



Christmas Day 2023

Welcome:

Greeting:

The Light has come;
a light in a dark stable,
a light for darkened lives,
a light which shines in every place,
the Light of eternal truth.

As we celebrate the birth of the Christ-child today,
May the Lord be with you

And also with you

Moment of Stillness:

As we welcome the Christ-child, let's take a moment to be still and aware of Christ's presence within us and all around us.

Advent & Christ Candle: Jen and Frank

All four candles are lit and then the Christ Candle

On each of the four Sundays in Advent, leading up to Christmas, we lit a candle - for hope, for peace, for joy and for love.

Today, on Christmas Day, we light the white Christ candle to celebrate the birth of Jesus and Christ's presence with us today.

This is the mystery of Christmas – the Christ who is come, is still coming.

We light this candle
for the baby in the cradle,
for the child born to be king,
who became a man on the cross,
the Redeemer and Saviour of the world.
The darkness is overcome, the light shines and is all around us.

Acknowledgement First Peoples:

This is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here.
We acknowledge and give thanks for the Gadigal and Wangal people who
have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We
acknowledge the continued deep spiritual relationship of the First Nations
Peoples to this Country.

**We commit to walking with and learning from the elders of this land, and
to the ongoing journey of justice and reconciliation.**

Carol: Hark the Herald Angels Sing (TIS 303)

1. Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn 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 hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

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

2. 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. [Refrain]

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 may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth. [Refrain]

Call to Worship

And the time came.
The morning birdsong carolled the news
as the daylight hung gently over the stable
and celebrated the new life within.

The echoes of angels bringing joy
could be heard across creation.

Christ has come bringing love and peace!

Undaunted by rejections and searchings for a home,
the Child of God lies waiting to meet all who will come.
Here, among the ordinary, in the humblest of places,
the beauty of holiness is born.

This is Christmas Day and we will rejoice!

Opening Prayer

We give thanks to God
for the truth has come:
truth that challenges the proud,
truth that lifts up the lowly,
truth that brings justice and hope,
the truth of eternal life.

We give thanks to God
for the life has come:
the life of God in a new-born child,
life vulnerable and precious,
life which conquers death's power,

the new life of the Kingdom of God.

We give thanks to God
for the king has come:
a King who brings peace,
a King who brings healing,
a King who shares our weakness,
a gentle King whose name is love.

Lord Jesus Christ,
whose coming sets us free,
let your light shine in us,
your truth change us,
your life renew us,
for you are the Holy Child of Christmas.

Amen

Carol: Child in the manger (TIS 319)

1. Child in the manger,
infant of Mary;
outcast and stranger,
Lord of all;
Child who inherits
all our transgressions,
all our demerits
on him fall.

2. Once the most holy
child of salvation
gently and lowly
lived below;
now as our glorious
mighty Redeemer,
see him victorious
over each foe.

3. Prophets foretold him,
infant of wonder;
angels behold Him

on his throne;
worthy our Saviour
of all their praises;
happy for ever
are his own.

Prayer of confession:

Let us pray

O gentle Christ,
we are sorry for the times when we have
made no room for the wonder of your life,
or failed to protect its vulnerability among us.
We kneel before your birthing,
knowing how human we have been, and will be.

**Receive us again in love, Jesus Christ.
Gather us around the cradle of your coming, we pray.**

Forgive us if we have not prepared a place for you
in the community around us,
in the initiatives for loving justice
and the sheltering of the struggling people here.

**Receive us again in your love, Jesus Christ.
Gather us around the cradle of your coming, we pray.
Amen.**

Words of Assurance:

Today, of all days, we know that grace is ours.
There is no time when this is not the
gift of our God for all humankind.
As we come before the newborn Christ,
we are forgiven!

Thanks be to God.

Peace:

Welcome each other. Welcome the stranger.
Welcome all who come.

As Christ welcomed everyone, no matter what their background,
let us open our hearts and lives.

Let us be Christ to everyone we meet.

The peace of the Christ-child be with you

And also with you.

Carol: The North Wind (TIS 322)

The north wind is tossing the leaves.
The red dust is over the town;
The sparrows are under the eaves,
And the grass in the paddock is brown;
As we lift up our voices and sing,
To the Christ-child the heavenly King.

The tree ferns in green gullies sway;
The cool stream flows silently by;
The joy bells are greeting the day,
And the chimes are adrift in the sky,
As we lift up our voices and sing,
To the Christ-child the heavenly King.

Moment for the young at heart: [The Christmas Story – St Paul’s Auckland.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWq60oyrHVQ)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWq60oyrHVQ>

Bible Reading:

Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ 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.

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ 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: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,^[a] the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,^[b] praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”^[c]

¹⁵ 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.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Hear the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Reflection: Rev Joy

Moment of Stillness:

Prayers of the People:

*When the leader says “Where there is darkness Lord”,
please respond with “**Let there be light**”.*

Let us pray:

This Christmas, as we remember the birth of Jesus in a stable, we are reminded that hope comes in unexpected ways and in unfamiliar places.

We pray for the work of midwives and medical staff who care for mothers and babies. And especially for those who have babies around the world in unsafe conditions.

Where there is darkness Lord,
Let there be light

This Christmas, as we remember the violence used by the soldiers searching for Jesus, we are reminded that conflicts still have devastating effects on children and families trapped between warring sides. We pray for conflict zones and strive for peace.

Where there is darkness Lord,
Let there be light

This Christmas, as we remember the flight of Jesus' family to Egypt, we are reminded of the plight of people forced to flee from homes and possessions. We pray for refugees and asylum seekers.

Where there is darkness Lord,
Let there be light

This Christmas, as we remember the homeless holy family, we are reminded of the millions of families who have no food or shelter, or who face eviction. We pray for all homeless people across the world.

Where there is darkness Lord,
Let there be light

This Christmas, as we remember those who went to the stable, we are reminded

that you invite us also to make a journey.
We pray for ourselves that as you have
come to us, we may also come to know
you, to know of your love and let your light
and love shine in our lives as we love and
serve each.

Where there is darkness Lord,
Let there be light
Amen

The Lord's Prayer:

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 in the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom the power and the glory are yours.
Now and forever.
Amen

Announcements:

Offering Prayer:

O Christ, today we join those who first offered
you their gifts as we bring our own to you.
We pray that they will make a life-changing
difference to the work of [add name of charity]
this Christmas.

Amen.

Carol: O Come all ye Faithful (TIS 304)

1 O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him
born the king of angels:

Refrain:

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

2. True God of true God,
Light from Light eternal,
lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, begotten not created:
[Refrain]

3. See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks,
draw nigh with holy fear;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps:
[Refrain]

4. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens of heaven above,
'Glory to God, glory in the highest':
[Refrain]

5. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father
now in flesh appearing:
[Refrain]

Christmas Blessing:

May our lives and our prayers be like lights shining in dark places.
And may the blessing of God –
Creator, Christ-Child and Spirit
fill our hearts and homes with light this Christmas.

3-fold-amen

Acknowledgements:

Image: Virgin Mary and Child by Tabitha Brown

Shine on Star of Bethlehem - Shining Lights – Christian Aid