

**ST MATTHEW'S ANGLICAN PARISH
CHELTENHAM**

**FAMILY CHRISTMAS SERVICE
24th December 2025**

Merry Christmas



This is a child friendly Christmas Service
Children take an active part in the Service

**VICAR: FR GERALD LOOS
ORGANIST: MR ERROL FERNANDO**

As we gather to worship the God of peace and reconciliation, we respectfully acknowledge the Boon Wurrung people as the traditional custodians of this land.

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE

A Service of Carols, Readings, and Celebration

Welcome & Introduction

Good evening and welcome to our Christmas Eve Family Service. Tonight we gather with joy to celebrate the birth of Jesus, to sing the carols we love, and to hear again the story of God's love coming among us as a child. Whether you come every week or this is your first time, you are warmly welcome.

Opening Carol “O Come, All Ye Faithful” (verses 1-3)

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O 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!

God of God, Light of Light,
lo, He abhors not the virgin's womb;
very God, begotten not created;
O come, let us

Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come, let us

Opening Prayer

Loving God,

Tonight we celebrate the wonderful gift of your Son, Jesus, born in Bethlehem to bring hope, peace, joy and love to the world. As we hear the Christmas story, fill our hearts with wonder and help us welcome Christ into our lives. **Amen.**

Lighting of the Christ Candle

On this holy night, we light the Christ Candle. Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. May His light shine in our hearts and homes tonight and always.

Thanks be to God.

*A child of the parish will now place baby Jesus in the manger
Please kneel or be seated*

Carol: “Silent Night”

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,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Darkness flies, all is light;
Shepherds hear the angels sing,
"Alleluia! hail the King!
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior 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,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night,
Wondrous star, lend the light;
With the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born.

Prayers Of Penitence

The priest invites the people to recall their sins:

On this night of nights, we come together as God's family, to celebrate the birth of our Saviour. With confidence let us ask the Father's forgiveness, for he is full of gentleness and strength.

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.

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.**

The Christmas Story according to Luke's Gospel (Short, Family-Friendly Readings)

Reading 1 - The Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38 – short excerpt)

Carol: “Once in Royal David’s City” (verse 1 & 2)

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and His shelter was a stable,
and His cradle was a stall:
with the poor, and meek, and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.

Reading 2 - Mary and Joseph Journey to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-5)

Reading 3 - The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:6-7)

Carol:
“Away in a Manger”

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head;
the stars in the heavens looked down where He lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

Reading 4 – Angels and Shepherds
(Luke 2:8-14)

Carol:
“While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks”

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
an angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.

"Fear not," said he for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind

"glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind.

"To you, in David's town, this day
is born of David's line
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:

"The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all simply wrapped in swaddling clothes
and in a manger laid."

Thus spoke the seraph; and forthwith
appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus
addressed their joyful song:

"All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace;
goodwill henceforth from heaven to earth
Begin and never cease.

Reading 5 - The Shepherds Visit Jesus
(Luke 2:15-20)

Carol:
"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

During the singing of this hymn the collection will be taken

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep

the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.

O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him still,
the dear Christ enters in.

Short Family Address / Interactive Reflection

Violin Solo - Elizabeth

A Christmas Poem

Affirmation of Faith (Child-Friendly)

Let us affirm together the faith of the Church.

We believe in God who loves us.

We believe in Jesus who came to live with us as a child.

We believe in the Holy Spirit

who fills our hearts with joy.

We believe that God's love is for everyone.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

On this holy night, let us pray to God.

For the world Jesus came to save—
that peace and goodwill may fill every place.

Lord, hear us.

For families and friends gathered together tonight,
and for those who are lonely or far from home.

Lord, hear us.

For children everywhere,
that they may grow in safety, love, and hope.

Lord, hear us.

For our church and community,
that the light of Christ may shine brightly among us.

Lord, hear us.

For those who have died,
and those we remember with love,
that they may rest in God's eternal peace.

Lord, hear us.

Lord Jesus, Light of the World, hear our prayers and stay with us this night and always. **Amen.**

The Peace

On this holy night the angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth.”

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

All are invited to greet one another with the sign of peace.

Blessing

May the joy of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and the peace of the Christ Child
be yours this Christmas.

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

Amen.

Go in peace.

May the light of Christ shine in your hearts and homes.
Thanks be to God.

Final Carol “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th'angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

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 th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

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 may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King"

A Child-Friendly Christmas Message

Christmas is a time full of sparkle—lights, songs, presents, and excitement.

But the very first Christmas was simple and quiet. It happened in a small stable, with hay on the floor, animals nearby, and a tiny baby named Jesus.

Jesus didn't come as a powerful king.

He came as a baby— small, gentle, and full of love.

He came to show us something very special:

that God loves every single one of us,

no matter how little we are, no matter who we are.

And do you know the amazing part?

Every time we do something kind— like sharing, helping, smiling, or including someone who feels left out—

we are spreading the same love that Jesus brought into the world.

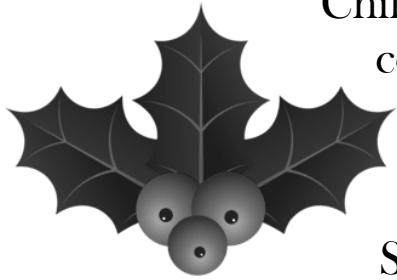
So this Christmas,

as you open presents, see family, or enjoy some tasty treats, remember this:

The greatest gift we can give is kindness.

And the greatest gift ever given is Jesus.





Children love to say prayers, especially prayers that contain rhyme and cadence. Teaching your kids to pray is a great way to introduce them to Jesus Christ and reinforce their relationship with God.

Simple children's prayers will help your kids learn to talk with God directly. As they grow more comfortable with prayer, they will discover that God is always close by their side and ready to listen. To reinforce prayer as a natural part of life, start teaching your kids as early as possible, and encourage them to pray throughout the day as often as possible.

Children's Prayer to Say Every Day

He wakes me up;
He makes me sleep.
Provides for me the food I eat.
When I cry, I call on Him,
Because I know with Him I win.
Even through the hardest day,
I trust in Him in every way.
He's the One who sees me through,
Jesus lives, I know it's true.
With loving-kindness, He smiles on me.
Because He died, I am free.
Lord, for all, I thank you so,
I know you'll never let me go!

Kids' Prayers to Say in the Morning

You can start each day by modelling what a genuine life of prayer looks like for your children. Your kids will discover that God is personal and approachable anytime they call on him throughout the day.

Jesus, you are good and wise
I will praise you when I rise.
Jesus, hear this prayer I send
Bless my family and my friends.

Jesus, help my eyes to see
All the good you send to me.
Jesus, help my ears to hear
Calls for help from far and near.

Jesus, help my feet to go
In the way that You will show.

Jesus, help my hands to do
All things loving, kind, and true.
Jesus, guard me through this day
In all I do and all I say. Amen.

Prayer for Kids to Say at Mealtimes

Teaching kids to say grace at mealtimes is a great way to include prayer in their daily routines. Plus, the impact of praying before meals can reach much further than you'd expect. When this act becomes second nature to your children, it shows their gratitude and dependence on God to all who observe them.

Round this table, here to pray, First, we thank you for the day. For our family and our friends. Gifts of grace that heaven lends.

Living water, daily bread.
Countless blessings our God sends
Thank you, Jesus, for them all
For the great ones and the small
When we're happy, when we're sad
On the good days and the bad
We are grateful, we are glad Amen.

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
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.

 @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

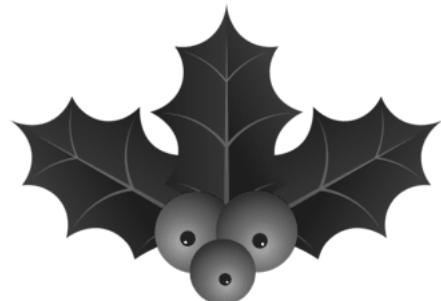
Friday – Pastoral Visits

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

www.stmatthewscheltenham.org.au





Fr. Gerald, together with the
Churchwardens
and congregation of St Matthews
extends to you and your families warm
greetings and every blessing this
Christmas.

May the Christ Child find a welcome
place in your homes and hearts,
now and in the years to come.



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