

Guest Preachers and Teachers at Holy Hermits Online

We give thanks for our Guest Preachers and Teachers who share their ministry gifts with our community.

It is wonderful to have clergy visit from other communities, to offer refreshment to our program of teaching, and become known to our community and we to theirs.

We know that preaching or teaching online might be a new experience for many of our visiting guests and so we have prepared some tips to help prepare for the occasion of a visit with us.

Before coming to worship or study

If licensed outside of the Anglican Church of Southern Queensland, all visitors will need to arrange a Letter of Good Standing from the governing body of their Church. This enables us to fulfil our safeguarding requirements and reassure our Bishop's that we are collaborating with clergy who are licensed and supervised by a responsible structure like our own. This letter can be sent to the Clergy or Lay-leaders of HHO so that it can be forwarded on to our Bishop's office, and preferably no later than 2 weeks prior to the visit.

Once a date has been discerned for a visit to worship, the readings will be confirmed from the Lectionary, as well as information about which Holy Hermit we are remembering on that occasion. The pages we use to tell the stories and legacies of the Hermits can all be viewed at the [Holy Hermit Remembrance page](#).

The liturgy is prepared every week by a team of lay servers and will be made available for the guest preacher to view the week prior to their visit. We are very flexible in our liturgy and if a change or addition might serve the purpose of teaching in the guest preacher's homily, then they are invited to work on the cloud liturgy alongside us. We have had guest preachers add special prayers to the intercessions, poems or focus questions for the devotions section and ask for images to be displayed aiding in reflection for their sermon.

Preparing the homily

Recordings of previous homilies can all be viewed at the [Sermons](#) page. For an idea of the context of our community teaching, this is a great place to look.

Usually, our sermons go for around 10-15 minutes, although the preacher is invited to use their discretion about offering shorter or longer homilies.

Reading the sermon word for word, or via notes off the preacher's own screen can be a great support for those accustomed to pre-writing their sermon and preaching from it. This can then be made available for community members to download on the sermon page if it is sent in. Preaching off script/from the heart is also welcome if the preacher is confident that the experience of being online won't be disruptive to their usual practices.

The experience of preaching online can be very different to preaching in person. If accustomed to receiving live-feedback from a congregation gathering in person, a preacher may find that having the community at HHO 'on mute' means that there is no audible feedback. If the preacher leaves their screen in 'gallery' mode, rather than 'speaker' mode, they will be able to see some community members on screen (although appearing on screen is an optional part of our participation, so not everyone has their camera switched on).

We have enjoyed a variety of preaching styles, with some guests using the Zoom Screen Share function to put PowerPoint slides up for viewing, others using digital backgrounds to display artworks, some inviting comments in the chat function to get the community involved, and even inviting participation by asking members of community to unmute and share. We have had poetry, music, art, and pop culture references included in the sermons.

Some preachers are especially inspired to preach on the life and legacy of the Hermit we are remembering on their visit, but this is not an expectation.

Some tips for joining on Zoom

The Zoom link will be provided before the service and the welcomers begin gathering people into the Zoom space 15minutes prior to commencing worship.

Setting up your space:

Ensure that headphones (or means of sound and microphone) are correctly assigned for audio and video.

Check lighting is facing towards your face and not behind (if light comes from behind, facial features will be dark and hard to see).

It is likely that we will be at the Zoom for over an hour and a half, if not 2 hours, if there is a lot of community interaction after the service. Regard for comfort in the set up can go a long way to ensuring a positive experience. Is everything needed in reach? Is a drink (water or otherwise) to stay hydrated during the service ready? Is there a quiet/safe space where focus can be on the Zoom session without distraction?

Presentation

Clergy are invited to wear clerical collars, lapel studs or crosses, or to appear in casual attire. Robing is not necessary as our service is an ante-communion/prayer and praise liturgy. Being comfortable is the main thing.

If visiting our Pajama Service (July every year) or Teddy Bear Service (October) visitors are invited to get into the spirit of things and come along in PJ's and with teddies.

Just like checking the sanctuary is in order before a physically gathered service, being aware of what people are going to see on screen is a great practice I.E. What's behind you? Some preachers like to set up props behind them or use digital backgrounds which might speak to the message.

Any concerns or nerves?

Overall, the purpose of our guest preaching ministry is to invite clergy to come and see our space; for us to be known to them, and them to become known to us. We are glad that preachers come to be with us. The community is very open to new experiences as well as new people. We love when clergy share their ministry gifts and stories to engage with us.

The community enjoys different theologies, styles, and academics, and are thinkers glad to be challenged, encouraged and equipped with new ideas. If you have any questions or concerns, we'd love to hear them so that we can make you feel more welcome!