

**Liturgy Rosters:**  
 Many thanks for your ministry to the Parish.

**This Weekend: 23rd, 24th & 25th December**

**Saturday: 6.00pm**  
 Reader: G Priestley  
 Prayers: P O'Brien  
 Minister: D Kierce  
 Computer: A O'Brien

**Sunday: Dec 24th 8.00pm Christmas Eve**

Reader: J Howman  
 Prayers: M McKenzie  
 Minister: P Howman  
 Computer: K Howman

**Monday: Dec 25th 9.30am Christmas Day**

Reader: P Couttie  
 Prayers: M Schultz  
 Minister: D Kierce  
 Computer: Volunteer Please

**Next Weekend: 30th & 31st**

**Saturday: 6.00pm**  
 Reader: P Howman  
 Prayers: D Bennett  
 Minister: K Howman  
 Computer: A O'Brien

**Sunday: 10.30am**  
 Reader: P Couttie  
 Prayers: M Picard  
 Minister: D Arnott  
 Computer: Volunteer Please

**Following Weekend: 6th & 7th January 2024**

**Saturday: 6.00pm**  
 Reader: D Baudinette  
 Prayers: D Kierce  
 Minister: A O'Brien  
 Computer: P O'Brien

**Sunday: 10.30am**  
 Reader: A McIntyre  
 Prayers: I Eichler  
 Minister: K Loftus  
 Computer: Volunteer Please

**All Saints Outreach Op-Shop:**  
 (In Woolworth's Car park)  
 Phone: 5521 1587

The Parish Outreach Op-Shop is always in need of good quality clothing, bric a brac or furniture.

**Donations during shop hours only.**

Please ring Outreach for pick up if necessary. Thank you all for your ongoing support of Outreach.

**Outreach Op-shop will be closed between noon on the 23rd of December and reopening on the 3rd of January at 10.00am. Please do not leave any donations outside the shop during this Christmas break period.**

Outreach is a significant fundraiser within the Parish and we regularly need Volunteers to give 3 hours in the mornings or afternoons. **Please contact Kate Howman 0428 235 218 for further information.**

**LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL**

All Saints Parish has been present at most of the important milestones in your life: your Baptism, your First Communion, at times of great celebration and at times of great sadness. By leaving a gift to your Parish in your Will, you will leave a legacy of faith – a legacy to help ensure that the mission and pastoral outreach that has been important to you will continue both for today's needs and for those of our children, our grandchildren and beyond.

If you would like to receive a weekly copy of "The Spire" by email, please send us an email and we can add you to a list of subscribers.



**24th December 2023**

**4th Sunday In Advent Year B**



**Portland Daily Services 25th December 2023 to 1st of January 2024**

December 24th 10.30am Mass Dartmoor.  
 December 24th 7.30pm Carols Portland.  
 December 24th 8.00pm Mass Portland.  
 December 25th 9.30am Mass Portland.

Tuesday 26th NO MASS  
 Wednesday 27th NO MASS  
 4.30pm Rosary

Thursday: 10.00am Mass

Friday: 9.30am Adoration & Morning Prayer  
 10.00am Mass  
 5.00pm Evening Prayer

Saturday: 6.00pm Mass Portland  
 Sunday 10.30am  
 Monday 1st of January 11.00am Mass

**Recent Death:** Brian Ough.

**Anniversaries:** Pauline Healey, Carmel Sheedy, Inala Bell, Hilda Habel, Gertie Brown, Paige Prentice, Lee Crow, Jim Tobin, Merle Johnson, Karen Graham, Sr Mary O'Neil RSM, Ramona Salt, Neville Bourke, Michael Vigilante, Frank Lodge, Allan Smith, Gerald Mugavin, Edmund Canavan, Jack Foletti, Dap Kennedy, Winnie McDonald, Patrick Bourke, Denise Kirwan, Brendan Payne, Elsie Rose, John Kennedy, Joseph Farrell, Frank McCarthy, Val Brown.

**Prayer Requests:**

Les Hildebrand, Lea-anne Bourke, Michelle Mutch, Deanne Atkinson.

*If you have any prayer requests please contact the Office at the Parish Office; for privacy reasons only Next of Kin may ask for names to be added: Thank you.*

**"The Spire"**

**All Saints' Parish**

**Portland - Heywood - Dartmoor**

**All Saints Parish Office**

Entrance via, 8 Henty Street Portland  
 PO Box 210 Portland 3305

Phone: 5523 1046 Mobile 0475 512530

email: [portland@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:portland@ballarat.catholic.org.au)  
[www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parishes/portland](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parishes/portland)

Rev. Gregory A. D. Tait, P.P.

email: [greg.tait@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:greg.tait@ballarat.catholic.org.au)

**Parish Office Hours**

Tuesday to Thursday 9.00am till 3.00pm  
 Friday by arrangement with Fr Gregory

*All Saints Parish is committed to Child Safety - our Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct are on display on the Parish website and noticeboard in the Tower Entrance of the Church.*

*All Saints Parish Portland acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which our Parish Community meets, the Gunditjmara people. We pay our respects to their Elders past present and emerging. We commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation and constitutional acknowledgement of first peoples.*

All Saints Catholic Church presents

**SUMMER PSALTER**

RUNNING IN THE FIRST  
 WEEK OF JANUARY  
 1ST JAN - 5TH JAN



Experience the small practices that accompanied Christians through the millennia in both good times and bad

An introductory session will be held after Mass on Sunday the 31st of December at All Saints Catholic Church. Contact [jphowman@gmail.com](mailto:jphowman@gmail.com) for bookings and further information

**Our Parish & Presbytery Finances**

**Planned Giving for Parish Account**

**Given last week, inc. EFT: \$912.00**

**Target \$62,400**

**Total YTD 2023 \$29,853.10**

Direct deposit payments for planned giving and donations can be made electronically. Details are as follows:

**Account Name:** Portland Catholic Church  
**BSB:** 083 532  
**Account No.** 5159 81661

**Presbytery Account**

**Priest support: inc. EFT \$589.90**

Direct deposit payments for the presbytery account can be made electronically. Details are as follows:

**Account Name:** All Saints Presbytery Portland  
**BSB:** 083 526  
**Account No.** 24476 6002

**Bishops Christmas Appeal for 2023.** This appeal will be taken up at all Christmas Masses.

Below is the distribution of aid from last year's appeal across the Diocese.

Catholic Mission Humanitarian Aid for Ukraine	10,000
Caritas Humanitarian Aid for Gaza	10,000
St Columban's Mission, "Shared Table" Peru	5,000
Nazareth House Ballarat	5,000
St Vincent de Paul	5,000
CatholicCare Victoria	5,000
Aid to the Church in Need	2,000
Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH)	2,000
<b>Total donations made in 2023</b>	<b>\$44,000</b>



## Liturgy of the Word

**First Reading** 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12,14,16

A reading from the second book of Samuel.

7:1 Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' <sup>3</sup>Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.'

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup>Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in?

<sup>8</sup>Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; <sup>9</sup>and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup>And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup>from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. <sup>12</sup>When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

<sup>14</sup>I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings

<sup>16</sup>Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

The word of the Lord.

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 88:2-5, 27, 29. R. see v.2

(R.) For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord; through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth. Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever, that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. (R.)

2. 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages.' (R.)

3. He will say to me: 'You are my father, my God, the rock who saves me.' I will keep my love for him always; for him my covenant shall endure. (R.)

**Second Reading** Romans 16:25-27

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

16:25 Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all

the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

The word of the Lord.

**Gospel Acclamation** Luke 1:38

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the servant of the Lord: may his will for me be done.

Alleluia!

**Gospel** Luke 1:26-38

From the holy Gospel according to Luke.

1:26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God.' <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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### Christmas Hampers 2023:

**Through our Parish Outreach and your individual contributions, we have provided meat tray vouchers to accompany the Christmas hampers that have been distributed in December by the Portland Branch of the Salvation Army.**

**This is an important partnership that we have been involved in for many years. This year we provided 209 Meat Trays to accompany the Hampers to local families in need.**

**A Total of \$6,270.00 was provided jointly by Parishioner contributions of \$1,324.00 and \$4,946.00 from our Outreach Funds. Many thanks for your generosity.**

## Gospel Reflection for 4th Sunday in Advent by Greg Sunter.

We have reached the final Sunday in the season of Advent – a time of preparing ourselves to recognise and celebrate Christ's presence in the world, both historically and in an ongoing, timeless way. This week's gospel account of the Annunciation is an ideal culmination to this season as we recall Mary's emphatic 'Yes' to all that was being asked of her. At the end of the Advent season of reflection and preparation to recognise Christ's presence in the world and in our lives, what better response could there be than to simply say, 'Yes'?

In a world that is driven by selfishness and the drive to push one's self ahead of others, Mary's selfless act stands as a challenge to our modern society. Even in her own time, Mary's decision must have been an enormously difficult one – one that had the potential to bring great shame on herself and Joseph. Yet, her decision is made swiftly and in faith. She trusts God absolutely and gives her life over into God's hands. That is perhaps the supreme act of faith; to say 'Yes' to God so completely that you are prepared to hand over direction and control of your own life.

Few of us tend to be visited by angels who lay out God's plan for us as clearly as Gabriel did for Mary. For most of us, it is a challenge to discern God's desire for us; to realise what it is that we are called to do and then give ourselves fully to that call. In the hustle and bustle of life, it is difficult to hear anything that God may be trying to ask of us. Perhaps the example of Mary's 'Yes' is a reminder to be still enough to hear the question in the first place!

### Scriptural context

Throughout the gospel of Luke, great importance is placed on the people in society who were regarded as the 'lesser ones'. The mission of Jesus, as described in Luke's gospel, is directed towards those who were unimportant in the eyes of society. In first century society, women were regarded as much less in status than men. So it is significant that the first revelation of Jesus is made to a woman, Mary. The angel Gabriel announces that Mary has won God's favour. For a woman to win God's favour would have been unimaginable to many Jews at the time, yet, through this woman God was revealed in human form.

### Have you thought? What about Joseph?

Luke's account of the Annunciation (and indeed much of the infancy narrative) focuses its attention on Mary. But what of Joseph? How does he react to the news that his betrothed wife is pregnant? By Jewish Law and tradition, Mary could well have been stoned to death if Joseph had denounced her. Even if Joseph allowed people to think that he was the father of her child, this would have caused an enormous scandal – a breach of the sanctity of the betrothal vow. However, foreshadowing the compassion of Jesus himself, Joseph acts purely out of compassion and continues with his marriage to Mary.

### Different View – Virgin births

Some critics of Christian tradition argue that the account of the virgin conception and birth of Jesus is merely a literary device used to give status to Jesus' birth. At the time, it was not an uncommon device to accord a significant figure a heroic or even virginal birth. In Greek, Egyptian and even Roman legend, several characters are credited with virgin births. Some authors point to the fact that it is only the gospels of Matthew and Luke and none of the earlier writings that portray Mary as a virgin. The argument suggests that assigning Jesus a virgin birth was an attempt to place Jesus alongside other historical and legendary figures as a person of great status.

### Questions for personal reflection.

1. What message is conveyed by Mary's 'Yes' to God in today's gospel?
2. How do you think Mary's family and friends may have reacted to her news?
3. To what aspects of your life do you need to say 'Yes'?
4. In what way, or in what direction, are you called by God?

### Leaning Moments.

Spend some time in silent reflection thinking about what it is that God calls you to be and how God wants you to live your life.

© Greg Sunter  
Greg Sunter has worked in Catholic Education (Brisbane) for many years, most recently as a member of the Religious Education team and Mission and Formation team. He has extensive experience of praying with young people and forming others to lead prayer with young people. He is the author of books on adolescent faith, is a regular speaker at youth and evangelisation conferences, and is a retreat and reflection facilitator and presenter. His areas of interest include religious education, theology, scripture, spirituality, Catholic ethos, prayer, and ministry with young people.