

WELCOME TO

ST BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC PARISH



St Brendan's Parish is a Child Safe community. We promote the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all and a zero tolerance to child abuse.

Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) Midnight

25 December

First Reading Is 9:1-7

A son is given to us.

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the
spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.

For all the footgear of battle,
every cloak rolled in blood,
is burnt
and consumed by fire.

For there is a child born for us,
a son given to us
and dominion is laid on his shoulders;
and this is the name they give him:
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God,
Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.

Wide is his dominion
in a peace that has no end,
for the throne of David
and for his royal power,
which he establishes and makes secure
in Justice and Integrity.
From this time onwards and for ever,
the jealous love of the Lord of hosts
will do this.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 95:1-3. 11-13 R. Lk 2:11

*(R.) Today is born our Saviour,
Christ the Lord.*

1. O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.
O sing to the Lord, bless his name. *(R.)*
2. Proclaim his help day by day,
tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all
the peoples. *(R.)*
3. Let the heavens rejoice and earth
be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
let the land and all it bears rejoice,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord
for he comes,
he comes to rule the earth. *(R.)*
4. With justice he will rule the world,
he will judge the peoples with
his truth *(R.)*

Second Reading TI 2:11-14

God's grace has been revealed to all people.

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made
salvation possible for the whole human race and
taught us that what we have to do is to give up
everything that does not lead to God, and all our
worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained
and live good and religious lives here in this
present world, while we are waiting in hope for
the blessing which will come with the Appearing
of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ
Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to
set us free from all wickedness and to purify
a people so that it could be his very own and
would have no ambition except to do good.

Gospel Acclamation Lk 2:10-11

Alleluia, alleluia!

*Good News and great joy to all
the world:*

*today is born our Saviour, Christ
the Lord.*

Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 2:1-14

Today a saviour has been born for you.

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.'*

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Reflection by Greg Sunter

If you were to give just a cursory glance at a collection of 'religious' Christmas cards, or even the local nativity scene, you would undoubtedly see a varied assortment of shepherds, wise men, livestock and angels gathered around the holy family in a timber structure of some sort. Even the most casual reading of Luke's account of the birth of Christ would reveal that most of the nativity figurines are missing! Our retelling of the birth of Christ tends to be an amalgamation of the Luke and Matthew versions with a bit of creative tradition thrown in for good measure.

The Luke account of the nativity carries a very specific theology that runs throughout the rest of that gospel. It is a theology that places the outcast and downtrodden at the centre of Jesus' mission. In this account, Jesus is born outside the town because there is no room for Joseph and Mary within the safety of the inn. Like those he will minister to later in life, Jesus is born 'on the edge' – even outside the boundaries. Rather than the impressive 'Wise Men' of the Matthew infancy account, the witnesses to Jesus' birth in the Luke account are lowly shepherds. Unlike the somewhat romantic notion we may have of shepherds, in Jesus' time they were regarded as little better than thieves and cut-throats. All they could be trusted to do was tend sheep outside of townships and away from 'civilised' society. They held one of the lowest positions in Jewish society. The gospel writer's choice of these witnesses to the birth of Jesus is a very deliberate one that clearly announces the purpose and direction of Jesus' mission.

ST BRENDAN'S PARISH NEWS



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 Parish Priest: Fr Joe Taylor
 Priest in Residence: Fr Joseph Kunnackattu
 Associate Priest: Fr Jackson Saunders
 Deacon: Francois Baguma
 Office Manager: Diane Teitzel
 Child Safe Officer: Jason Giuliani Ph: 5821 2633
 Office Hours: Mon to Fri 9am - 2pm



*Christ in community ...
 the heart of our faith*

Recently Deceased: Vince Cavallaro

Anniversary: Andrew Cannizzano, Erminio Sangalli, Mario and Marietta Ginevra, Alice Stein, Ian Gill (1 month), Patricia O'Sullivan, John Mahony.

Readers & Commentators December 30 & 31, 2023

6pm	L. Kelly	TBC
8am	L. Billings	D. Teitzel
11am	J M. Mupenda	M. Frizzell

A portion of the **collections over Christmas** will be shared between the following causes:

- ◇ Voice for Silent People
- ◇ Monsignor Gerard Kalumba Seminary, Uganda
- ◇ St Mary's Church, Derimbat, Manus Island

Billabong Nursery Cafe Cuppa

All Sacristans and ladies who help around the Church are invited to join us for a cuppa on the 2nd Saturday of each month at 10.00am, including Saturday, January 14. All enquiries to: Kath Smyth 0409 003 420.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We turn our hearts and minds to the people of the Yorta Yorta nation, who have occupied this country for thousands of years. We pay respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and commit to walking alongside Aboriginal Australians in truth and justice.

**Masses between
 Christmas and New Year**



Tuesday, December 26	NO MASS (Boxing day)
Wednesday, December 27	5.00pm (Time change)
Thursday, December 28	9.15am
Friday, December 29	9.15am
Saturday, December 30	6.00pm
Sunday, December 31	8.00am and 11.00am
Monday, January 1, 2024	10.00am: NY Day Mass Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
Tuesday, January 2, 2024	9.15 (return to normal)

Save the Date: Parish Expo to celebrate St Brendan's Parish Feast Day—Sunday, May 5, after the 11am Mass.



Special Ministers will be required at all Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses. Please come forward at the appropriate time. As there are no rosters for these Masses, we ask for 6 volunteers at each Mass.

The Parish Office will be closing at 2pm Friday, December 22, and will re-open 9am on Tuesday, January 2, 2024. We wish everyone a safe and blessed Christmas. May the New Year bring health and joy to all.



Misa de Gallo

A sincere word of thanks to all who have supported Misa de Gallo this year.



We have had Masses each morning at 6am from December 16 until December 24.

About 100 people have attended each morning and some mornings many more. Special thanks is to go to Lady Price, Sr Bing, Benita Connelly and Cynthia Gorry. Many thanks to Mason Crosier for opening the Church each day, as well as to our sacristans, altar servers, musicians, projectionists, liturgy planners, readers, commentators and those who assisted with the offertory or gave gifts.

We are most grateful to those who cooked, prepared or sponsored breakfast each day, as well as those who assisted with the clean up each morning. It was so good to see people stepping forward to assist in various ways without being asked. It is a sign of an active and healthy parish. We express our sincere gratitude to you. We also give thanks to Bishop Shane and the various priests, who joined us for Mass each day. We look forward to Misa de Gallo in 2024. If you would like to be involved next year, please let us know. *God bless, Fr Jackson and Fr Joe.*

Weekend Mass Times

Saturday Vigil 6pm

Sunday 8am & 11am **PRAYING WITH CHILDREN**
SUNDAY LITURGY

Syro Malabar Rite: Wednesday 6.00pm, Saturday 8.30am, Sunday 5.30pm

Rosary— The Rosary is prayed in the Marian Chapel after weekday Masses and after the 8am Mass on Sunday.

Holy Hour with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Thursdays 7pm to 8pm and Fridays 5pm to 6pm

Weekday Mass Times

Tuesday to Friday 9.15am

Reconciliation Saturday 9.45am to 10.30am (in the Church)

Anniversary celebration 50



St Brendan's Parish will host a celebration of Fr Joe's 50th anniversary of ordination to priesthood on Sunday, May 19, at the 11am Mass.

All are welcome. Please save the date.

Fr Joe has also requested that he would like married couples, who celebrate 50 years of marriage next year, to join him in celebrating this occasion.

Also religious who are celebrating 50 years.

Please see Fr Joe, if this applies to you.



Who is Jesus? Alpha is coming again, are you ready? <https://www.alpha.org.au/try>

Young Adults Group
for those aged 18-35



Our St. Brendan's Young Adults Group has been a huge success this year. We have been meeting on Thursday nights from 6pm -7pm in the Monsignor Peter Jeffrey Centre (behind St. Brendan's Church). We gather to reflect on the readings at Mass for the coming Sunday.

We have also organised many fun events, and have had guest speakers come to speak to us about our Catholic faith. We look forward to returning on **Thursday, January 11**, for a fun and exciting new year ahead. From the St. Brendan's Young Adults Group, we wish everyone a blessed and enjoyable Christmas.



Our parish **RCIA** (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) process is taking a break over Christmas and will return on Thursday February 1, 2024.

Please keep all the participants in your prayers as they continue to discern if joining the Catholic faith is what they are being called to.



The **men's group** takes a break over Christmas and will begin again on Saturday February 10, 2024.



The **CUPPA** after our 9.15am Mass on Thursdays will go into recess until January 18, 2024, and continue weekly from then.

A special thank you to our **SACRISTANS** for all the work that they have done for our Parish this year.



The past month has been particularly busy for them. In addition, to our Sunday and daily Masses, we have had a run of funerals, end of year school Masses, Misa de Gallo, Christmas liturgies and other special occasions. We are most grateful for your tireless work and commitment to our Parish. We strongly encourage parishioners to consider joining the Sacristy team. Please reach out to Andrea Hayes, the Parish Office, Fr Joe or Fr Jackson, if you are interested.

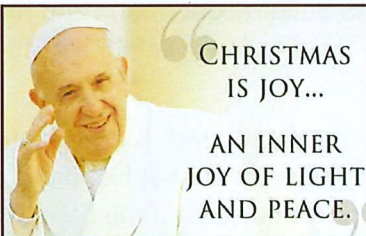
Who do you see when you look at Mary—Our Lady?

An aunt of mine was once showing a man around her home and in nearly every room she had some picture or other, depicting (as she likes to call her) 'The Blessed Mother'. The man, possibly not overly religious, was a little perturbed and felt he had to comment: 'You have a lot of pictures of Mary,' he said. Without a flinch, my aunt replied, 'Oh but of course, I consider her a personal friend.' No more to be said!



It's a great way to look at Mary—as a 'personal friend'—and in that light you can see why God would dispatch Gabriel to meet her in the kitchen.


He knew what sort she was. There was a generosity of spirit there and a kindness that is only truly found in the best of friends. I think that is how she would want us to see her today as we journey with her to Bethlehem in the company of Joseph. She would want us to see her as someone whose door is open to us, no need for formalities or elaborate ritual. The door is open, the light is on and she awaits our approach.
Vincent Sherlock, Let Advent be Advent.



To all parish volunteers

A sincere word of thanks to all our volunteers across our parish, who have assisted in various ways this year. We are most grateful for all that you do in our Parish and the various ministries you exercise. There are so many groups and individuals we could thank. We wish you a holy Christmas and every blessing for 2024. God bless, Fr Joe, Fr Jackson and Fr Joseph.






Caritas AUSTRALIA The Catholic agency for international aid and development

Help families rebuild from disaster.

caritas.org.au OR Caritas Christmas Appeal




The **eye** Shop

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Phone 5821 0311
enquiries@eyeshopshepparton.com.au




A Christmas Message

FROM BISHOP SHANE MACKINLAY

In early November, I was meant to be attending a conference in Jerusalem. Like so many other events and pilgrimages, it had to be rearranged following the brutal attack on Israel by Hamas fighters, and the subsequent military action by Israel in Gaza. Of course, the inconvenience for people like me is completely insignificant by comparison with the ongoing suffering and loss caused by the violence for those who are caught in it. Sadly, as is so often the case, those who are suffering most are civilians, including women, children and the elderly.

So, as our thoughts turn to Bethlehem again this Christmas, there is a great sense of sadness at the suffering of those who live in the land where Jesus lived, and at how difficult it is to imagine peace in the place where Jesus' birth was acclaimed by the angels as giving glory to God and bringing peace on earth.

As well as the Holy Land, there are many other places where violence and conflict continue this year: the people of Ukraine continue to bravely resist Russia's invasion, and armed conflict of one kind or another continues to inflict great suffering in places like Sudan, Myanmar and Colombia.

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace. At least part of why that is so important for us is because we are aware of how much we need peace, and of how difficult it is to find peace and to build it up. In our own families and communities, we all know of situations where division, hurt and mistrust have grown up, leading to animosity or even separation. So when we come together at Christmas, we experience tension and disappointment alongside the joy and excitement of gathering together. More broadly, the failure of the Voice referendum this year has highlighted divisions in our national community, and perhaps even made them worse. We will only be able to build reconciliation and justice if we renew our commitment to ensuring that each person in our community is valued and respected, that their voice is heard, and that practical actions are taken to respond to the needs around us.

We are about to celebrate Jesus' birth, which is always an occasion of great joy and hope. We celebrate the faithful love of our God, who cares so much for us that he comes to enter fully into our lives, taking on our very flesh and blood. We celebrate the peace that he proclaimed and we acknowledge our need for God to build that peace in our hearts and in our world.

So, as we celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas, we are also invited to recommit ourselves to carrying on his unfinished mission, remembering that the God who sent him amongst us also raised him from the dead, and continues to walk faithfully with us, asking us to shape our world ever more into one where his love and peace is known and celebrated, and where all people are recognised as his beloved sons and daughters.

I wish each of you and those you love the joy, peace, and hope of this Christmas season.

Most Rev. Shane Mackinlay,
Bishop of Sandhurst.

