St James' Old Cathedral

21st December 2025 at 10:00am Fourth Sunday in Advent

The Word made Flesh: John 1:14

Service of Holy Communion from A Prayer Book for Australia (1995)



St James' Old Cathedral

Acknowledgement of Country

We worship our creator God on the ancestral lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge them as the traditional and continuing custodians of this land and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Child Safety Officer

We are committed to continuous improvement in a safe culture for all, and especially vulnerable persons. Our parish's Child Safety Officer is Una Ebsworth. Una is an accredited specialist in criminal law. All correspondence and questions relating to safety checks should be forwarded to her at safety@sjoc.org.au

The Old Cathedral Voices

Formed in March 2009 from some of Melbourne's finest choral soloists, The OCV are a consort choir directed by Alex Ritter. Today's singers are:

Monika Harris Lily Flynn Eliza Bennetts O'Connor

Roslyn White Carolyn Baker Maggie Dunleavy

Alex Ritter Hamish Gould Jack Jordan

Tanum Shipp Julien Robinson Mike Mews Matthew Crossley

The Organ

The present organ was built in 1991 by Australian Pipe Organs, restoring and expanding the 1866 Fincham organ. 2 manuals, 18 speaking stops, 8 couplers. Gt: 8.8.4.4.2.III. Sw: 8.8.8.4.2.III.8. Ped: 16.16.10-2/3.8.4.

The Old Cathedral's organist is David Brown. David undertook studies as an organ scholar at the Universities of Cambridge and St Andrews. He also serves as College Organist for Scotch College.

The Bells

Melbourne's first peal of bells were the six bells hung in St James' Cathedral in 1853, replacing an old ship's bell. Two more were added in 1885. All were cast by Mears and Stainbank of Whitechapel Road, London, and are reputed to be the finest ever cast there. They are still rung regularly by a team of volunteers.

Processional (All Stand) The Old Cathedral Voices While all things were in quiet silence N. Rorem (b. 1923)

While all things were in quiet silence, and that night was in the midst of her swift course, thine Almighty Word, O Lord, leaped down out of thy royal throne. Alleluia.

Lighting of the Advent Candles Alex De-Leon

(The first four candles are lit.)

Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into the peace of your kingdom:
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

You come in word and sacrament to strengthen us in holiness: Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

You will come in glory with salvation for your people: Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

Hymn 193 (Veni Emmanuel)

Anon. (Latin 13th Century)

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

> Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home; make safe the way that leads on high and close the path to misery.

> Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny; from depths of hell thy people save and give them victory o'er the grave.

> Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death's dark shadows put to flight.

> Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Welcome Alex De-Leon

Greeting & Preparation

Alex De-Leon

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Commandments

Alex De-Leon

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one;
you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.' Collect Alex De-Leon

O Dayspring, Sun of Righteousness,
whose light no darkness can comprehend:
come and enlighten all who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death;
that we and all your people
may watch with hope and persevere in prayer;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for Peace

Alex De-Leon

O God, the Father of all,
whose Son commanded us to love our enemies
and to pray for those who persecute us:
deliver them and us from prejudice, hatred, and revenge;
that all people may learn the things that make for peace,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Ministry of the Word

Alex De-Leon

As we listen to your Word,

may we know you better, love you more,
and learn to please you in all we do;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gathering for Children's Chapel Janet Neumann

We offer an age-appropriate experience of the Ministry of the Word for children, led today by Janet Neumann. They are invited to process out to the conference centre, as the following anthem is sung.

Childsafe Policy: Children's Chapel is supervised at all times by at least two unrelated adults with current Working with Children Check approvals.

Meditation Canticle of John

The Old Cathedral Voices
D. Riley (b. 1992)

Commissioned for The Old Cathedral Voices. Premiered 19th March 2017.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him;

and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness;

and the darkness comprehended it not. John 1:1-5

'See, you have said to me, "Bring up this people";

but you have not let me know whom you will send with me.

Yet you have said, "I know you by name,

and you have also found favour in my sight."

¹³Now if I have found favour in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favour in your sight.

Consider too that this nation is your people.'

¹²Moses said to the LORD,

- ¹⁴The LORD said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'
- ¹⁵And Moses said to the LORD, 'If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here.
- ¹⁶For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us?
- In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth.'
- ¹⁷The LORD said to Moses,

 'I will do the very thing that you have asked;
 for you have found favour in my sight,
 and I know you by name.'
- ¹⁸Moses said, 'Show me your glory, I pray.'
- ¹⁹And the LORD said, 'I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, "The LORD"; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.
- ²⁰But', he said, 'you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.'
- ²¹And the LORD continued,

'See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock;

22 and while my glory passes by

I will put you in a cleft of the rock,

and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by;

23 then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back;

but my face shall not be seen.'

Hear the Word of the Lord: Thanks be to God.

Preserve me, O God:

for in you I have taken refuge.

I have said to the Lord, You are my lord: and all my good depends upon you.

As for those who are held holy on the earth: the other gods in whom people delight,

Though the idols are many that they run after: their offerings of blood I will not offer, nor take their name upon my lips.

The Lord is my appointed portion and my cup: you hold my lot in your hands.

The share that has fallen to me is in pleasant places: and a fair land is my possession.

I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel: at night also he has instructed my heart.

I have set the Lord always before me:

he is at my right hand, and I shall not fall.

Therefore my heart is glad and my spirit rejoices: my flesh also shall rest secure.

For you will not give me over to the power of death: nor suffer your faithful one to see the Pit.

You will show me the path of life:

in your presence is the fullness of joy, and from your right hand flow delights for evermore.

Epistle: Philippians 2:5-11

Bridget Chapman

⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped,

⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,

And being found in appearance as a human,

assuming human likeness.

8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, ¹⁰so that at the name given to Jesus

every knee should bend,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hear the Word of the Lord: Thanks be to God.

Hymn 215 Corde Natus)

Latin: Prudentius (348-413)

Trans: J. M. Neale (1818-66)

Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see
evermore and evermore.

O that birth for ever blessed when the virgin, full of grace, by the Holy Ghost conceiving bore the saviour of our race, and the babe, the world's redeemer, first revealed his sacred face, evermore and evermore.

This is he whom seers and sages sang of old with one accord, whom the voices of the prophets promised in their faithful word; now he shines, the long expected: let creation praise its Lord evermore and evermore.

In the heights of heaven adore him, angel hosts his praises sing, all dominions bow before him and extol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert sing evermore and evermore.

Gospel Reading: John 1:1-14 Alex De-Leon

The Gospel is written in the first chapter of the Gospel according to John, beginning at the first verse.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was in the beginning with God.

³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.

⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him.

¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

For the gospel of the Lord: praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sermon Rev. Mike Raiter

Anthem The Old Cathedral Voices
A Boy was born B. Britten (1913-1976)

A boy was born in Bethlehem;
Rejoice for that, Jerusalem! Alleluya!
He let himself a servant be,
That all mankind he might set free: Alleluya.
Then praise the Word of God who came
to dwell within a human frame: Alleluya.

Nicene Creed (All Stand)

Alex De-Leon

Let us together affirm the faith of the church:

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers (All Sit or Kneel)

Intercessions

Owen Billington

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Preparation

Alex De-Leon

Jesus said: I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

John 6:35

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies.

We are not worthy

so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord, whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ,
and to drink his blood,
that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Confession & Greeting of Peace Alex De-Leon

Let us open our hearts and prepare for his coming, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Merciful God,
our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:
we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.
Father, forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

Rev. Mike Raiter

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace

Alex De-Leon

We are the body of Christ.

His Spirit is with us.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

(We share a greeting of peace with those nearest us.)

The children's chapel rejoin us as the following hymn is sung.

Hymn 336 (Kingsfold 500)

G. W. Briggs (1875-1959)

The Spirit of the Lord revealed his will to saints of old; their heart and mind and lips unsealed, his glory to unfold.

Amid the gloom of ancient night they hailed the dawning Word, and in the coming of the light proclaimed the coming Lord.

The prophets passed; at length there came, to sojourn and abide, the Word incarnate, to whose name the prophets testified; and he, the twilight overpast, himself the Light of light, as man with man, revealed at last the Father to our sight.

Eternal Spirit, who dost speak to mind and conscience still, that we, in this our day, may seek to do our Father's will, to us the word of life impart, of Christ, the living way; give us the quiet humble heart to hear and to obey.

Thanksgiving & Holy Communion Rev. Mike Raiter

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who was looked for by the prophets,
heralded by the Baptist
announced by an angel,
born of the Virgin Mary,
and revealed at last to men and women of every race.

By his death on the cross

and rising to new life, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Merciful God, we thank you

for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit, we who eat and drink them may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread; and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup,

and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying,

'Drink from this, all of you.

This is my blood of the new covenant

shed for you and for many

for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded:

proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup, his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit,
unite us in the body of your Son,
and bring us with all your people
into the joy of your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom, and in whom,
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
we worship you, Father,
in songs of never-ending praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

We who are many are one body,

for we all share in the one bread.

Come, let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

All baptised believers in the Lord Jesus Christ including children at their parents' discretion are welcome to join us at the Lord's Table.

Gluten free wafers are available on request.

If you prefer an individual cup of grape juice, simply decline the common cup of wine when it is offered to you.

During Communion Jesu, Word of God incarnate

The Old Cathedral Voices W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Jesu, Word of God incarnate of the blessed virgin Mary born
On the cross thy sacred body for our sakes with nails was torn.

Cleanse us by the blood and water streaming from thy pierced side Feed us with thy body broken that thou may'st in us abide.

After Communion

Rev. Mike Raiter

God of heaven, dwelling among us,
we thank you for feeding us with this holy food.
By your grace keep us ever faithful to your Word made flesh

that as his body in the world we may bring your presence to all people.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Notices

Rev. Mike Raiter

Prayers of Farewell

Rev. Mike Raiter

For Alex De-Leon

Holy God, Alpha and Omega,
Lord of beginnings and endings,
we thank you for all we have shared with Alex,
and ask your blessing on him as he continues to walk with you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Before you move onward, we ask forgiveness where we have failed you, we give thanks for all you have given us, we assure you of our love and prayers.

Alex: Before I leave,
I ask forgiveness where I have failed you,
I give thanks for all you have given me,
I assure you of my love and prayers.

(All:) What we forgive, if there is anything to forgive, we have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake. 2 Cor 2:10

Let us pray.

We praise and thank you, faithful God, for our brother soon to leave us.

We entrust him into your loving care.

Shelter and protect him from harm and anxiety, grant him courage to meet the future, and the grace to do the good works you have prepared for him, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn 227 (Mendelssohn)

C. Wesley (1707-88)

Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn king, peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.

Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim, 'Christ is born in Bethlehem'.

Refrain: Hark! The herald angels sing glory to the newborn king!

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb!
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

Refrain

Mild he lays his glory by,
born that man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth.
Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.

Refrain

Blessing & Dismissal

Rev. Mike Raiter

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:

In the name of Christ, Amen.

Recessional David Brown (Organ)
Von Himmel Hoch BWV700 J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

PLEASE JOIN US FOR MORNING TEA IN THE CONFERENCE CENTRE AFTER THE SERVICE

Instead of collecting offertories during the service, we gratefully receive free offerings made at the exit, or by electronic transfers to:

St James' Old Cathedral

BSB: 013 377

Acc. No.: 008 684 064

Tax deductible giving to support our music program is also possible through the St James' Gift Fund:

Melbourne West ITF Gift Fund

BSB: 013 377

Acc. No.: 526 890 909

National Trust Appeal: Roof Replacement

In 2010 a Heritage Review identified the replacement of our slate roof as an urgent work for the next two years.

We have not been able to fund this, and have continued to tolerate regular leaks in the rain, which are damaging other parts of the church in turn.

Parish Council and the National Trust have authorised an appeal. **We are seeking to raise \$500,000** for the full replacement of the slate roof and the restoration of other things which are urgent or best done at the same time. We have engaged Extent Heritage to guide this process and optimise outcomes.

Just before Tony died, Tony and Wendy Greenwood donated the first \$200,000 to this appeal. They hoped to inspire others.

Donations through the National Trust are Tax Deductible. The National Trust take an 8% administration fee.

Please direct Tax Deductible Donations to:

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
BSB: 033000

Account number: 937419

Description: St James Old Cathedral

Please follow up any donations with an email to both accounts@nattrust.com.au and office@sjoc.org.au so that we can track donations.

Should we raise more than is needed for urgent works, we are approved to use donations to repay the outstanding loan for the 2011 Tower Restoration.

Christmas Services at St James Old Cathedral:

Wednesday 24.12.25 at 11:00 pm:

Christmas Eve (Holy Communion)

Thursday 25.12.25 at 10:00 am:

Christmas Day (Holy Communion)

Sunday 28.12.25 at 10:00am:

Holy Innocents (Holy Communion)

Sunday 4.1.26 at 10:00am:

Feast of the Epiphany (Holy Communion)

St James' Old Cathedral Commitment to Child Safety

Jesus said:

"Anyone who welcomes a little child in my name welcomes me.

But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble –

it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck

and he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

Matthew 18:5-6

As we meet together to worship God, we seek to honour him by the diligent protection of children.

We are committed to creating a culture of safety for all, and undergoing regular training to do so.

We seek to normalise routine submission to Police Checks and Working With Children Checks for all members of the community.

If anyone sees any behaviour related to child safety that strikes them as odd, they should not investigate the matter themselves, but call the independent Professional Standards Hotline (Kooyoora Ltd) for expert guidance:

1800 135 246

or our local police (313 Spencer Street, Docklands):

03 8690 4444

Intercessions

We pray for: Our West Melbourne Community; Haileybury College; Mike Raiter and The Centre for Biblical Preaching; Emma Payne (CMS); Chris & Sarah Griffioen and family (OM); Australian Indigenous Churches; Ridley College; Trinity College; the Overseas Chinese Christian Church; Janette Wells; Neil; Diane and Roger Smith and family; Beverly Stephenson; Sergio Altin; The Hamilton Family; Jean Ely; Neil Hawthorn; Lorraine Hedley; Jamie Chisholm; Stuart; Jenny Swain; Kim Boulton; Tony Billington; Ken McAlpine; Anne Ellison; Faye Moses; Gillian Williams; Amodha Ratnayeke; Mavis Payne; Lisa Thompson; Warren Mills; Chris & Roselee Jones; Wendy Greenwood.

Notices

- Today we farewell our Student Minister for 2025, Alex De-Leon.
- Bridget Chapman is returning for another student placement in 2026.
- o Canon Matt is on annual leave, returning tomorrow.
- Lisa Wardell will be on leave after Christmas until late January.

Contact Details

Vicar:	Rev. Canon Matt Williams	0403 770 867
Associate Minister:	Rev. Mike Raiter	0425 211 058
Lay Minister:	Ms. Bei-En Zou	0434 899 839
Student Minister:	Mr. Alex De-Leon	0481 040 243
On-Site Manager:	Ms. Lisa Wardell	0417 624 915
Child Safety Officer:	Ms. Una Ebsworth	0400 717 571
Churchwardens:		
Mr David Spriggs		0417 190 319
Ms Elizabeth Blades-Hamilton		0423 100 677
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