

348 Raleigh St,
Thornbury East

45 Railway Pde,
Alphington

AND WE FOLLOW THE CHRISTMAS STAR...

We wait.

Every Christmas Eve we wait for the children dressed as sheep, shepherds and wise men to assemble calmly. Mary and the angel walk slowly through the Church. The star is held high and majestic music fills Holy Spirit Church.

The nativity play, which began at Holy Spirit more than 25 years ago, is similar to that performed in Churches around the world every Christmas. For centuries Christians have gathered to re-enact the birth of Jesus, the moment that transformed the world.

Parishioners Kevin and Kathy Jansz have been in charge of the play for the past five years and this year, the play at the 5pm Christmas Eve Mass, is their final 'performance'.

Become part of the play

School children from St Anthony's and Holy Spirit are invited to participate.

The rehearsal dates of this year's event are Saturday, December 11 and 18 at 6pm. If you would like to know more about what's involved, or your child is keen to participate, contact Kathy on 0417 155 098.

Kathy and Kevin have created a photo gallery from their time as coordinators. If you would like to see the photos, contact Kathy at the number above.

Kathy and Kevin's favourite moment of the play:

"The procession at the end following the star is our favourite part because of how happy, bright and proud the kids look."



David Jansz,
son of Kevin and Kathy Jansz



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*"I bring you news
of great joy, a joy to
be shared by the
whole
people."*



VINNIES GIVING TREE

Every Christmas the Holy Spirit/St Mary's and the St Anthony's St Vincent de Paul conferences make a special effort to brighten up Christmas for those who are finding life difficult, or who are isolated and lonely. You can join in too.

At Holy Spirit Church Brendon and Ingrid Leverett have set up the Giving Tree. Please take an envelope from the tree and donate some money or take a tag asking for a particular item such as lollies, soft drinks or a pudding.

On Christmas Eve volunteers gather, put hampers together and deliver them to people who have asked for a hamper. If you would like to volunteer, please call Brendon on 9484 6932.

If you decide to donate money, you can put the envelope on the plate.

At St Anthony's Tony Bolzon has set up a basket at the back of the church with special Christmas envelopes for your donations. Again, you can put your envelope on the plate, or drop it into the office. Tony and his team will be giving out supermarket vouchers to those in need who can then buy some groceries for Christmas.

Favourite Christmas book

Brendon's attitude to giving at Christmas is captured in his favourite Christmas story book – The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey.

He said the story is "Something about the spirit of Christmas, something about the plight of the lonely and those that suffer at Christmas time, and lots about love and friendship and how they can make a difference in the world".



'It's about the spirit of Christmas, something about the plight of the lonely and those that suffer at Christmas time, and lots about love and friendship and how they can make a difference in the world.'

LAXMI'S FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS FOOD

"I am from Goa on the west coast of India and seafood is part of all special occasions. Green prawn curry has always been part of my family's Christmas celebrations and I will make it again this year.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

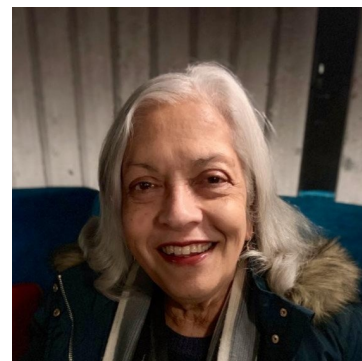
Laxmi Fonseca has been raising funds and supporting asylum seekers and refugees for decades. This year she is encouraging us to add this marginalized group of people to our Christmas list.

"I encourage people to think about what they spend at Christmas and donate some money to asylum seekers," said Laxmi, a St Anthony's parishioner.

While Australians enjoy a variety of foods at Christmas, many newly arrived Australians from countries far away, will eat rice at Christmas because it is a staple of their diet.

This Christmas you can buy some rice for the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Foodbank by adding to the St Anthony's Giving Tree.

Take a coloured card and write a message on the circle. The card will have an envelope attached in which a cash donation can be placed. The bauble will also have a piece of ribbon with which it can be attached to the Tree.



MAKING MUSIC FOR CHRISTMAS; THE TRADITION CONTINUES

Music is an integral part of our Christmas celebrations and the tradition of the Holy Spirit Christmas Eve orchestra stretches back to 2003. Dr Daryl Barclay, singer, conductor, arranger, educator, linguist and musician, established the inaugural orchestra to support the choir and a tradition was born.

Now that we have entered the season of Advent, we invite any young person who can play a musical instrument to become part of this tradition for 2021. There's usually one rehearsal before the Family Christmas Eve mass and more can be organised if necessary.

We also invite anyone who would like to be part of the Christmas Eve or Christmas Day choir. The choirs have been singing at Holy Spirit for over 50 years. We will be missing five members this year and it would be a great help if new members could join. Choir practice is on Wednesday 22 December at 7.30pm. In Holy Spirit Church.

If you would like to be part of the Christmas Eve orchestra or choir, please contact the parish office and leave your contact details and John Samanna the Music Director of Holy Spirit will be in touch with you.

John's favourite carol?

Silent Night composed in 1818 by Franz Xaver Gruber with lyrics by Joseph Mohr. The beautiful melody helps us experience the presence of Christ within us as if he is reborn anew; it always moves me into a contemplative state.

Christmas music at St Anthony's

Accomplished musician and former parishioner, Mark Walsh will lead the music at the 6.00pm Christmas Eve Mass at St Anthony's.



SANTA HAS HIS PLACE, BUT MAKE JESUS MATTER

The Holy Spirit/St Anthony's parish gift stalls have lots of lovely things for Christmas. There are beautiful cards available at both churches featuring the infant Jesus. They are \$7 a pack of 10 or \$1 for loose cards.

Buy a Columban calendar and help your family keep track of the days while viewing stunning art at the same time. The calendars are a bargain at just \$10.

Holy Spirit's gift shop is overflowing with cards, rosary beads, books and Christmas gifts. No decent offer refused!

As a special free Christmas gift, we are inviting parishioners to come and take a medal from the gift shop counter at Holy Spirit or from the back table at St Anthony's. Take one for yourself and for your family members.

So remember - shop local this year.



*'Glory to
God in
the
highest
heaven,
and peace
to men
who
enjoy his
favour.'*



'IN THE TOWN OF DAVID A SAVIOUR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU'

The Gospel according to Luke:2:1-14

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

A GOSPEL REFLECTION, SR HELEN DUFFY

This Gospel of Luke is a beautiful, very short, Christmas Story - so short that someone might read it before our Christmas dinner - because it is truly 'our' story.

And an even shorter story in the Gospel of John ((3:16) tells us what this story means. John tells us why we celebrate Christmas with love, joy, and gift giving! Because...God loved the world so much He gave us His Only Son.

Wow, we celebrate Christmas because God loves our world so much!

That's what Mary pondered in her heart as she held Jesus in her arms! That's why we give presents, see our friends and have nice food because God loves our world: you, me, the flowers, the Sun, the moon and the stars - even the bugs and the bees, our cats and dogs.

The shepherds heard this good news and they came to see the Christ Child, worshiped Him, and then went back to their sheep glorifying and praising God.

So Christmas giving is about praising God for his great love for our world, and we spend Christmas day knowing the great love God has for us, for everyone, and every living thing. We know that this God of Love came to dwell in us at our Baptism.

Jesus' love, given to us, is stronger than the lights on our Christmas tree, shining through our hearts to our family, to all creation and to our world. So we try to be a little kinder, a little more thankful, a little more forgiving and a little more thoughtful to one another.

May we have the faith to believe that the love in our family is truly God's love for our world this Christmas.

We thank Sr Helen Duffy rsm for this reflection. Sr Helen has been a member of our Parish community for many years.



CHRISTMAS BLESSING

Dear Parishioners, School Communities, Friends and Visitors!

Every year on Christmas Day we express our wishes to each other and exchange gifts.

What are your expectations for Christmas this year?

What would you like to receive from God or from your family as a gift?

Of course, we have different needs but, I think, the biggest desire we all should have is to have the presence of Jesus in our lives.

We need the Saviour to be a part of our existence on earth. Not only that; we need him to be the Lord of our lives and of our homes. May He truly be alive through our words and actions during this beautiful season. Let us be peacemakers and bring reconciliation to our families and friends.

Please, come and join our community to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ!

May the Lord bless you and keep you in God's loving presence.

I wish you a truly happy Christmas.

You are in my prayers.

Fr Ireneusz

PS. Please say a prayer for me too as I am about to begin a new ministry at another parish. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. I'll always remember you.



BENEDIZIONE DI NATALE

Cari parrocchiani, comunità scolastiche, amici e visitatori!

Ogni anno il giorno di Natale ci esprimiamo i nostri desideri e ci scambiamo regali.

Quali sono le tue aspettative per il Natale di quest'anno? Cosa vorresti ricevere in dono da Dio o dalla tua famiglia?

Certo, abbiamo esigenze diverse ma, penso, il desiderio più grande che tutti dovremmo avere è avere la presenza di Gesù nella nostra vita. Abbiamo bisogno che il Salvatore faccia parte della nostra esistenza sulla terra. Non solo quello; abbiamo bisogno che lui sia il Signore delle nostre vite e delle nostre case. Possa Lui essere veramente vivo attraverso le nostre parole e azioni durante questa bellissima stagione. Cerchiamo di essere operatori di pace e portare la riconciliazione alle nostre famiglie e ai nostri amici.

Sentitevi benvenuti mentre vi unite a noi per celebrare la nascita di Gesù Cristo!

Possa il Signore benedirvi e tenervi alla presenza amorevole di Dio.

Vi auguro un felice Natale.

Siete nelle mie preghiere.

P. Ireneusz

PS. Vi prego di dire una preghiera anche per me perché sto per iniziare un nuovo ministero in un'altra parrocchia. Grazie per la possibilità di servirvi. Mi ricorderò sempre di voi.



2021 CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES



CONTACT US

For more information
about any of the groups
in this bulletin:

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E: hosan@cam.org.au

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Christmas Eve Friday 24 December

5pm	Holy Spirit	Fr Ireneusz
	(Nativity play, choir and youth orchestra)	
6pm	St Anthony's (Choir & music)	Mons Tom
8pm	St Anthony's (undeclared vaccination status)	Fr Ireneusz
Midnight	St Anthony's	Fr Ireneusz

Christmas Day Saturday 25 December

9am	St Anthony's (Italian)	Fr Ireneusz
10am	Holy Spirit	Mons Tom
11am	St Anthony's	Fr Ireneusz

Vigil masses for Feast of the Holy Family

5pm	Holy Spirit	Fr Ireneusz
6pm	St Anthony's	Fr Ireneusz

Feast of the Holy Family Sunday 26 December

9am	St Anthony's (Italian)	Fr Ireneusz
10am	Holy Spirit	Fr Ireneusz
11am	St Anthony's	Mons Tom

MERRY CHRISTMAS

FROM FATHER IRENEUSZ AND MONSIGNOR TOM



Our Parish Priest, Fr Ireneusz and Mons. Tom Doyle wish all parishioners and their families a very Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.

And they also send a big thank you to all the parish groups and volunteers who give their time.

