

**ST MATTHEW'S ANGLICAN PARISH  
CHELTENHAM**

**BLESSING OF THE CRIB  
AND MIDNIGHT MASS**

**24TH DECEMBER 2025**



**VICAR: FR. GERALD LOOS  
DEACON OF THE MASS: REV'D JILL RENISON  
ORGANIST: MR KEITH FULLARD**

## Welcome to St Matthew's

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.

**This is a service of Holy Communion.**  
**All are welcome at the Lord's Table.**

Gluten-free wafers are available upon request.  
If you prefer, you are most welcome  
to come forward to receive a blessing.

The toilets are at the back of the church.  
A welcomer can help you to find them if necessary.

You are invited to join in the text printed in  
**bold type** in this order of service.

Please ensure that your mobile phone  
is switched off or is on silent.

**It is a joy to have you with us.**  
**We hope you enjoy the service.**



Priest            The Lord be with you.  
All:              And also with you.  
Priest:          Let us proceed in peace.  
All:              + In the name of Christ. Amen

**HYMN: O Come All Ye Faithful**

**304 TIS**

O Come All Ye Faithful,  
joyful and triumphant,  
come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold Him,  
born the King of Angels:  
*O come, let us adore Him,*  
*O come, let us adore Him,*  
*O come, let us adore Him,*  
*Christ the Lord!*

True God of true God,  
Light of Light eternal,  
lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Son of the Father,  
begotten, not created:  
*O come, let us adore Him, .....*

### **THE BLESSING OF THE CRIB**

Almighty and everlasting God, before this Crib we venerate the image of the Holy Family of Bethlehem. May all who offer their prayers, here before the Christ Child, his most holy Mother and Saint Joseph receive every grace and blessing.

We pray that the holy joy of Christmas may fill our minds with thoughts of peace and our hearts with a sense of your

great love. We pray that all people may come to worship you and kneel before you with love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God, you led the Wise Men by the shining of a star to find the Christ Child in Bethlehem, lead us also on our pilgrim way by that same light, that we may find the Lord of life who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*The Hymn continues*

See how the shepherds  
summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks,  
draw nigh with holy fear;  
we too will thither  
bend our joyful footsteps:  
*O come, let us adore Him, .....*

Child, for us sinners  
poor and in the manger,  
fain we embrace thee  
with love and awe;  
who would not love thee,  
loving us so dearly?  
*O come, let us adore Him, .....*

Sing, choirs of angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above,  
'Glory to God, glory in the highest':  
*O come, let us adore Him, .....*

## 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 - The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light: for to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

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.**

## PENITENTIAL RITE

My friends, we gather this night to celebrate the love of God for all people manifested in the birth of the long awaited Saviour of the world. In a moment of silence may we be aware of the miracle of God's love for us as we call to mind our sins and ask for God's forgiveness as we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

You came to live among us as a man: Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord have mercy.**

You were born the Son of a Virgin Mother: Christ  
have mercy.  
**Christ have mercy.**

You were a man like us in all things but sin:  
Lord have mercy.  
**Lord have mercy.**

*The Celebrant says the absolution.*

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 to do his will, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

♪ Kyrie eleison (x3)  
Christe eleison (x3)  
Kyrie eleison (x3)

## **GLORIA IN EXCELSIS**

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his 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.**

## **THE OPENING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

Father, you make this holy night radiant with the splendour of Jesus Christ our light. We welcome him as Lord, the true light of the world. Bring us to eternal joy in the kingdom of heaven, where he 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 the prophet Isaiah*

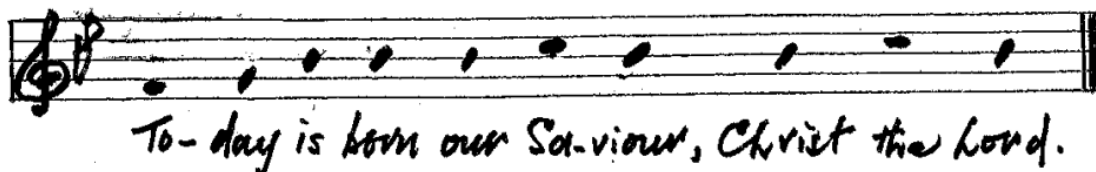
(Isaiah 9.2-7)

For the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

*Psalm 96.1-3, 11-12, 13*

**R:** Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.



O sing to the Lord a new song:  
sing to the Lord, all the earth.  
Sing to the Lord and bless his holy name:  
proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.  
Declare his glory among the nations:  
and his wonders among all peoples. **R:**

Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad:  
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
Let the fields rejoice, and everything in them:  
then shall all the trees of the wood  
shout with joy before the Lord. **R:**

For he comes, he comes to judge the earth:  
he shall judge the world with righteousness,  
and the peoples with his truth. **R:**

## SECOND READING

*A Reading from the letter of Paul to Titus*

(Titus 2.11-14)

For the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*If you are able, please stand for the Gospel.*

♪ Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

♪ Cantor – Good news and great joy to all the world: today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

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

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

*The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.*

**Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Luke 2.1-14)

For the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

## THE HOMILY

*Silence may be kept.*

### The Nicene Creed

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.

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Deacon of the Mass: Father, in this holy night your Son our Saviour was born in human form. Renew your Church as the body of Christ.

In this holy night Christians the world over are celebrating his birth. Open our hearts that he may be born in us today. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

In this holy night there was no room for your Son in the inn. Protect with your love those who have no home and all who live in poverty. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

In this holy night Mary in the pain of labour brought your Son to birth. Hold in your hand all who are in pain or distress today. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

In this holy night shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy. Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redeeming love. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

In this holy night the angels sang 'Peace to God's people on earth'. Strengthen those who work for peace and justice in all the world. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

In this holy night strangers found the Holy Family, and saw the baby lying in the manger. Bless our homes and all whom we love. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

In this holy night heaven has come down to earth, and earth is raised to heaven. Keep in safety all those who have gone through death in the hope of heaven. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

In this holy night angels and shepherds worshipped at the manger throne. Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Blessed Mary and all the saints.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Deacon of the Mass: Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## **THE GREETING OF PEACE**

*Please stand if you are able*

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: It came upon the midnight clear      NEH 29**

*During the singing of the hymn the offertory will be taken*

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, to all good will,  
from heaven's all gracious King!"  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come  
with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heavenly music floats  
o'er all the weary world:  
above its sad and lowly plains

they bend on hov'ring wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds  
the blessed angels sing.

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 warring humankind hears not  
the tidings that they bring:  
O hush your noise, and cease your strife,  
and hear the angels sing!

For lo, the days are hastening on,  
by prophet bards foretold,  
when with the ever-circling years  
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.

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.**

Almighty God, the saving work of Christ made our peace  
with you. May our offering today renew that peace within us  
and give you perfect praise. We ask this in the name of Jesus  
the Lord. **Amen.**

# 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.**

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God,  
we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the wonder of the incarnation your eternal Word  
has brought to the eyes of faith a new and radiant vision  
of your glory.

In him we see our God made visible and so are caught up  
in love of the God we cannot see.

And so, with all the choirs of angels in heaven  
we proclaim your glory and join in their unending  
hymn of praise 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.**

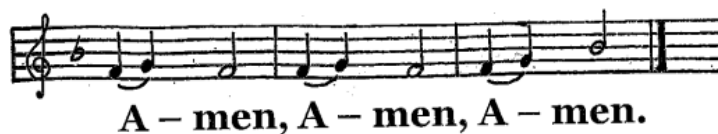
In memory of his death and resurrection,  
we offer you, father,  
this life giving bread this saving cup.

We thank you for counting us worthy  
to stand in your presence and serve you.

May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be  
brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit.

Lord, remember your church throughout the world:  
Together with Ric our Archbishop, Paul our regional  
Bishop and all the clergy, remember those who take part in  
this offering, those here present and all your people, and  
all who seek you with a sincere heart.

Remember our brothers and sisters  
 who have gone to their rest in the hope of rising again;  
 bring them and all the departed  
 into the light of your presence.  
 Have mercy on us all;  
 make us worthy to share eternal life  
 with Mary, the virgin Mother of God,  
 with St. Matthew, the apostles, and all the saints  
 who have done your will throughout the ages.  
 May we praise you in union with them, and give you glory  
 through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
 Through him, with him, in him,  
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit  
 All glory and honour is yours,  
 almighty Father, for ever and ever.



♪ 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 - Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has  
visited and redeemed his people: and has raised up a horn of  
salvation for us in the house of his servant David

Let us pray.

Father, we ask you to give us a new birth as we celebrate  
the beginning of your Son's life on earth. Strengthen us in  
spirit as we take your food and drink. Grant this through  
Christ our Lord.



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*

The Lord be with you.  
And also with you.

Deacon: Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

*The Celebrant gives the blessing.*

When he came to us as man, the Son of God scattered the darkness of this world, and filled this holy day with his glory. May the God of infinite goodness scatter the darkness of sin and brighten your hearts with holiness. **Amen.**

God sent his angels to shepherds to herald the great joy of the Saviour's birth. May he fill you with joy and make you heralds of his gospel. **Amen.**

When the Word became man, earth was joined to heaven. May he give you his peace and good will, and fellowship with all the heavenly host. **Amen.**

May almighty God bless you, + the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Deacon: Go in the peace of Christ.

People: Thanks be to God.

'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.

Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a 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, ....

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 us from the earth,  
born to give us second birth.

Hark! the herald angels sing, .....

*All hymns and text used with permission from the Australian Prayer Book of Australia, New English Hymnal, Together in Song. CCLI Licence #5371063*

# EVERYONE IS WELCOME AT ST MATTHEW'S

## Regular Service Days and Times:

### First Sunday of the Month:

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

### Every Sunday:

9:30am A sung service of Holy Communion

### 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.

 @StMattsCheltAus

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  
Communions

Thursday - Office Day in Parish Office

Friday – Pastoral Visits

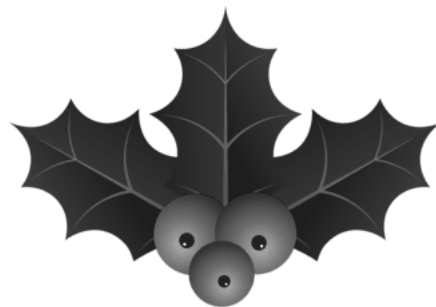
Please note that Fr Gerald will be taking his regular day off on Monday.

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)

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