

Christ Church Maneroo

180th Anniversary Commemorative Service



ORDER OF SERVICE

9.30 am Sunday 23rd March 2025

Christ Church Maneroo

151 Maffra Rd Cooma NSW 2630

A Church in the Anglican Parish of Cooma

Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn

Welcome

Hymn - TIS 132. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty

1 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty,
early in the morning to you our praise shall be;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

2 Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore you,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before you,
God everlasting through eternity.

3 Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide you,
though the sinful human eye your glory may not see,
you alone are holy, there is none beside you,
perfect in power, in love and purity.

4 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty,
all your works shall praise your name in earth and sky and sea;
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

Author Reginald Heber 1783-1826

Thanksgiving prayer (Heather Little)

Bible reading - Psalm 118: 1-29 (Sue Litchfield)

¹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

² Let Israel say: "His love endures forever."

³ Let the house of Aaron say: "His love endures forever."

⁴ Let those who fear the LORD say: "His love endures forever."

⁵ When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD; he brought me into a spacious place.

⁶ The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

⁷ The LORD is with me; he is my helper. I look in triumph on my enemies.

⁸ It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in humans.

⁹ It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.

¹⁰ All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the LORD I cut them down.

¹¹ They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the LORD I cut them down.

¹² They swarmed around me like bees, but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them down.

¹³ I was pushed back and about to fall, but the LORD helped me.

¹⁴ The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.

- ¹⁵ Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous:
The LORD's right hand has done mighty things!
- ¹⁶ The LORD's right hand is lifted high; the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!"
- ¹⁷ I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done.
- ¹⁸ The LORD has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death.
- ¹⁹ Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
- ²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.
- ²¹ I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.
- ²² The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
- ²³ the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.
- ²⁴ The LORD has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad.
- ²⁵ LORD, save us! LORD, grant us success!
- ²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
- From the house of the LORD we bless you.
- ²⁷ The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine on us.
- With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.
- ²⁸ You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you.
- ²⁹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. (NIV)

Message The Right Reverend Mark Short, Bishop of Canberra & Goulburn

Hymn - TIS 129. Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)

- 1 Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.
- 2 As grace first taught my heart to fear
so grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!
- 3 Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come:
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.
- 4 The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

John Newton 1725-1807

Current Christian Ministry in the Monaro (Revd Martin Christensen)

Future Christian Ministry in the Monaro (Greg Colton)

Hymn - TIS 111. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation

1 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation;
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation.
Come all who hear, brothers and sisters draw near,
praise him in glad adoration.

2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is wondrously reigning
and, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining:
have you not seen, all you have needed has been
sent by his gracious ordaining?

3 Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend us;
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend us:
ponder anew, what the Almighty can do
as with his love he befriends us.

4 Praise to the Lord, who when darkness of sin is abounding,
who, when the godless do triumph, our best hopes confounding,
sheds forth his light, scatters the horrors of night,
saints with his mercy surrounding.

5 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him.
Let the Amen sound from his people again:
gladly for ever adore him.

Joachim Neander 1650-1680, Translated Catherine Winkworth 1827-78

Final Blessing

A freewill offering for the continuing ministry in the Monaro may be made near the
entrance of Christ Church.

Please share morning tea with us outside Christ Church, Maneroo, and a Soup and Rolls
Lunch at St Paul's Anglican Church Hall, 136 Commissioner St, Cooma from about 12.30.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever." These words bookend our reading from Psalm 118; they are there at the beginning and again at the end, they both introduce and summarise the 27 verses in between. They begin with thanksgiving.

On a day like this, gratitude comes naturally.

We're together with friends and family, we 're celebrating 180 years of ministry in this beautiful church and afterwards we'll get to share lunch together. Who wouldn't be thankful on a day like this?

But what about everyday gratitude?

According to Harvard Health, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Living with gratitude helps us feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve our health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. And who wouldn't want some or all of that?

But where does gratitude come from?

One possibility is that gratitude is essentially reactive - it's a response to something positive that we experience like a good meal, or a beautiful sunset, an act of kindness

We acknowledge what's happened and we feel thankful.

BUT

The opening verse of our Psalm points us in a different direction because it commands us to be thankful: "Give thanks" Now to be sure this is an excited joyful command, but it's a command nonetheless.

The person who wrote this Psalm assumed that gratitude is a practice that can be consciously nurtured and adopted.

A truly thankful person then is not at the mercy of the changing and unpredictable circumstances of life.

A truly thankful person who approaches the changing and unpredictable circumstances of life with a mindset that looks for reasons to be thankful

Of course, the Psalmist isn't just commending gratitude in general.

He urges us to direct that thankfulness towards the LORD, the God of Israel, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is not just thankfulness towards the universe in general, or towards an un-named and un-knowable spiritual force.

This is thankfulness towards a God who can be known, a God who can be named, a God who is personal.

And straight away we're told something about this God.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good

Let me ask you a question: who have you known who you would describe as a truly good person.

And now that you've pictured that person - ask yourself - how do or did you know that they were a good person.

Now one obvious answer might be this: I know that they are a good person because

- they've done good things for me.
- I was in a tight spot and they helped me out.
- They visited me when I was in hospital.
- They helped me fix my car when it was broken.

But here's the thing.

It's possible for someone to do good things for us for reasons that aren't so good.

Perhaps they visited me in hospital because they wanted to make sure I'd stay there for a while.

Perhaps they helped me fix my car because they were expecting payment or because they we're hoping that I'd do them a favour in return.

The mark of the truly good person is this: whenever they do good it's a reflection of who they are.

Their good actions are the overflow, the expression of their character. Their goodness is gracious and generous rather than calculating and considered.

And the Bible says: the goodness of God is like that. It's who he is, not merely what He does.

I mean, how could it be otherwise when everything we have and everything we are comes from Him in the first place?

The Apostle Paul puts it this way in the New Testament:

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else

The goodness of God is always the gracious and generous expression of his gracious and generous character.

But there's a particular aspect of that goodness highlighted in these verses.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

You may have heard it said that the Eskimos have 50 words for snow.

The point being made is that it's so much part of their day to day life that they need ways to capture the subtle variations between one snowfall and another which may be lost on those of us who live in warmer climates

Well, the Bible is similar when it comes to words that are translated love.

There's not just one word but many in the original languages.

And that is a reminder that there are subtle variations when it comes to love.

What does it mean

- to love chocolate?
- to love your job?
- to love your country?
- to love your children?
- to love spouses?
- to love God?

Yes, there's some common elements - in each instance there's a sense of having a positive regard towards something or someone but there's important variations as well.

For example, throughout history people have been willing to die for love of family or sometimes love of country, but even at my hungriest I've never felt that I would die for chocolate.

The word translated 'love' in this Psalm carries the sense of 'committed love.' It's love that keeps its word, love that stands by the other,

And God we are told displays this kind of love forever. His love is not a passing infatuation, nor is it subject to the human limitations of memory and mortality.

The rest of the Psalm gives some concrete examples of the ways in which God has displayed that love to the Psalmist

- in saving him from his enemies
- in rescuing him from death
- in restoring him to fellowship with God's people

Read on through the rest of the Bible and you'll see countless other ways in which God has displayed this kind of love in sending the rain and sunshine, in filling our hearts with joy through the blessings of the earth and the company of friends, and most wonderfully in giving us His Son the Lord Jesus, whose committed love for His people took him all the way to the cross where he lay down his life for their freedom and forgiveness.

There is a prayer which in its various forms will have been prayed many times in this building over the past 180 years: Gracious God, we humbly thank you for life and health and safety, for freedom to work, leisure to rest, and for all that is beautiful in creation and human life. But, above all, we praise you for our Saviour, Jesus Christ, for his death and resurrection; for the gift of your Spirit; and for the hope of sharing in your glory. Fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

To be a thankful person is healthy and wise.

To be a thankful people is attractive and compelling.

In a world where it can be far easier to be cynical and negatively a community that intentionally practices thanksgiving and gratitude is one worth joining.

Even better when that thanksgiving is directed towards the God whose faithful love the ultimate source of every good gift we so easily take for granted.

"Give thanks to our LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever." AMEN

Current Christian ministry in the Monaro

Since Christ Church Monaro was built and consecrated, Christian ministry has grown throughout Cooma and the Monaro. The Anglican parish of Cooma (which is part of the diocese of Canberra Goulburn now includes congregations at Bredbo, Jerangle, Nimmitabel and Adaminaby. Other Anglican parishes include the parish of Berridale and the Snowy Mountains with congregations at Berridale, Boloco, Jegedzerick, Maffra, Perisher and the new village church at Jindabyne. The parish of Southern Monaro includes congregations at Bombala, Delegate, Cathcart and Bibenluke. Of course, it is not just the Anglicans who are ministering the gospel in the Monaro - there are Roman Catholic churches, the first of which was at Nimmitabel, but now are at Cooma, Jerangle, Adaminaby, Berridale, Delegate, Numeralla, Jindabyne and Bombala. There are also uniting churches in Cooma, Jindabyne and the one in Bombala, which meets in the Currawarna Residential Care facility. The Lifegate Church which is affiliated with Australian Christian churches (previously Assemblies of God), Baptists, Lutherans, and Prebyterians also meet in Cooma, and the Presbyterian inland mission ministers in Bombala

The Cooma Schools Ministry Association employs David Reading as a SRE teacher at Monaro High school, where he also works as a chaplain 3 days each week. The Snowy Mountain Christian school also operates in Cooma. Vision Christian radio transmits throughout the Monaro.

So, from the relatively humble beginnings, which even predate this building when ministers from Queanbeyan and other places were welcome to the Monaro, particularly ministering with weddings, baptisms, funerals and worship services. Now, hundreds, if not thousands of Christians faithfully live and serve Jesus, but even more desperately need to hear the gospel and its saving message of hope, love and the eternal life that Jesus won for us on the cross. Among the churches in the Monaro, no matter the denominational affiliation, there is a need for trained gospel ministers. The vast majority of our churches are seeking ministers who know and are able to preach God's word and administer the sacraments. Even when parishioners are generously contributing financially for them, qualified ministers are unwilling to leave large cities to come here.

We need to pray for workers in the harvest - God says the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few, and I personally believe that God will provide by raising up ministers who are already in the Monaro, who already love this region and its people. Some of those ministers may even be here today, and so I want to pray that God's spirit is even now touching your hearts and preparing your minds to minister to his people here and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have many fine buildings like this one, and many that just need some tender care, but I know that God would fill all of them, if only there were those willing to proclaim his gospel, preach his word, and minister to his people. Some of the ministers will be ordained, but many will be lay, but all need to faithfully trust in him. Let me pray for those workers, and that they - and that you will be is calling today, will hear his voice, and say with the Psalmist:

14 The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.

15 Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The LORD's right hand has done mighty things! 16 The LORD's right hand is lifted high; the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!"

17 I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done.

Let me now pray for workers in this harvest.

Father God - your right hand has done marvellous things in the Monaro, and still the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. So, Loving God, raise up and send out workers into your harvest field. Touch the hearts of those you are calling this day that they may proclaim what you have done, so that every church building throughout the Monaro will be filled, and Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous, proclaiming The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.

Amen