



## · **Father Paul Writes - 2<sup>th</sup> of March, 2025**

I welcome you to St Saviour's as we give thanks today for the beauty of God's creation and God's gracious generosity at our Harvest Festival. We give thanks for the harvest of fruit and vegetables and other produce from the church property, our gardens and across the wider world. Please bring along any produce you would like to donate to the Mary Magdalene Centre and place it before the altar so that it can be blessed today. We also today bless a picture that has been donated by the Community of the Holy Name. The picture in honour of past parishioner, Rosemary Scrutton is erected in the choir room, where Rosemary spent much of her time as Choir Director. She was also a member of the Community. And so, it is wonderful we bless this picture called "Light of the World" and to have Sr Carol from the Community with us today.

There is always something special about the change of seasons. We have officially entered the Season of Autumn and hopefully some milder weather and more importantly some rain! The weather is not the only thing that changes, we are about to enter the Season of Lent. This is a special time for Christians as we count down the days to Easter where we celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection. It is a time to reflect on Jesus' sacrifice and His extraordinary capacity for love and forgiveness, even on the cross where he asked God for those who had crucified him to be forgiven. Love and forgiveness seem to be in short supply at the moment with the wars of the world and in Australia with antisemitism and Islamophobia. This should never be acceptable, no matter what religion or race.

Before the Lenten season starts on Wednesday, we will gather for our Shrove Tuesday pancake evening at 6 pm, starting with Evening Prayer at 5.30 pm. The evening is a tradition where we engage in the last round of merriment before the more sombre season of Lent. You are welcome to bring along either a savoury or sweet filling to share with others along with the pancakes. Please register your name at the back of the church for catering purposes or just roll up! All are welcome and with BYO drinks.

The next day on Ash Wednesday, we officially start the season of Lent. There will be two services on that day, at 10 am and 6 pm. There will be the

imposition of ashes at both services. Lent is a time, over the following 40 days, to become closer to God through the study of scriptures and in prayer. One way of doing this is to join our Hope25 Lenten Bible Study. The study contains daily reflections by almost all the Australian Bishops along with weekly testimonials and discussion points for the study groups. The studies will be held on Wednesdays at 10.45 am and at 7 pm at the church, starting on March the 12<sup>th</sup>. There is a sheet at the back of the church to register for either study or to gain a book. If you are unable to do so, please let Bobbie know at the office or leave a message on 8379 4114.

Ash Wednesday represents the start of the Hope25 Season of Intentional Preparation. Part of that preparation includes connecting with those who we would like to invite to our activities between Easter and Pentecost. We will launch Hope25 at our Easter Sunday Breakfast BBQ. The program includes a course titled "Hope Explored" to be run on Sundays at midday over a light lunch and on Fridays at 6 pm starting with wine and cheese. It will also include a guest speaker at our Friendship Lunch in May.

On Friday at 10 am, the World Day of Prayer Service for 2025 will be held at the Gartrell Church on the corner of Alexandra Avenue and Prescott Terrace at Rose Park. This is being co-ordinated by the Burnside Interchurch Council, of which we are members. This year, the focus is on the Cook Islands. This is always a joyful ecumenical service where we pray for a certain country each year.

The annual vestry meeting will be held on Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March at 11.30 am in the meeting room of the church. The agenda and the vestry reports are available today. The financials for 2024 and the budget for 2025 will hopefully be available next Sunday. It is important to attend what is classed as our AGM.

Just a reminder too about our new initiative starting on Sunday March the 16<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm, a choir for school-aged children. This is a wonderful opportunity to encourage children from around the community to be involved in singing and to be able to take part once a month at our Sunday service at 10 am. Please spread the word.

Your friend and priest,

Paul