



**St Matthew's Holland Park Weekly  
Bulletin 22nd December 2024**

***Welcome to the 4th Sunday of  
Advent: It's Love Sunday!***



***This week's Revd. Morris' message: Can you see God's love in action in your life today? How can you share His Love with others this Christmas week?***

In today's Gospel, we are permitted to 'eavesdrop' upon the loving exchange between Elizabeth and her cousin Mary. Elizabeth [ and her child- the future John the Baptist] are overcome by the filling of the Holy Spirit and literally leap for joy. Elizabeth recognises the presence of her Lord Jesus [ and his pregnant Mother Mary], declares her gratitude, the blessedness of Mary and Mary's faithfulness in saying 'Yes' to God's invitation to bear the Divine babe.

Mary, incredulous of the Holy One's regard and actions, is suffused with Holy Joy. She responds in the wonderful words of the Magnificat. Their familiarity to our ears risks blunting Mary's message. Our Holy God in judgment upholds the lowly and outcast and tears down the proud, the mighty and the rich. *How powerfully this must move us individually and as a parish to reach out to those doing it tough this Christmas .*

***So, how does this all relate to this Sunday being 'Love Sunday'?*** The loving exchange between Elizabeth and Mary and their emotive exclamations are a direct result of their ***recognition of God's hand being upon them and His loving work in their midst.*** Both had become pregnant via Divine intervention. In Elizabeth's case, lifting virtual lifetime of being perceived any others harshly as 'barren' and therefore probably cursed by God. Yet, in the proper time, all rejoiced with her [ v.58] Mary, is upheld by Elizabeth as ***the 'Theotokos'*** [the Mother of God or God-bearer] and Elizabeth also recognises that Mary, and her son Jesus, are indeed Divinely Blessed.

So, this Sunday we are likewise called to ***recognise the Loving Hand of God and His work*** today, in our midst, in our own lives and that of our parish and community. And, like Elizabeth and Mary, we are also called to say '***yes' to that Divine invitation to rejoice in and share*** that agape, unconditional love, with ourselves and others. Only In this way, can we be truly prepared to receive the Christ Child afresh on Christmas Day, be found ready for his Second Coming in Glory to put things aright and to obey His commandment to "*Love one another even as I have loved you ...*" [ John 13:34] ***By this path, we too may, by the Grace of God, become 'God-bearers' to those we touch.***

***Well, what does this mean for us today?***

*I wonder what we could do everyday this Christmas week to share God's love personally with others? Can we recognise God's Love in action in our midst, the importance of God's love in our lives and see this Grace as the ultimate gift we can receive? And further, that*

*its' value can only multiply when we share that love with others?*

Perhaps we could:

- Look for ways to do random acts of kindness for the people around us.
- Think about conversation starters we can initiate with strangers and friends
- Put our phones away when on public transport, in elevators, in lines, and in spaces where people wait.
- Address our cashiers or waitresses by name, acknowledging them as a person of value.
- Thank someone we see offering another person assistance.
- Go out of your way to be friendly and gracious, role modelling the Father's love.
- Put someone else's needs before your own without anyone knowing it.
- Explicitly put Christ at the centre of our Christmases and, where necessary, make peace with any family or others from whom we may currently be estranged.



***I wonder what God may be calling us to do this Advent to more fully receive and share His Agape Love?... in our own lives, and with our families, workplaces, communities, church and all those whom we touch?***

**Gospel reading: Luke 1:39-55. Some resources to dig deeper:** <https://cepreaching.org/commentary/2018-12-17/luke-139-45-46-56-2/>; <https://www.norwichdiocese.org/Stay-Informed/All-Diocesan-Articles/ID/2710/Fourth-Sunday-of-Advent-Love>; <https://www.catholic.org/mary/theo.php>; <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/what-it-looks-like-to-love-one-another-as-jesus-loves-us.html#:~:text=After Jesus instructed his disciples,the radical love we show.>

**Upcoming Parish Activities: Christmas Eve Informal Service: 5 pm; Christmas Day Traditional service 8am. No Midweek service. All regular parish activities are in recess.**

**Today's Notices Highlights: PC Last week:** Positive feedback received on recent activities; suggested Christmas market for next year with Uniting Church; Video Training available; **Finances** : NOV ACT \$5580 ; BUD \$5731; YTD \$63186; BUD \$63,041; Shortfall \$21,300.03; **Raffle** will be drawn after the Christmas Service; **Calendars** available \$20; **Behind the scenes thx:** Our Op Shop team!

**Readings for Next Sunday:** 1 Samuel 2: 18-26; Psalm 148: Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

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**Parish website :** <https://www.stmatthewshollandpark.com/>

**Parish Private Facebook site :** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/292308270851142> ;

**Public Site:** <https://www.facebook.com/StMatthewsHollandPark> ;

**Tipper's Treasure's Facebook site:** <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559040358754>

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY:**

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Turrbal and Jagera Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather today. We acknowledge their continued spiritual connection to country and surrounding land, sky and water. We pay our respect to their Elders, past present and emerging and pray that we may continue to learn from and nurture one another in the spirit of Reconciliation.