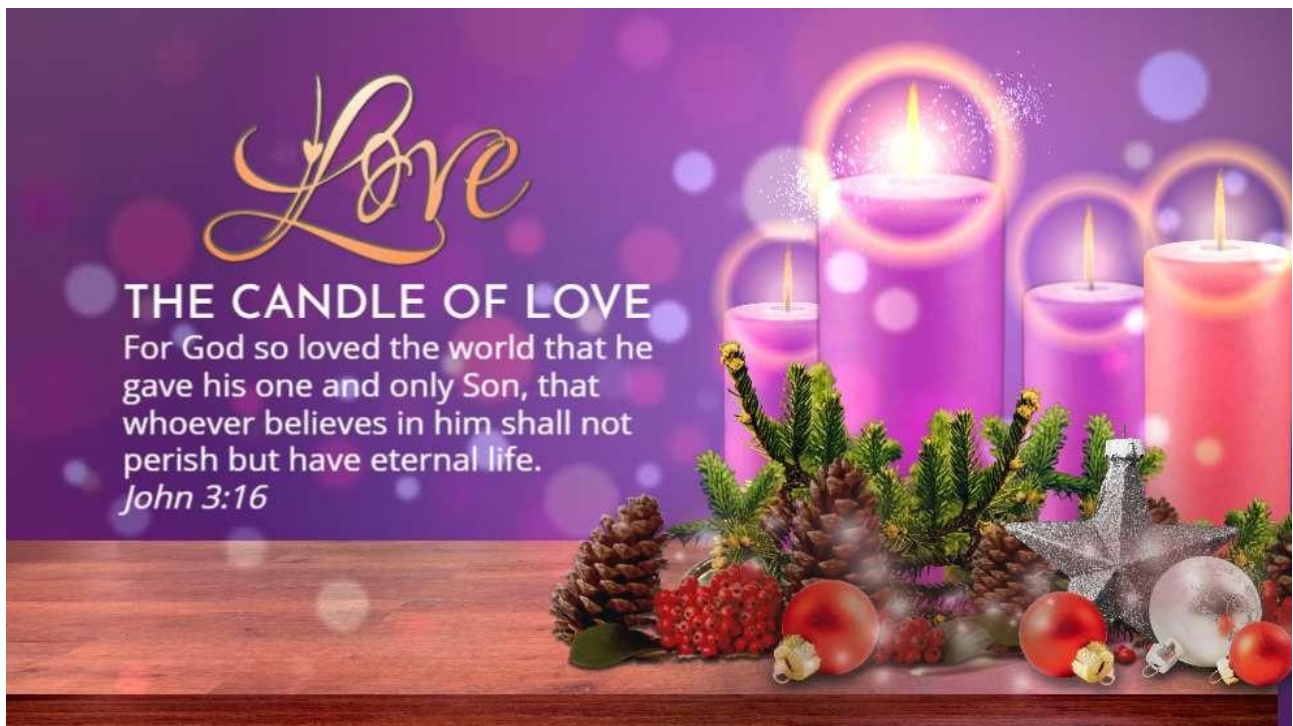


# **ST MATTHEW'S ANGLICAN PARISH CHELTENHAM**

## **ADVENT SUNDAY IV**

**SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER 2025**



**CELEBRANT & PREACHER:  
FR. GERALD LOOS**

**DEACON OF THE MASS: REV'D JILL RENISON**

**ORGANIST: MR KEITH FULLARD**

*This church stands on the land of the Boon Wurrung people.  
We respectfully acknowledge their elders, past and present, and we pray  
for the ongoing work of reconciliation.*

Come down, O Love divine,  
 seek now this soul of mine,  
 and visit it with your own ardour glowing;  
 O Comforter, draw near,  
 within my heart appear  
 and kindle it, your holy flame bestowing.

There let it freely burn,  
 till earthly passions turn  
 to dust and ashes, in its heat consuming;  
 and let your glorious light  
 shine ever on my sight  
 and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity  
 my outward garment be,  
 and lowliness become my inner clothing:  
 true lowliness of heart,  
 which takes the humbler part  
 and for its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,  
 with which the soul will long,  
 shall far outpass the power of human telling;  
 for none can guess its grace  
 till we become the place  
 in which the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

### GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
 Amen

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

♪ Cantor – Shower O heaven from above and let the skies rain down righteousness: let the earth open and bring forth salvation.

Brothers and sisters, today we gather to celebrate the sacred mysteries. As we begin, we light the candles of our Advent wreath, a sign of our longing and joyful expectation for the coming of Christ, the Light of the World.

*(Pause)*

Let us pray.

Lord God,  
Your eternal love was made visible  
when the Virgin Mary gave birth to Your Son.  
As we light the fourth candle,  
may its flame remind us of Christ's unfailing love  
and move us to love You and one another more deeply.  
Prepare our hearts to celebrate with joy  
the mystery of His Incarnation.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

*Two purple and rose candles followed by another purple candle are lit followed by the acclamation.*

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

*Introduction to confession*

Lord Jesus, you come to bring joy and peace to a weary world.

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

Christ Jesus, you call us to rejoice in the hope of Your coming.

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

Lord Jesus, you forgive our sins and prepare us to celebrate Your birth with gladness.

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

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **THE COLLECT**

Let us pray,

Sustain us, O God, with the power of your love on our journey to meet the One who is coming: strengthen our weak hands, make firm our feeble knees, and open blind eyes to the dawning of your kingdom, so that our hearts may rejoice as we behold the majesty of our God.

We ask this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## **THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

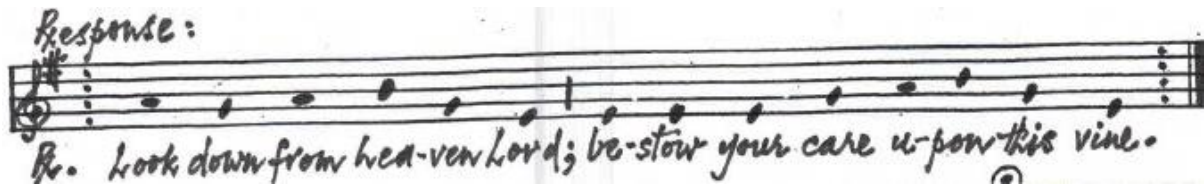
### **FIRST READING**

A reading from book of Isaiah

(Isaiah 7:10-16 - Found on page 554 in the pew bible)

For the word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM 80



**R.** Look down from heaven Lord; bestow your care upon this vine

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
you that led Joseph like a flock:  
you that are enthroned upon the cherubim,  
shine out in glory;  
Before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh:  
stir up your power, and come to save us. **R.**

Turn to us again O Lord of hosts:  
look down from heaven and see.  
Bestow your care upon this vine:  
the stock which your own right hand has planted. **R.**

Let your power rest on the man at your right hand:  
on that son of man  
whom you made so strong for yourself.  
And so we shall not turn back from you:  
give us life, and we will call upon your name. **R.**

## **SECOND READING**

A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans  
(Romans 1:1-7 - Found on page 913 in the pew bible)

For the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL** *Please stand*

♪ Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

♪ Cantor – A virgin shall conceive and bear a Son: and his name shall be called Emmanuel, God with us..

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew  
**Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Matthew 1:18-25 - found on page 783 in the pew bible)

For the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

## **The Sermon**

*Silence may be kept.*

## **The Apostolic Creed**

Let us together affirm the faith of the Church

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Deacon of the Mass:* As we wait in hopeful anticipation for the coming of Christ, the Prince of Peace, let us bring before God the prayers of our hearts, remembering the love of God revealed in the birth of Jesus Christ.

For the Church, the Body of Christ in the world, that we may be a beacon of love, drawing others to the light of Christ, and sharing the message of His love with all people.  
Lord, in Your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For all who serve the Church, especially our clergy, staff, and lay leaders, that they may be strengthened by God's love and guided by the Holy Spirit as they lead us in worship and service.  
Lord, in Your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those who are struggling to experience love, especially the lonely, the sick, and the grieving, that they may feel the embrace of God's presence in their lives and know the comfort of His love.

Lord, in Your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For our world, that in the midst of division and conflict, God's love may bring reconciliation, healing, and peace to all nations, communities, and families.

Lord, in Your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those who are homeless, hungry, or in need, that they may find shelter, compassion, and care, and that we may be vessels of God's love, bringing justice and mercy to those who are suffering.

Lord, in Your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those who are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus, that the true meaning of Christmas, the self-giving love of God, may renew our hearts and inspire us to share that love with others.

Lord, in Your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For our families and loved ones, that God's love may bind us together in unity and peace, and that we may be a source of love and support for one another.

Lord, in Your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those who have died, especially those we remember this Advent season, that they may rest in the eternal love and peace of God, and that we who remain may continue to live in love and hope.

Lord, in Your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**



*Deacon of the Mass:* Loving God, we thank You for the gift of Your Son, born in love to show us the way of peace, joy, and hope. Help us to reflect that love in all we do, as we wait for His coming. We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**All:** *Amen.*

## THE GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ.

**His spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

**HYMN:** Seek, O seek the Lord

TIS 464

*Seek, O seek the Lord, while he is near;  
trust him, speak to him in prayer,  
and he will hear.*

God be with us in our lives,  
direct us in our calling;  
break the snares the world contrives,  
keep us from falling.

*Seek, O seek the Lord ...*

God, increase in us the life  
that Christ by dying gave us:  
though we faint in mortal strife  
his blood will save us.

*Seek, O seek the Lord ...*

Strengthen in our hearts the love  
we owe to one another;  
how can we love God above  
and not each other?

*Seek, O seek the Lord ...*

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.  
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.  
Accept and use our offerings for your glory  
and for the service of your kingdom.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

Pray, my sisters and brothers, that our sacrifice may be  
acceptable to God, the almighty Father.  
**May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise  
and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his  
Church.**

## **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

♪ 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.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,  
mighty Creator, everliving God.  
We give you thanks and praise for your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who was looked for by the prophets,  
heralded by the Baptist

announced by an angel,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
and revealed at last to men and women of every race.  
By his death on the cross  
and rising to new life,  
he offered the one true sacrifice for sin  
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.  
Therefore with angels and archangels,  
and with all the company of heaven,  
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.**

Merciful God, we thank you  
for these gifts of your creation,  
this bread and wine,  
and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit,  
we who eat and drink them  
may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.  
On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;  
and when he had given you thanks  
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,  
    "Take, eat. This is my body given for you.  
    Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper, he took the cup,

and again giving you thanks  
he gave it to his disciples, saying,  
    “Drink from this, all of you.  
    This is my blood of the new covenant  
    shed for you and for many  
    for the forgiveness of sins.  
    Do this, as often as you drink it,  
    in remembrance of me.”

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded:  
proclaiming his offering of himself  
made once for all upon the cross,  
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,  
and looking for his coming again,  
we celebrate, with this bread and this cup,  
his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice  
for the sins of the whole world.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit,  
unite us in the body of your Son,  
and bring us with all your people  
into the joy of your eternal kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
with whom, and in whom,  
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
we worship you, Father,  
in songs of never-ending praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power  
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

♪ As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray,



## THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.  
We who are many are one body,  
for we all share in the one bread.

♪ Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
Grant us peace.

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word,  
and I shall be healed.**

*The sacrament is given with the following words*

**The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen.**

**The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen.**

## **THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

♪ Cantor – Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son:  
and his name shall be called Emmanuel.

Let us pray.

God for whom we wait,  
we thank you that you have fed us  
with the bread of life  
and the cup of salvation.

As we joyfully await your Son,  
keep us ever watchful  
that we may be ready to stand before him  
on the day of his coming.

**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. Amen**

*Please remain seated for some announcements.*

## **THE BLESSING AND DISMISSAL**

*If you are able, please stand for God's blessing*

May the God of Joy fill your hearts with gladness,  
as we rejoice that the Lord is near.

**Amen.**

May Christ, the Light of the world, shine in your lives,  
guiding your steps with hope and peace.

**Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit strengthen you to share joy with all you  
meet, so that your words and actions bring comfort,  
kindness, and love.

**Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and  
the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

As we await our coming Saviour,  
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

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

**HYMN: Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!**  
161 TIS

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!**  
**Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;**  
**tender to me the promise of his word;**  
**in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!**  
**Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;**  
**his mercy sure, from age to age the same;**  
**his holy name - the Lord, the Mighty One.**

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!  
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,  
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!  
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.  
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
to children's children and for evermore!

## Church News

**Morning Tea after the Service today  
With Carols sing along**

### **BUNNINGS SAUSAGE SIZZLE**

**The next Sausage Sizzle will be held on Sunday, 28 December  
from 8am–4pm at Mentone Bunnings.**

If you are able to help, please speak to Jan.

It would also be wonderful if parishioners could drop in on the day to  
offer support or simply say hello.

### **Service Roster 28 December 2025 - Christmas 1**

<b>Volunteer roster:</b>	<b>Readings:</b>
Welcomer:	Isaiah 63:7-9
Chalice:	Psalm 148
Reader: Deb P	Hebrews 2:10-18
Intercessor: Graham	Matthew 2:13-23



## Prayer Diary:

Monday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Lynette Brooks Loreen, Bryce, Cheryl & Ben Elaine Bryant
Tuesday	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Fr Geoff & Jane Cheong Clara, Colman & Elizabeth Chung -Tao Guy Churchman
Wednesday	24 <sup>th</sup>	Fr. Ian & Joy Clarke Barrie Cledsmith Sandra Cooper
Thursday	25 <sup>th</sup>	Harold Daly Erik, Rachel, Owen, Thomas & Cora Dober Michael Donnellan
Friday	26 <sup>th</sup>	Barbara Duncan Steve Duggan David Evans
Saturday	27 <sup>th</sup>	CHN St. Matthew's Cheltenham



On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the final candle—the candle of Love. Its warm glow reminds us that at the very heart of Christmas is a God who chooses to come close, not with power or spectacle, but with love made flesh.

In today's Gospel, we encounter Mary, whose entire life becomes a witness to this love. When she hears God's invitation, she does not fully understand it, yet she responds with trust: "Let it be done to me according to your word."

Her “yes” opens the door for Christ to enter the world. Mary shows us that love is not merely a feeling; it is a willing response to God, a surrender to His plan, and an openness to His presence.

As Advent draws to a close, we are invited to make our own “yes” to God. To welcome Him into the places we guard too closely. To allow His love to transform our fears, heal our wounds, and soften what has grown hard in us. To let Him be born again in our hearts.

Love is the greatest of all the Advent gifts because it is the very nature of God. It is the love that moved Him to send His Son. The love that wrapped itself in human frailty in Bethlehem. The love that comforts, forgives, restores, and remains.

This final candle challenges us, too:

- to love those who are difficult to love,
- to reconcile where there is division,
- to give generously and humbly,
- to see Christ in the overlooked and forgotten.

Every act of love prepares a manger for Christ in our world.

As we approach Christmas, let this candle remind us that we are loved beyond measure and called to share that love without hesitation. God is not distant. He draws near—Emmanuel, God with us—and His love is the light that no darkness can overcome.

May we carry that love into these final days of Advent and into the celebration of Christ’s birth.

Blessings

*Fr Gerald*



St Matthew's Anglican Parish



CORNER NEPEAN HIGHWAY & PARK ROAD, CHELTENHAM

You're Invited to Our Christmas Family Service!

Join us for a joyful and child-friendly service, where children take an active role in the celebration!

Come along to enjoy your favourite Christmas carols and watch as the little ones decorate the Christmas tree with festive cheer. It's the perfect way to kick off the Christmas season with family and friends.

We look forward to celebrating with you!

## CHRISTMAS @ ST MATTHEW'S 2025

### DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00pm Family Service    11:30pm Midnight Mass

### DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup> CHRISTMAS DAY

9:30am Christmas Day Mass



# EVERYONE IS WELCOME AT ST MATTHEW'S

## **First Sunday of the Month:**

8:00am A quiet, said service of Holy Communion

## **Every Sunday:**

9:30am A sung service of Holy Communion  
with a Children's Program

## **Wednesdays:**

9:45am Prayer for Healing, Wholeness and Peace

10:00am A quiet, said service of Holy Communion

## **Monday, Thursday and Friday mornings:**

9:00-9:30 am Morning Prayer via Zoom.

Meeting ID: 796 1738 1243

Passcode: 8hzrij

If you would like to donate to St Matthew's, thank you!

Our bank details are:

St Matthew's Anglican Church

BSB 06 3119 Acc. No. 1044 5437

## **Contact Details:**

**Vicar – Fr Gerald Loos SSC**

Mobile 0409 149 486

Tuesday – Pastoral Visits

Wednesday – Healing Mass and Home Communion

Thursday - Office Day in Parish Office

Friday – Pastoral Visits

Please note that Fr Gerald will be taking his regular day off on Monday.

Should there be an emergency or if you require urgent pastoral care, he can be contacted on his mobile.

[vicar@stmatthewscheltenham.org.au](mailto:vicar@stmatthewscheltenham.org.au)

[www.stmatthewscheltenham.org.au](http://www.stmatthewscheltenham.org.au)

