

Midnight Mass 24th December 2025

WELCOME

In the darkness let us prepare ourselves for worship

CALL TO WORSHIP

With eyes wide open and our ears on edge,
**we look for shepherds
and listen for the songs of angels.**

In the light of winter's moon,
with the Southern Cross lighting the way,
**we gather outside the door of a mystery,
wondering if we dare go enter.**

With folks and friends we love,
with strangers we have just met,
**we gather, becoming the holy family
for this time and in this place.**

A candle is burning,
a flame warm and bright
A candle of hope in December's dark night.

A candle is burning, a candle of peace,
A candle to signal that conflict must cease.

A candle is burning, a candle of joy.
A candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy

A candle is burning, a candle of love.
A candle to point us to heaven above.

We sing: It came upon a midnight clear

1 It came upon a midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,
from heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the 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 warring humankind hears not
the love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise of mortal strife,
and hear the angels sing!

5 For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
comes round the age of gold;
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and all the world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

2 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 hovering wing;
and ever o'er its Babel-sounds
the blessed angels sing.

4 And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow:
look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing.

*Edward Hamilton Sears (1810-1876) alt.
CCL Licence Number 5935*

DEDICATION OF THE CRIB

Dear friends, as we meet to celebrate the birth of Christ,
let us pray that God will bless this crib,
that all who worship his Son, born of the Virgin Mary,
may come to share his life in glory.

God our Father,
on this night 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 for ever. **Amen**

CONFESSION

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts.
In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

[Silence is kept]

God our Father,
you sent your Son full of grace and truth:
Forgive our failure to receive him.
Lord, have mercy
Lord, have mercy.

Jesus our Saviour,
you were born in poverty and laid in a manger:
forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Spirit of love,
your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:
forgive the hardness of our hearts.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

ABSOLUTION

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw you to himself,
that you may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh,
and be cleansed from all your sins,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

GLORIA - *we stand to say*

**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.**

COLLECT

Let us pray in the peace of this Christmas night
that our joy in the birth of Christ will last for ever.
Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.

Amen

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 52: 7 - 10*

please sit for the reading

⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'

⁸ Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see
the return of the Lord to Zion.

⁹ Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰ The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

We sing In the bleak mid-winter

1 In the bleak mid-winter
frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow,
snow on snow,
in the bleak mid-winter, long ago.

3 Enough for him, whom cherubim
worship night and day,
a breastful of milk,
and a mangerful of hay:
enough for him, whom angels
fall down before,
the ox and ass and camel which adore.

5 What can I give him,
poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

2 Our God, heav'n cannot hold him
nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall fell away
when he comes to reign.
In the bleak mid-winter
a stable place sufficed
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

4 Angels and archangels
may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim
thronged the air;
but only his mother
in her maiden bliss
worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894)
CCL Licence Number 5935

Gospel Reading – John 1: 1 - 14

Please remain standing

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

Today Christ is born:

alleluia.

Today the Saviour has come:

alleluia.

Today the angels sing on earth:

alleluia.

Glory to God in the highest.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

SERMON

CREED

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

INTERCESSIONS

THE PEACE – *please stand*

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.

We light the Christ light candle

We sing: Joy to the world!

1 Joy to the world!
the Lord has come;
let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven,
and heaven and nature sing!

3 He rules the world
with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, and wonders of his love.

2 Joy to the earth!
the Saviour reigns;
your sweetest songs employ.
While fields and streams and hills
and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy!

*Isaac Watts
CCL Licence number: 5935*

INVITATION TO THE TABLE:

Word made flesh, life of the world,
in your incarnation you embraced our poverty:
by your Spirit may we share in your riches.
Amen.

THE PRAYER OF 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, we give you thanks and praise
through your beloved Son Jesus Christ,
your living Word,
through whom you have created all things;
who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our Saviour.

By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh;
as your Son,
born of the blessed Virgin,
he lived on earth and went about among us;

He opened wide his arms for us on the cross;
he put an end to death by dying for us;
and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life;
so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.

And now we give you thanks because, by the power of the Holy Spirit,
he took our nature upon him
and was born of the Virgin Mary his mother,
that being himself without sin, he might make us clean from all sin.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and singing

**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.

Lord, you are holy indeed,
the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will,
these gifts of bread and wine may be to us
the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.
Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours,
O loving Father, for ever and ever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break the bread of life, and that life is the light of the world.
**God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.**

GIVING OF COMMUNION

*If you would like to receive a blessing please come forward and bow your head.
We remain silent as we give thanks for the greatest gift to all humankind*

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

God our Father,
in this night you have made known to us again
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:
confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him
until the day dawns and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts.
To him be glory both now and for ever. **Amen**

SENDING

To people who hunger for hope, God sends us.
We will share the wonder which has been given to us.

Into neighbourhoods filled with injustice, Jesus sends us.
We will go to stand beside those overlooked by our society.

Into a world filled with death and destruction, the Spirit sends us.
We will go to be peacemakers carrying the gifts of reconciliation.

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
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.

CAROL

1 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 to-night.

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

2 For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love;
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace upon the earth.

4 O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels,
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

*Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) alt.
CCL Licence number: 5935*

SENDING

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ.
Amen.