERFUL NEW YEAR.**

"They will call
him Emmanuel
... which means
'God-is-with-us.'"

Matthew 1:23

WE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY:

Sick List: James Bennett, Silvi Bennett, Dakai Smith, Scott Massey, Peter Corcoran, Maya Kelly, Paul Whitelaw, Simon Morrice, Victor Andres Guerrero Luhing, Margaret Sheridan, Judy Blissett, Judy Fisher, Jenny Moles, Sarah Hill, Brian Coogans, Graham Sneesvy, Judith Kilburn, Kath Brooks, Brett Sulman, Peter Mason, Amanda Sevil, Ella Hammond, Barrie Jenkins, Michael Burke, and Monica LoCascio.

Recently Deceased:

Anniversaries:

If you would like a loved one remembered in the Anniversaries, please let the Parish Office know by Thursday morning.

Living Prayer

In this season of Advent as we eagerly anticipate the birth of Jesus, we pray:

- that we discover how Jesus calls us to be a united community showing love, gentleness and patience at all times and particularly for the continued success of the community kitchen.
- for all those who generously give of their time to support those experiencing considerable upheaval in their lives.
- in this jubilee year that everyone in our community feels sought after, loved and forgiven by God.
- in this special time may we reach out to our sick, elderly and lonely as our witness of Christ's love.
- that we guard against excessive distraction, busyness and stress so that when the Infant Jesus arrives, He may find a serene and peaceful dwelling place in our hearts.
- for our parish HSC students and their future pathways
- that our school and parish families will have a peaceful, safe and joy filled Christmas and holiday period.

May God's love envelope you and your families and may His Holy Blessings and Peace be with you all.

Mass Collection

Purple Collection supports our Clergy:

BSB: 066 739

Account Number: 100003439

Account Name: CBA

Reference: *Your Surname.*

Green Collection supports our parish:

BSB: 066 739

Account Number: 100003443

Account Name: CBA

Reference: *Your Surname.*

Donations to support our parish can also be made via the eftpos machine at the back of the church.

**Come to Me, all who are
weary and burdened, and I will
give you rest. – Mt 11:28**

**Come and join us for prayer,
reflection, and adoration.**

When: Thursdays, 6:30pm

Where: St Michael the Archangel, Booragul



Christmas Fundraising

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, we have a few things on sale that you might be interested in:

- Tickets in the St Joseph's 2026 Lottery. This is our major fundraiser—we have sold 35 tickets and need to sell at least 60.
- A Christmas Seafood Hamper raffle for seafood lovers valued at \$150 (drawn Sunday 21st December). Generously donated by Shane's Seafood at Carey Bay.
- Caribbean Steel Pans Music CDs. Lovely music! Great rhythm!

All would make great Christmas Presents.
Thank you for generously supporting our parish.

Christmas Masses volunteers

If you will be attending our Christmas celebrations and would like to volunteer for the various ministries needed for Mass, please add your name to the list on the back table of the church.



*Volunteers
Needed!*

JEWISH COMMUNITY IN OUR PRAYERS

The tragic and targeted attack on the Jewish community at Bondi Beach, as they gathered to begin their celebrations of the religious festival of Hanukkah, has shocked and saddened us all. Such hatred and violence have no place in our community.

We stand in solidarity and support for all in the Jewish community. I call for all to pray for our Jewish brothers and sisters, for those killed, those injured and all those impacted by these traumatic events.

I give deep thanks to the brave first responders and our emergency services.

While we as Christians were lighting candles on our Advent wreaths and celebrating Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday, the Jewish community were lighting candles to begin their celebration of Hanukkah, an occasion that should have been a joyful gathering.

As we reflect at this time – a time when in the Christian community we are preparing to celebrate Jesus' birth, a birth into a Jewish family – I am reminded this was God's choice for his Son and God does not do things without good reason.

Together, we must live in mutual respect.

I know our leaders and governments will do all in their power at this difficult time to ensure that all Australians, and particularly Jewish Australians, can go about their daily lives without fear.

Let us pray together for peace: O God, creator of the world, who first revealed your love and salvation for humankind in and through the Jewish community, and who have revealed that peacemakers are to be called your children, grant we pray, that we may work without ceasing to establish that justice which alone ensures true and lasting peace. Amen.

With every blessing.
Bishop Michael Kennedy

Oh Holy Night!

CHILDREN are INVITED TO PLAY a SPECIAL PART in our
CHRISTMAS EVE MASS
at St. Joseph's
24TH DECEMBER AT 6:00PM
JUST TURN UP ON THE NIGHT, BUT PLEASE COME A LITTLE EARLY (5:40PM) TO PREPARE FOR YOUR PART!
ALL welcome TO JOIN in THIS FAMILY celebration

CONGRATULATIONS!

We welcome
Mateo James Inman
into our faith community as he is
baptised this weekend.

May the Holy Spirit guide him as he continues to grow as a disciple of Christ. We pray for his family and godparents, that God may strengthen them as they bring him up in the faith we all profess.



LATEST NEWS FROM OUR SAFEGUARDING PROVIDERS 21 December 2025

Christmas, a season steeped in traditions and festivity, serves as a poignant example of communities coming together to look after the vulnerable. It's a time when the spirit of generosity and compassion takes centre stage, reminding us of our shared responsibility to safeguard those in need.

Charitable initiatives during the Christmas season play a pivotal role in addressing the vulnerabilities that many individuals and families face, specifically those who may be struggling financially or emotionally. The festive atmosphere becomes a backdrop for acts of kindness, highlighting the true essence of Christ's message to love one another.

In Australia, there are over 60,000 registered charities which support many causes such as health, education, environment, animal welfare, religion, culture, reconciliation, human rights and the vulnerable. Charity volunteers number over 500,000.

It is these volunteers who become the unsung heroes of the Christmas season, dedicating their time and effort to connect with the marginalised through a spirit that transcends cultural and religious boundaries.

Individuals, too, play a crucial role in fostering a sense of community and support. Many take it upon themselves to reach out to neighbours, friends, or colleagues who may be experiencing hardship.

In a world that can sometimes feel divided, Christmas becomes a unifying force, a reminder that, regardless of our differences, we are all interconnected and responsible for each other's well-being. Through these collective efforts, Christmas becomes a beacon of hope, warmth, and inclusivity for all.

The Safeguarding Team extends best wishes to all parishioners and to our wider community for a happy and holy Christmas and reminds all to help and support where able.