



**ST GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
MALVERN**

FESTIVAL MIDNIGHT EUCHARIST

FOR THE

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



11:00 p.m.

WELCOME

You are most welcome to tonight's celebration – one of the two great poles of the Christian year (the other being Easter). Tonight, we celebrate Christ's incarnation (literally, en-fleshment): when God, in the person of his eternal Son, became fully human. The wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, foretold by the prophets and born of Mary, provides the material of the feast:

*Hark, hark, the wise eternal Word,
like a weak infant cries!
In form of servant is the Lord,
and God in cradle lies.* (Thomas Pestel).

While Christmas – and especially this 'first eucharist of Christmas' – focuses on the infant in the manger, Christmas is much more than simply the celebration of Jesus' birth. The task of this Christmas liturgy is to recall us, amid all the joyful customs and celebrations of this season, to this central truth: God takes on *all* that it is to be human – subject to the difficulties and dangers of first century child-birth, growing up in relative poverty in an occupied land, and ultimately suffering death – all for our sakes and to bring us salvation from death. And we also remember that he rose from the dead, 'trampling down death by death', yet then met with grieving friends and ate and talked with them – remaining fully human as well as fully God.

Thus, whatever it is that brings you here; in whatever state of joy, expectation, disruption, uncertainty, grief you find yourself tonight, Christianity proclaims that in Jesus, God has encountered all of these feelings and states of mind or being; and transforms them by his presence with us.

Christ's birth (nativity) has provided the occasion for this festival of the Incarnation since the end of the third century. And it occurs on a date (at least in the northern hemisphere, where the dating to December 25 began) just after the darkest point of the year: his birth marks the turn towards light, as days become gradually (even if barely noticeably at first) lighter and longer. The Christmas crib (and traditional nativity plays) can be said to descend from the tableau of Christ's birth that Francis of Assisi arranged when he celebrated Christmas at Greccio in 1223. Christmas carols are a mediæval tradition, which have been notably developed from the end of the nineteenth century.

The Christmas season is celebrated for twelve days, ending with the Epiphany on January 6th. The Church maintains until then the celebration of 'God with us' (the literal meaning of 'Emmanuel'). May God be with you.

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

After the carol-singing, we keep silence for a few minutes, waiting expectantly for the coming of Christ.

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy infant, so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight!
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!

Music: Franz Xaver Gruber (1787–1863)

Words: Joseph Mohr (1792–1848) trans. John Freeman Young (1820–85)

The Congregation stands as a bell is rung.

Deacon: Let us proceed in peace.

All: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

I. Of the Father's heart begotten,
Ere the world from chaos rose,
He is Alpha: from that Fountain
All that is and hath been flows;
He is Omega, of all things
Yet to come the mystic Close,
Evermore and evermore.

2. By his word was all created;
He commanded and 'twas done;
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,
Universe of three in one,
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,
All that breathes beneath the sun,
Evermore and evermore.
3. He assumed this mortal body
Frail and feeble, doomed to die,
That the race from dust created
Might not perish utterly,
Which the dreadful Law had sentenced
In the depths of hell to lie,
Evermore and evermore.
4. O how blest that wondrous birthday
When the Maid the curse retrieved,
Brought to birth the world's salvation,
By the Holy Ghost conceived;
And the Babe, the earth's Redeemer,
In her loving arms received,
Evermore and evermore.

The Procession having reached the Crib, the celebrant addresses the congregation, before the following prayer is offered:

God our Father, on this most holy night
we rejoice as we recall
that your Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary
for us and for our salvation:
bless this crib,
which we have prepared to celebrate that holy birth;
may all who see it be strengthened in faith
and receive the fullness of life he came to bring,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end.

All: Amen.

The crib is censed, then the hymn continues:

5. This is he whom seer and sibyl
Sang in ages long gone by;
This is he of old revealed
In the page of prophecy;
Lo! he comes, the promised Saviour;
Let the world his praises cry!
Evermore and evermore.
6. Let the storm and summer sunshine,
Gliding stream and sounding shore,
Sea and bushland, frost and zephyr
Day and night their Lord adore;
Let creation join to laud thee
Through the ages evermore,
Evermore and evermore.
7. Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;
Angels and archangels sing!
Whereso'er ye be, ye faithful,
Let your joyous anthems ring,
Every tongue his name confessing,
Countless voices answering,
Evermore and evermore.

Words: Prudentius (348–413),
trans. R. F. Davis (1866–1937), alt.

Music: 'Divinum Mysterium', melody from *Piae Cantiones Theodorici
Petri Nylandenis (1582)*
arr. David Willcocks (1919–2015)

Priest: Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All: **Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

The Vicar welcomes the congregation, then this sentence of Scripture is read:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
for to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

Isaiah 9:2, 6

Let us pray.

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

We sing together:

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

The ancient hymn Gloria in excelsis, which echoes the song of the angels, is sung by all:

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Let us pray.

The people pray silently, and then the Celebrant 'collects' the silent prayer:

Eternal God, who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness of your one true light:
bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth,
to see the radiance of your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All sit.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2–7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David
and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it with justice
and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Reader: Hear the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 96

Response:

To - day is born_ a Sa - viour, Christ_ the Lord;
to - day is born_ a Sa - viour, Christ_ the Lord.

¹ O sing a new song to the Lord, sing to the Lord, all the earth.
O sing to the Lord, bless the Lord's name.

R.

² Proclaim God's mercy day by day.
Tell the Lord's glory among the nations,
and wonders among the peoples.

R.

³ Let heaven and earth rejoice and be glad,
the sea and its creatures render praise,
the land and its fruit show forth their joy.

R.

⁴ Let the trees and forests shout for joy at the presence of God,
for the Lord is come,
at the presence of God who rules the world.

R.

Second Reading

Titus 2:11-14

A reading from the letter to Titus:

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all,
training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions,
and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled,
upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope
and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour,
Jesus Christ.

He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity
and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Reader: Hear the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

All stand.

GRADUAL HYMN

1. It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold”
‘Peace on the earth, good-will to all,
From heaven’s all-gracious King!”
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.
2. Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaveful wings unfurled;
And still the heavenly music floats
O’er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing;
And ever o’er its Babel sound
The blessed angels sing.
3. Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!
4. For lo! the days are hastening
By prophet bards foretold,
When, with the ever-circling year,
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Words: Edmund Sears (1810–76)

*Music: Noel, traditional English melody
adapted by Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900)*

Remain standing.

The Gospel will be read from among the people, symbolising Jesus coming to be with us.

Gospel

Alleluia, alleluia: I am bringing you good news of great joy:
to you is born this day a Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus
that all the world should be registered.

This was the first registration

and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

All went to their own towns to be registered.

Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea,
to the city of David called Bethlehem,

because he was descended from the house and family of David.

He went to be registered with Mary,

to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

And she gave birth to her firstborn son

and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger,

because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their
flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them,

and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them,

“Do not be afraid;

for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah,
the Lord. This will be a sign for you:

you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven,
the shepherds said to one another,

“Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place,
which the Lord has made known to us.”

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

For the gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

All sit.

A sermon is preached.

After the sermon, silence is kept.

All stand.

Let us together affirm the faith of the Church:

**We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy Catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

All kneel or sit.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Prayers are offered for the world, the church and all of God's creation.

At the end of each petition, the following is said:

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

After the final petition, the prayers are concluded thus:

Vicar: Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.

All: Grant that what we have asked in faith,
we may by your grace receive,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Christ the grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all.

Silence is kept.

Let us bring our weaknesses and infirmities to him,
confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Merciful God,
our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:
we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent and are sorry for all our sins.
Father forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you
in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The President pronounces Absolution, and the people respond

Amen.

All stand.

THE GREETING OF PEACE

This holy night the angels sang,
'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to all in whom he delights.'

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

All are invited to share God's peace with those around them.

OFFERTORY HYMN

During this hymn an offering of people's gifts, to be given for the work of the Anglican Board of Mission, assisting communities in the South Pacific, will be brought forward for blessing.

When all is ready, the altar and gifts are censed, a reminder that incense was offered to the Christ Child as a sign of his divinity.

1. Christians, awake! salute the happy morn
Whereon the Saviour of the world was born;
Rise to adore the mystery of love
Which hosts of angels chanted from above;
With them the joyful tidings first begun
Of God Incarnate and the Virgin's Son.
2. Then to the watchful shepherds it was told,
Who heard the angelic herald's voice, 'Behold,
I bring you tidings of a Saviour's birth
To you and all the nations on the earth:
This day hath God fulfilled his promised word.
This day is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord.'
3. He spake; and straightway that celestial choir
In hymns of joy, unknown before, conspire;
The praises of redeeming love they sang,
And heaven's whole orb with alleluyas rang:
God's highest glory was their anthem still.
Peace on the earth, and unto all goodwill.

4. To Beth'lem straight the enlightened shepherds ran
To see the wonder God had wrought for man,
And found with Joseph and the blessèd Maid
Her Son, the Saviour, in a manger laid:
Joyful, the wondrous story they proclaim –
The first apostles of his infant fame.
5. Like Mary let us ponder in our mind
God's wondrous love in saving humankind;
Trace we the Babe, who hath retrieved our loss,
From his poor manger to his bitter cross;
Then may we hope, angelic hosts among,
To sing, redeemed, a glad triumphal song.

Words: John Byrom (1691–1763)

Music: 'Yorkshire' (Stockport), John Wainwright (1723–68)

THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

The gifts having been set up on the altar, the Celebrant offers prayers, to which the people respond:

Amen.

The Celebrant then begins the Great Thanksgiving Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Celebrant continues with a prayer appropriate to the season, concluding with:

... we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Celebrant continues the prayer until:

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:
**Christ has died,
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

The Celebrant continues the prayer, which concludes:

...we worship you, Father, in songs of never-ending praise:
**Blessing and honour and glory and power
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

Silence is kept.

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION

As the Celebrant breaks the bread, the following is said:

On this holy night heaven is come down to earth,
and earth is raised to heaven as we receive the One born for us,
in the breaking of the bread.

We who are many are one body.
for we all share in the one bread.

Together, we sing:

**Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.**

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven.
Lord, give us this bread always.

The people and ministers receive the sacrament.

All who wish to come to receive communion are welcome.

Please note: in keeping with current health advice, Communion will be administered in both kinds, but 'Intinction' (the 'dipping' of the host into the chalice) is not permitted.

(It is entirely appropriate to receive the sacrament in only one kind – the ancient and long-held practice of the Church – as the Church has always taught that full communion in the body and blood of Christ occurs in consuming either element.)

If you wish to receive a blessing rather than the sacrament, please come forward and stand with your arms crossed.

Ushers will assist the movement of communicants to the altar rails.

During Communion, the choir will sing a selection from the following carols:

*The Angel Gabriel from heaven came
O little one sweet, O little one mild
I saw a maiden sitten and sing
Balulalow*

After Communion, silence is kept.

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

All stand.

A prayer is offered by the Celebrant, which ends

Father,
**we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory.**

FINAL HYMN

1. Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King;
peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled;
Joyful, all you nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies,
with the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem'.

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
glory to the new-born King.*

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate Deity,
pleased in human flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
glory to the new-born King.*

3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more need die,
born to raise all those on earth,
born to give us second birth.

*Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King.*

Words: Charles Wesley (1707–88)
Music: Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809–47)
arr. David Willcocks (1919–2015)

THE BLESSING

May God the Father,
who has loved the eternal Word from before the foundation of the world,
now shed that love upon you without measure.

Amen.

May Christ our Redeemer, who by his incarnation,
united heaven and earth, now make you one with each other and with him.

Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit,
by whose overshadowing Mary became Mother of the Word,
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ within your life.

Amen.

And the + blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be
upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Deacon: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:

All: In the name of Christ. **Amen.**

Postlude: Fantasia on *In dulci jubilo* BWV729 J. S. Bach (1685–1750)

Please remain standing as the choir, clergy and servers leave.

Tonight's eucharist:

Celebrant: The Reverend Dr Gregory Seach, Vicar
Deacon and Preacher: The Reverend Dr Aaron Ghiloni, Curate

Director of Music: Tom Baldwin
and
The Choir of St George's

Setting of the Eucharist: 'Christ Church Mass' by Philip Matthias (1952–)

*The Service for Holy Communion (Second Order) is taken from A Prayer Book for Australia
(Broughton Books, 1995), © The Anglican Church of Australia Trust Corporation.*

*The 'common texts' of the Eucharist are from a modern English translation,
prepared by the English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988. Other material comes from Common Worship:
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Words to hymns are taken from The New English Hymnal (Canterbury Press, 1986).

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The **Christmas season** continues until the **Feast of the Epiphany** (kept this year on January 7). In that time, the following services will be held at St George's. You are welcome at all of them:

December 26 (*St Stephen's day, aka Boxing Day*)

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

December 27 (*St John, Apostle & Martyr*)

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

December 28 (*Holy Innocents*)

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

December 29–30

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

December 31

9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist
11:30 p.m. “Watchnight Service”

January 1 (*Feast of the Naming and Circumcision of our Lord*)

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

January 2–6

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

January 7 (*The Feast of the Epiphany: the ‘Twelfth day of Christmas’*)

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with meditation.

From January 8 normal services resume:

Sundays

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with meditation

Monday to Saturday

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

both also via Zoom:

Morning Prayer

Meeting ID: 709 867 2691; Passcode: 630283

<https://zoom.us/j/7098672691?pwd=TFBBSGYxb2lhcUI3RWVRI dmIXWDQ4Zz09>

Evening Prayer

Meeting ID: 709 867 2691; Passcode: 630283

<https://zoom.us/j/7098672691?pwd=TFBBSGYxb2lhcUI3RWVRI dmIXWDQ4Zz09>

with eucharists at 9:00 a.m. on Festivals (and as announced)

Thursday

10:15 a.m. Eucharist

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CHILD SAFE OFFICER

Leonie Bird 0409 860 026

We acknowledge the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we meet.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, acknowledge their continuing spiritual connection to Country, and affirm our commitment to walk together the path of reconciliation.



***All at St George's Malvern wish you
and all whom you love***

***a very Happy and Holy
Christmas***

***and every blessing for this joyful season
and we pray for a more peaceful world in 2024!***