



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the triune God, the Creator of heaven and earth and God's ownership of all things (Psalm 24:1). In God's sovereignty, God has allowed other groups to migrate to these shores. We acknowledge the cultures of our First Nations Peoples and are thankful for the community that we share together now.

Cantor's welcome

Cantor: Thank you for joining our midnight Service on this most holy night. Tonight we gather in silent adoration, awaiting in expectation the birth of our Saviour King. I invite you to stand to sing our opening hymn.

Opening Song: O Come All Ye Faithful

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!

Chorus
*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

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens
of heaven above!
Glory to God,
All glory in the highest

Chorus
*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord*

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
born this happy morning
Jesus, to Thee be glory given
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing.

See how the shepherds
summoned to his cradle
leaving their flocks,
draw nigh with holy fear
we too will thither bend our
joyful footsteps

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Minister's Welcome

The Lord our God the Almighty Reigns.

Let us rejoice and exalt and give God the glory.

Glory to God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

as in the beginning, so now, and for ever. Amen.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light: for to us a child is born, to us a Son is given. (Isaiah 9:2.6)

Prayer of Approach

Deacon: *With expectant steps, and hearts filled with adoration, we approach God's throne of grace praying,*

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.

The Gloria

On this most holy night when the angels pronounced Christ's birth to the shepherds, let us join in their heavenly song,

**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.**

Prayer of the Day

Wondrous and majestic Father, all glory to you for the gift of your Son, who you sent to save us. With the angels, let us praise your name, and tell the earth his story, that all may believe, rejoice, and proclaim your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Ministry of the Word

The first reading is from the second book of Isaiah Chapter 9 beginning at verse 2 to 7.

² The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

³ You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

⁴ For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. ⁵ Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.
Hear the word of the Lord **thanks be to God.**

**The Psalm for today is number 96,
beginning at verse 1 to 10.**

¹ Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

**² Sing to the LORD, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.**

³ Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvellous deeds among all peoples.

**⁴ For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.**

⁵ For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

**⁶ Splendour and majesty are before him;
strength and glory are in his sanctuary.**

⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

**⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come into his courts.**

⁹ Worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth.

**¹⁰ Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."
The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.**

Glory to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
as in the beginning, so now and for ever. Amen.

The second reading comes from the letter of Titus, chapter 2 commencing at verse 11.

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

This is the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Song: Into us a Boy is Born

1 Unto us a boy is born!
The King of all creation,
Came he to a world forlorn,
The Lord of ev'ry nation.

2 Cradled in a stall was he
With sleepy cows and asses;
But the very beasts could see
That he the world surpasses.

3 Herod then with fear was filled:
"A prince," he said, "in Jewry!"
And all the little boys he killed
At Bethl'hem in his fury.

4 Now may Mary's son, who
came
So long ago to love us,
Lead us all with hearts aflame
Unto the joys above us.

5 Alpha and Omega he!
Now let the organ thunder,
While the choir with peals of glee
Shall rend the air asunder.

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**The Gospel of our Lord, according to Luke, Chapter 2,
verses 1 to 14. Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. **2** (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) **3** And everyone went to their own town to register.

4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. **5** He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. **6** While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, **7** and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **9** An angel of the Lord appeared to 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. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. **11** Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. **12** This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."

This is the Gospel of our Lord
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Message:

Let us gaze on our vulnerable, Almighty God

It is wonderful to be with you this evening as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

I have also enjoyed the Advent journey with you as well, as we have prepared for this Christmas Day and the good tidings it brings. I found the lighting of the Advent candles significant as I noted the gifts that Jesus birth brings to us, are found in these candles, hope, peace, love and joy.

Most of us here have experienced many, many Christmas days, some more than others. For me the season of Christmas never loses its awesomeness. There is something powerful and yet, also a humbleness about the birth of Jesus.

Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to participate in the universal census as decreed by Caesar Augustus. No one was exempt. The census means that Jesus will be born where Israel's Messiah should be born; in David's city Bethlehem. However as it turns out, there is no accommodation for them so Jesus is born outside the town. Jesus' birth takes place on the margins, beginning a pattern to be seen over and over again in his life and ministry.

Jesus was often on the margins of society because of his different way of thinking regarding forgiveness, love and care for the poor and needy, the outcasts of society. He came to minister to these suffering people and to introduce us to social justice, so that we, his people will carry on his work.

This visitor from God, who could not find hospitality in his own city, will institute in the world the hospitality of God. The poor and marginalised shepherds of Bethlehem will be the first to experience it.

Jesus lived a very simple life, his focus being prayerful contact with God the Father in order to ensure he was following God's will, to seek His guidance, strength and support as the Word was spread, and this theme will continue throughout Jesus' ministry.

Jesus also came to turn the world upside down and to encourage the people who had turned away from God, to repair the rift, as we so often hear in the Old Testament.

Jesus didn't begin his ministry until he was thirty. He spent his childhood in Nazareth and was therefore known as Jesus of Nazareth. He was a carpenter and no sermons or miracles were performed before he was baptised by John the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan river.

The birth of Jesus is a very short story in Luke's Gospel and moves quickly to the shepherds who are keeping watch over their flocks by night. *"Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the Glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terrified,"* so would we be, I'm sure.

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; to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

This will be a sign for you; you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of heavenly hosts. Praising God and saying "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!"

When the angels and the heavenly hosts had left them and gone to heaven, the shepherds decided to go to Bethlehem and see this thing that had taken place.

I seem to remember a whole lot of "songs" were written about this mysterious birth in a stable, I'm sure we will continue to sing them for generations to come, this baby Jesus certainly made an impact on this earth.

So the shepherds went with great haste to see the baby Jesus and made it known, and all who heard it were amazed.

The Gospel reading finishes with, "*But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.*" I often think about Mary, she was only a child herself, probably fifteen years old.

What a devoted and trusting young person she was, sounding wise beyond her years, loved, trusted, and chosen by God to deliver baby Jesus, the Messiah, King and Lord of all.

I have often wondered about Mary and her pregnancy, how was Mary's labour? Was it the same as women of today? Did she breast feed the baby? All these questions I have, or was it an amazing awesome miracle, like the ones we find scattered throughout the scriptures.

Questions, that were a big no-no in Jesus' culture and even now in many cultures around our world.

What ever happened doesn't really matter in the grand plan, the fact that Jesus came to this earth is the real joy and a perfect gift from God.

Today we delight in the birth of a baby, a very special baby.

However, as the days go on, we come to understand the full impact of this child on humanity, we see glimpses of Jesus childhood in the scriptures, even then he is no ordinary child growing up in Nazareth, we see his divinity as well as his humanness.

As Jesus public ministry begins, we see the wonder of God's amazing gift to us unfold.

This Christmas season lets us embrace the true meaning of Christmas. I sometimes find it difficult to celebrate when so many people throughout the world are suffering so much through wars, oppression, violence and extreme weather patterns.

But this indeed is a time for great celebration as Jesus comes to bring hope, peace, love and joy to a broken world. It is only through Jesus that we can overcome the troubles of our society.

We pray that Jesus will draw us to himself at this special time, speaking to us messages of hope, peace, love and joy.

As we dwell with our Lord, we will learn how we as individuals can bring his kingdom closer among our own families and friends, our local communities, nationally and worldwide.

Keep praying.....

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas with your families and friends, may you find love and peace around your Christmas table, become a shining example of what Jesus has brought to our world, we thank you God for this amazing gift, in Christ our Lord.

Come Jesus, come!

The Prayer of the Week

Almighty God, you make us glad each year through the expectation of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come as our judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Prayers for the world and our community

We gaze, Loving Father, at your glory that has been revealed, through the angels' message of peace and joy. We pray for the peoples of your world and for all your creation: for those in places still ravaged by war and unjust governmental structures. Comfort your people, at the time of your Son's coming, as we join in the angels' song, **Glorify to God in the highest.**

We gaze, Loving Father, at your glory that has been revealed, for the good news that salvation is at hand. We pray for your church throughout the world: for leaders of churches in this land; for the clergy and people of this parish; for prophets who call for church to repent. Guide your church into truth and free it from corruption. Comfort your people, at the time of your Son's coming, as we join in the angels' song, **Glorify to God in the highest.**

We gaze, Loving Father, at your glory that has been revealed, for the glorious Christmas message of reconciliation and love. We pray for our community: for our homes and our neighbours; for our

schools, our hospitals and our workplaces. Comfort your people, at the time of your Son's coming, as we join in the angels' song,

Glory to God in the highest.

We gaze, Loving Father, at your glory that has been revealed, for your good news of healing and wholeness. We pray for all in need of your comfort and care: We pray for the parishioners on our prayer list for God's healing and comfort. Comfort your people, at the time of your Son's coming, as we join in the angels' song,

Glory to God in the highest.

Please join me in praying,

Fulfil now, Lord, our desires and prayers as may be best for us. Grant us in this life, knowledge of your truth and in the age to come, life eternal.

We conclude by praying as our Saviour taught us:

**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 from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness

The Lord of light has come, bringing to light things which were hidden in darkness, thus disclosing the purposes of the heart. Knowing God's compassion to forgive, let us open our hearts by confessing our sins.

Merciful God, for the things we have done that we regret,
forgive us;

for the things we have failed to do, **forgive us;**

for the times we have acted without love, **forgive us;**

for the times we have acted without thinking, **forgive us;**

for our weakness, ignorance and wilfulness, **forgive us,**

and restore to us the joy and peace of your salvation.

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

Promise of Forgiveness

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, 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.**

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**

Thanksgiving and Communion

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,
mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us.

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, forever 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 this 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 giving 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.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’

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 our 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,
by 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.**

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.

Come and let us share in the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus
Christ and let us feed on him in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Communion Song: From Heaven you Came

From heaven you came,
helpless babe,

entered our world,
your glory veiled;

not to be served but to serve,
and give your life
that we might live.

*This is our God,
the servant king,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives
as a daily offering
of worship to the servant king.*

There in the garden of tears,
my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
'yet not my will
but yours,' he said.

This is our God ...

Come, see his hands
and his feet,

the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.

This is our God ...

So let us learn how to serve,
and in our lives enthrone him;
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God ...

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Communion Song: Away in a Manger

Away in a manger
No crib for His bed
The little Lord Jesus
Lay down His sweet head.

The stars in the sky
Look down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus
Asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing
The poor Baby wakes
But little Lord Jesus

No crying He makes.

I love Thee, Lord Jesus
Look down from the sky
And stay by my side
'Til 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 take us to Heaven
To live with Thee there.

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Commitment to live out our worship of the Lord

Living God, in this holy meal you fill us with new hope. May the power of your love, which we have known in word and sacrament, continue your saving work among us, give us courage for our journey, and bring us to the joys you promise.

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.**

Let us go from this place proclaiming that we have seen the glory of God, believing that there is a light that shines in the darkness, which the darkness shall not overcome. And may the love of God the Father, the peace of Jesus the Son, and the joy of the Spirit, be with you this Christmas, and evermore. **Amen.**

On this most holy night, may you sleep in the presence and peace of the Lord, **in the name of Christ. Amen.**

Closing Song: Joy to the World

Joy to the world!
The Lord is 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.

Joy to the earth!
The Saviour reigns
Let us our songs employ
While fields and floods
Rocks, hills and plains

Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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, wonders of His love.

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