



Catholic Communities of:
St Matthew's, Bridgewater
Our Lady of the Rosary, Stirling East
St Joseph the Worker, Lobethal
St Matthew's, Birdwood

2ND SUNDAY of ADVENT YEAR A

6TH / 7TH DECEMBER 2025

ADELAIDE HILLS PARISH

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SUNDAY'S GOSPEL REFLECTION

In Advent, the Church becomes both a sign and an instrument of that hope. Advent is a season of waiting – but not idle waiting. Isaiah's vision of the shoot springing from the stump of Jesse reminds us that God is always at work, even when life feels barren. Isaiah sees new life pushing through hard, dry ground. He promises that from Israel's failed kingship, God will raise a new kind of king – one filled with the Spirit, ruling with justice, compassion, and peace.

In this Sunday's Gospel, John the Baptist cries out in the wilderness, calling people to prepare the way of the Lord: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He demands an immediate response. We must change to make room for God's justice.

John is like a gardener turning the soil so that the new shoot Isaiah saw can grow. The shoot of Jesse grows quietly, but it transforms everything. God's reign begins in small acts of repentance, mercy, and reconciliation – in the places where we allow the Spirit, who dwells within us, to soften the hardened ground of our hearts. "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love."

Advent is a season of hope – not the shallow kind that merely wishes things would get better, but a deep and quiet trust that God is working even when we cannot see how. We live in a world, both large and personal, that often feels like a field of stumps – war, animosity, moral confusion, and personal loss. These can leave us disheartened. Picture an Advent banner in the sanctuary reading: "God has not finished with us yet." From what looks barren, God can raise new life.

Can you hear the familiar voice calling to us this Second Sunday of Advent? It is John the Baptist: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight God's paths." His cry is urgent and hopeful, reminding us that God's coming is not far off or abstract. It is near – very near.

But for God's new life to take root, something must change within us. Advent is not merely a time for decorations and shopping. As good as those things may be, they can also distract us from what truly matters. We must clear away the clutter of our hearts, focus, and make room for Christ to enter.

Notice where we find John today – in the wilderness. In Scripture, the wilderness is the place where God speaks to a wandering people: freed from slavery, yet unsure where they are going. It is there that they learn to depend on God day by day. The wilderness strips away false securities and distractions, teaching the heart to listen.

PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD



WEEKEND MASS TIMES

St Matthew's Birdwood

8.30 am: 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month

St Joseph's Lobethal

8.30 am: 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays of the month

St Matthew's Bridgewater

6pm Saturday Evenings

10.30 am Sunday

Our Lady of the Rosary East Stirling

5.30 pm Sunday

WE OFFER OUR PRAYERS ...

For those recovering from surgery, illness and the sick: Margaret Carroll, Betty White, Anne MacDonald. June Harvey, Jeff Oliver, Gabrielle Morgan, Mirla Mills, Judith McPhee, Krystina Rowland, Carolyn Whitfield

December Anniversaries: Kerry Liddell, Kathleen O'Grady, Justin Toome, Maria Smith, Margaret & Chappie Guthrie, Vernice Bevelander, Prudence Jolly, Tim McLoughlin, John Streich, Michael Smerdon, Troy Broadbridge, Christine Richter, Frank Keogh, Bill Guthrie, Adriana Beltrame, Barry Schultz, Linda Brawn, Jennifer Brooks, Diane Healey, Geoffrey Williams, Patricia McCalman, Alvina Hewish, Bill Healey, Bryce Carroll.

Recently deceased: Emma Vella, Doris Bonaci (Fr Fred's Aunties)

MASS TIMES DURING THE WEEK

Monday 8th	OLOR MASS	9.00a.m.
Tuesday 9th	Rosary at OLOR	4.00p.m.
Wednesday 10th	End of Year Mass at School	9.15a.m.
Thursday 11th	BIRDWOOD MASS	9.00a.m.
Friday 12th	BRIDGEWATER MASS	11.00a.m.
Saturday 13th	RECONCILIATION	12.00p.m.

UPCOMING PARISH ACTIVITIES December

Sunday 7th	2nd week of Advent	
Sunday 7th	Stirling Christmas Pageant	11.00a.m.
Monday 8th	Feast Immaculate Conception	9.00 a.m.
Wednesday 10th	End of year Mass St Catherine	9.15a.m.
Thursday 11th	Advent Reflection Birdwood	9.00a.m.
	Parish Finance Council	4.00p.m.
Friday 12th	Advent Penitential Rite	6.30p.m.
Sunday 14th	Third Sunday of Advent	
	Blessing of Baby Jesus/Cribs	

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

John cried out in
the desert,
Prepare! Reshape your life!
Change your mind, change your heart!
The one is coming
who is the very Spirit of God!
Christ, we want to have all these.
Talk to our hearts.
Set us on fire
with flames
that are your Spirit.
Amen.

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

Due to a shortage of staff in the Training and Integrity Unit the names of all volunteers in the Adelaide Parish have not been entered into the database. This has meant that no access beyond the log-in screen has been available for most volunteers. It is hoped that this problem will be fixed soon and we can advise when the on-line course is available for all. Apologies to all for this delay.

ROSTERS FOR WEEKEND MASSES

NORTHERN End	LOBETHAL Sunday 14th Dec 8.30a.m.	BIRDWOOD Sunday 21st Dec 8.30a.m
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Welcome`	Gayle Raven	Mary Nyeboeur
1st Reader	Jo Brickhill	Gayle Raven
2nd Reader	Margaret S	Anne Moore
Euch. Minister	Anne Moore	Margaret S
Cleaning	Connie Golding	Lea Crosby

BRIDGEWATER	Saturday 13th Dec 6.00pm	Sunday 14th Dec 10.30am
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Sacristan	Joan Davey	Gina Kelly
Welcoming	Kathy Lloyd	Di Golding
Reader 1	Alan Miller	Phil Schultz
Reader 2	Mark McGeough	Paul Somers
Euch. Minister	Mary Homann	Karen Dutton
Musicians	PowerPoint	Damien Mansfield
Counters	Alan Miller & Bill Robertson	
Our Lady	Orma Paine	Orma Paine
Cleaning	Otta Kovac & Hong Kim	
Flowers	Gloria Howe	Gloria Howe
Tea & Coffee		

OLOR	Sunday 14th Dec 5.30pm	Sunday 21st Dec 5.30p.m
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Sacristan	Paul Anderson	Paul Anderson
Welcoming	Debbie Somers	Sue Manchip

END OF YEAR MASS

End of year Mass to thank God for this scholastic Year of our school will be held next Wednesday 10th December at St Catherine's at 9.15a.m.

GRADUATION DAY – YEAR 6

Congratulations Year 6 of our school. Your reward lies ahead. Have a successful future. Remember, as you transition from one school to the next, things will get more exciting. You may have more responsibility. As progress, you will keep learning about yourself and enjoy life more and more.

TOILETRIES COLLECTION

The Social Justice Team is again collecting toiletries for the Vinnies Asylum Seeker and Refugee Service. VRASS mainly supports Asylum seekers on various visas, including some who are awaiting resolution of their visa status. Many hold a Visa type which prevents them from working and accessing Centrelink; they rely solely on help from services like VRASS. As well as donations of shampoo, body wash, soap, shaving cream etc, donations of toddler size disposable nappies and feminine products are needed. Toiletries collected from parishioners are distributed by VRASS to families who seek support. Toiletries should be unopened and placed in the tubs provided on the altar from Sunday 7 December. Thank you for your generosity – a simple gift of a bar of soap or a bottle of shampoo, or a clean nappy make a difference.



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - PEACE

The second advent candle is also purple and represents peace which is a central theme of the advent season but the main focus of the second week of Advent. One of the prophecies about Jesus calls him "the Prince of Peace". When the angels appeared to the shepherds, they ended their message by saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests". When Simeon saw baby Jesus in the temple, he thanked God that he could now die in peace for he had seen the Messiah. On a broader level, the Bible talks in various places about a spiritual war going on between goodness and evil. The combination of Satan fighting against goodness, and humans fighting against God, has made the earth a battleground in an ongoing fight.

In his December 2025 prayer intention for Christians in areas of conflict, Pope Leo makes that dry and testing call to prayer come alive. He does not only pray for our brother and sister Catholics in Gaza, Sudan or Myanmar who suffer, but prays for their ministry to all the people of their suffering nations. He prays specifically that our fellow Catholics there may succeed in their mission to their fellow citizens and others.

BLESSING OF THE CRIBS/BABY JESUS

In keeping with the theme of joy and expectation, on Gaudete (JOY) Sunday, We will blessed small cribs and images of Baby Jesus next Sunday during the weekend masses. This is tangible and meaningful way to prepare for the coming of the Lord as family. When we have a crib scene in our home it is not only a reminder of the first Christmas. Reflecting before the crib in silence or in prayer together is a meaningful way to prepare for the coming of Jesus into our lives this Christmas.

PENITENTIAL SERVICE FOR ADVENT

Through prayer in Advent, we can enter into God's world and ask Him to prepare our hearts the way He prepared all of history to receive the gift of His Son, Jesus. We ask God to use this time during Advent to cut away the distractions and make our life a place of warmth and openness. And to help you make sure there's "room at the inn" of your heart this year. So join us for the Advent Penitential Service next Friday 12th December at 6.30p.m. at Bridgewater. After the penitential service Fr Fred will also be available if one wishes to receive also the Sacrament of Reconciliation

CHURCH DECORATION

On Monday 15th December we will decorate the church for Christmas at Bridgewater. It will be appreciated if any volunteers can come around 5.00pm. to help in the setting up of the Christmas crib and other decorations.

ADVENT REFLECTION AT BIRDWOOD

Mass and Advent reflection for next week will be held on **THURSDAY not WEDNESDAY** at Birdwood. At 9.00a.m. we recite the morning prayer during mass and mediate and share the Sunday's Gospel

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception will be celebrated on Monday 8th December. The Feast centers on the belief that Jesus' mother, the Virgin Mary, was conceived without sin. We will celebrate Mass of the Immaculate Conception next Monday at 9.00a.m. and 6.30p.m. the OLOR.

CHRISTMAS 2025

A Nativity tableau will form part of the Vigil Mass celebrations at St Matthew's Bridgewater on Christmas Eve, Wednesday 24th December 2024 at 6.30 pm. Parents of children who are interested in participating in the Nativity Play should contact Fr Fred. Costumes provided. There will be one or two rehearsals prior to the performance with dates to be confirmed.

VOLUNTEERING (2)

Every parish has a reach far beyond what is visible at weekend Masses. The presence of worshipers proves the importance of faith sharing among believers. However, when Monday comes and the crowds are gone, the 'hidden' work of a parish continues and this is largely achieved by volunteers. Like any charity or not-for-profit, the work of our Catholic parishes is borne as much by unpaid supporters as by paid staff. Indeed, the staffs' role often includes recruiting and coordinating volunteers to help them. It takes many hands and minds to do God's work. So many, that we can be unaware of how much is actually being done within our parish boundaries.

THANK YOU

I wish to thank the Ecology Group and volunteers: John Leeton, Paris Huffman, Dan De Fazio, Tom Kovac, Des Stapleton and Jeff Cantwell who last Saturday planted trees and bushes and pruning trees around the area of our parish boundaries at Bridgewater. Thanks for your time and effort guys, much appreciated. FR FRED.

THE BULLETIN

To publish the weekly bulletin it involves a lot of work from different generous people who give up their time to have such a beautiful bulletin. I know that the majority shows appreciation to have the bulletin each week. However, its important to remind from time to time the following: Take your copy and please take it home with you. Avoid putting back the bulletin at the back of the church after one has read it already, and avoid leaving the bulletin on the pew.

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

Our last PFC meeting for 2025 will be held on Thursday 11th December at the OLAH parish hall at 4.00p.m.

Weekly Income 29th/30th November 2025 THANK YOU

First Collection:	\$557.05
Planned Giving Received:	\$1716.00
Loose Plate:	\$202.80

If you would like to donate by Direct Debit use the parish bank account details below:
BSB: 066-782 Account: 100000277
Account Name CCES ADEL HILLS
Refer payment as "donation"

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse, a scion thrusts from his roots: on him the spirit of the Lord rests, a spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (The fear of the Lord is his breath.) He does not judge by appearances, he gives no verdict on hearsay, but judges the wretched with integrity, and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land. His word is a rod that strikes the ruthless; his sentences bring death to the wicked. Integrity is the loincloth round his waist, faithfulness the belt about his hips. The wolf lives with the lamb, the panther lies down with the kid, calf and lion cub feed together with a little boy to lead them. The cow and the bear make friends, their young lie down together. The lion eats straw like the ox. The infant plays over the cobra's hole; into the viper's lair the young child puts his hand. They do no hurt, no harm, on all my holy mountain, for the country is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters swell the sea. That day, the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples. It will be sought out by the nations and its home will be glorious.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

O God, give your judgement to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgement.

R.

In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails:
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds.

R.

For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor.

R.

May his name be blessed for ever
and endure like the sun.
Every tribe shall be blessed in him,
all nations bless his name.

R.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Everything that was written long ago in the scriptures was meant to teach us something about hope from the examples scripture gives of how people who did not give up were helped by God. And may he who helps us when we refuse to give up, help you all to be tolerant with each other, following the example of Christ Jesus, so that united in mind and voice you may give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It can only be to God's glory, then, for you to treat each other in the same friendly way as Christ treated you.

The reason Christ became the servant of circumcised Jews was not only so that God could faithfully carry out the promises made to the patriarchs, it was also to get the pagans to give glory to God for his mercy, as scripture says in one place: For this I shall praise you among the pagans and sing your name.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation
Alleluia, Alleluia!

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God.
Alleluia.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet spoke of when he said: A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father," because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand; he will clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

**READINGS FOR
3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR A**

1st Reading	Is 35:1-6,10
2nd Reading	James 5:7-10
Gospel	Mt 11:2-11