

1st Sunday after Christmas

9 am Service



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.

Welcome, praise and thanksgiving to God

The Lord our God the Almighty Reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult and give God the glory.

Let the word of God dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Sentence

Clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, and be thankful. (Colossians 3: 14-15)

Prayer of Approach

Let us pray.

Gracious God,

**we humbly thank you for life and health and safety,
for freedom to work, leisure to rest, and for all that is beautiful
in creation and human life.**

**But above all, we praise you for our Saviour Jesus Christ, for his
death and resurrection; for the gift of your Spirit; and for the
hope of sharing in your glory.**

**Fill our hearts with all joy and believing;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Opening Song: Joy to the World

Joy to the world!
The Lord is come;
let earth receive its 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 streams,
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.

© Together in Song
CCL Licence no: 89934

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: in your mercy, bring us to share the divine life of Jesus Christ, who came to share our human life, and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. **Amen.**

Ministry of the Word

Heavenly Father, as we listen to your Word, grant to us ears that hear and eyes that see what the Spirit is saying to our hearts. May your Word live in us and bear much fruit to your glory. **Amen.**

The first reading is from the prophet Isaiah chapter 63, reading verses 7 to 9.

⁷I will talk about the kind things the Lord has done. I'll praise him for everything he's done for us. He has done many good things for the nation of Israel. That's because he loves us and is very kind to us. ⁸In the past he said, "They are my people. They are children who will be faithful to me." So he saved them. ⁹When they suffered, he suffered with them. He sent his angel to save them. He set them free because he is loving and kind. He lifted them up and carried them. He did it again and again in days long ago.

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

The Psalm for today is Psalm 148.

We will read in alternate verse.

¹Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights above.

**²Praise him, all his angels; praise him,
all his heavenly hosts.**

³Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars.

**⁴Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the skies.**

⁵Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for at his command they were created,

**⁶and he established them for ever and ever
—he issued a decree that will never pass away.**

⁷Praise the Lord from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,

**⁸lightning and hail, snow and clouds,
stormy winds that do his bidding,**

⁹you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,

**¹⁰wild animals and all cattle,
small creatures and flying birds,**

¹¹kings of the earth and all nations,
you princes and all rulers on earth,

¹²young men and women, old men and children.

¹³Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his splendour is above the earth and the heavens.

**¹⁴And he has raised up for his people a horn,
the praise of all his faithful servants, of Israel,
the people close to his heart. Praise the Lord.**

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

**The second reading comes from the letter to the Hebrews,
chapter 2 verses 10 to 18.**

¹⁰ God has made everything. He is now bringing his many sons and daughters to share in his glory. It is only right that Jesus is the one to lead them into their salvation. That's because God made him perfect by his sufferings. ¹¹ And Jesus, who makes people holy, and the people he makes holy belong to the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters. ¹² He says, "I will announce your name to my brothers and sisters. I will sing your praises among those who worship you." ¹³ Again he says, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here I am. Here are the children God has given me."

¹⁴ Those children have bodies made out of flesh and blood. So Jesus became human like them in order to die for them. By doing this, he could break the power of the devil. The devil is the one who rules over the kingdom of death. ¹⁵ Jesus could set people free who were afraid of death. All their lives they were held as slaves by that fear. ¹⁶ It is certainly Abraham's children that he helps. He doesn't help angels. ¹⁷ So he had to be made like people, fully human in every way. Then he could serve God as a kind and faithful high priest. And then he could pay for the sins of the people by dying for them. ¹⁸ He himself suffered when he was tempted. Now he is able to help others who are being tempted.

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

Gospel Song: Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the babe is Lord of all;
swift are winging angels singing,
noels ringing, tidings bringing,
Christ the babe is Lord of all,

Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Flocks were sleeping,
shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story,
tidings of a gospel true;
thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,

praises voicing, greet the morrow, Christ the babe was born for you.
Christ the babe was born for you,
© Together in Song CCL Licence no: 89934

The Gospel of our Lord, according to Matthew, chapter 2, commencing at verse 13 to 23.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

¹³ When the Wise Men had left, Joseph had a dream. In the dream an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph. "Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you to come back. Herod is going to search for the child. He wants to kill him."

¹⁴ So Joseph got up. During the night, he left for Egypt with the child and his mother Mary. ¹⁵ They stayed there until King Herod died. So the words the Lord had spoken through the prophet came true. He had said, "I brought my son out of Egypt."

¹⁶ Herod realized that the Wise Men had tricked him. So he became very angry. He gave orders about Bethlehem and the area around it. He ordered all the boys two years old and under to be killed. This agreed with the time when the Wise Men had seen the star. ¹⁷ In this way, the words Jeremiah the prophet spoke came true. He had said, ¹⁸ "A voice is heard in Ramah. It's the sound of crying and deep sadness. Rachel is crying over her children. She refuses to be comforted, because they are gone."

¹⁹ After Herod died, Joseph had a dream while he was still in Egypt. In the dream an angel of the Lord appeared to him. ²⁰ The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother. Go to the land of Israel. The people who were trying to kill the child are dead."

²¹ So Joseph got up. He took the child and his mother Mary back to the land of Israel. ²² But then he heard that Archelaus was king of Judea. Archelaus was ruling in place of his father Herod. This made Joseph afraid to go there. Joseph had been warned in a dream. So he went back to the land of Galilee instead. ²³ There he lived in a town called Nazareth. So what the prophets had said about Jesus came true. They had said that he would be called a Nazarene.

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

The Message: God with us: In glory and in grief

We're still basking in the glow of Christmas — the candles, the carols, the joy of Christ's birth. But today's readings remind us that Christmas isn't just a story of light and angels and shepherds. It's also about a God who

steps right into the messy, dangerous, and painful parts of human life — and stays there with us.

1. Remembering God's Faithful Love (Isaiah 63:7–9)

Isaiah begins today by remembering the steadfast love of the Lord — all the wonderful things God has done for His people. It's like he's deliberately choosing to remember God's goodness, even when life doesn't look very good.

He says, "In all their distress, He too was distressed, and the angel of His presence saved them." Isn't that a beautiful image? God doesn't look down on us from a safe distance. When His people suffer, He feels it too. He enters in.

At Christmas, we celebrate exactly that — **God entering our distress**. In Jesus, God doesn't send a messenger; He comes Himself. He puts on our humanity, our frailty, our vulnerability. That's what love does. Love shows up.

2. All Creation Joins the Song (Psalm 148)

Then we turn to Psalm 148 — this great, joyful hymn that calls everything to praise the Lord. Not just people, but angels, stars, mountains, fruit trees, wild animals — even stormy winds are included! It's as if the psalmist wants us to lift our eyes and see that the whole universe is a chorus of praise. Everything that God has made reflects His glory.

And that makes Christmas even more astonishing — the One who created the stars became a child under those same stars. The Creator joined His creation. The voice that called the galaxies into being became a baby's cry. When we praise Him, we're joining the whole of creation — heaven and earth together, singing in harmony: "Glory to God in the highest."

3. Jesus, Our Brother (Hebrews 2:10–18)

Hebrews helps us understand just how close God comes to us in Jesus. The writer says, "He shared in our humanity so that by his death he might destroy the one who holds the power of death."

In other words, Jesus didn't just visit; He moved in. He took on flesh and blood — real life, with all its joy and its pain — so that He could set us free.

I love the phrase, "He is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters." Think about that. The Son of God is not ashamed to call you His sister,

you His brother. He knows what it's like to be tired, to be tempted, to be afraid. That's the heart of the incarnation: **God with us**, not in theory but in flesh. Not only in glory, but in grief.

So when we face pain, loss, or uncertainty — we don't face it alone. We have a Saviour who understands it from the inside.

4. God's Protection and Presence (Matthew 2:13–23)

And then Matthew shows us the other side of the Christmas story — the part we don't often put on the Christmas cards. The Holy Family is on the run. Joseph, Mary, and the baby flee to Egypt because Herod's jealousy has turned deadly. It's a story of violence, fear, and loss.

We might wonder — where is God in all that chaos?

The answer is: **right there** — guiding Joseph through dreams, protecting the child, and fulfilling ancient promises.

It's a sobering reminder that from His earliest days, Jesus shared in the suffering of our world. Even as a baby, He knew exile and danger. The Christmas story is not naïve about the world's pain — it's God's answer to it. God doesn't promise an easy road, but He does promise His presence on the journey.

5. God With Us — Then and Now

When you put these readings together, there's a pattern:

- God sees our distress — and He comes close.
- The whole creation joins in praise — because redemption has begun.
- Jesus shares our humanity — so that death and fear no longer have the final word.
- And even in danger or darkness — God's purpose quietly continues.

That's what it means that His name is Emmanuel — God with us. Not just in the manger. Not just in the miracle moments.

But in the flight to Egypt. In the sleepless nights. In the uncertain tomorrows. He is the God who rejoices with us and the God who weeps with us — the One who redeems and restores, from the inside out. So today, as the glow of Christmas lingers, we're invited to join the psalmist's song — to praise God with all creation.

And we're invited, like Isaiah, to remember God's goodness, even if the year ahead looks uncertain. Maybe you've had a hard year. Maybe you're stepping into 2026 with some fears or griefs still on your heart.

Remember this: **you are not alone.** The God who came as a child is still with us, still faithful, still redeeming.

And that's reason enough — for the whole world, and for each of us — to lift our voices and say, "Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights." **Amen.**

The Apostles' Creed

We believe in one God, who made and loves all that is.

**We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was born, lived, died and rose again,
and is coming to call all to account.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, who calls,
equips and sends out God's people
and brings all things to their true end.**

This is our faith, the faith of the Church:

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

Offertory song: The Servant King

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 © Mission Praise CCL Licence no: 89934

Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness

*Happy are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Return to the Lord your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger,
and abounding in standfast love.*

**Heavenly Father,
you have loved us with an everlasting love,
but we have broken your holy laws
and have left undone what we ought to have done.
We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them.
For the sake of your Son who died for us,
forgive us cleanse us and change us.
By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Promise of Forgiveness

God desires that none should perish, but that all should turn to Christ, and live. In response to his call we acknowledge our sins. God pardons those who humbly repent, and truly believe the gospel. Therefore, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Prayer of the Week

Almighty God, you have shed upon us the light of your incarnate Word: may this light, kindles in our hearts, shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Prayers and Intercessions

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your beloved children give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.

We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory throughout all ages. **Amen.**

**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.**

Greeting of Peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given,
and His name shall be called Prince 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 be to God the Father and His Son.

He is the everliving God, for in the darkness of our world
you sent Jesus, the Light that never goes out.

Born of Mary, He entered our night with love, to lead us into the dawn of your redeeming grace.

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 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.'

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Let us proclaim the mystery of our faith.

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.

Commitment to live out our worship of the Lord

Living God, we thank you for hearing our prayers, feeding us with your word, and encouraging us in our meeting together. May your Light shine in us and through us, that we may bring hope to others and walk always in your truth.

Take us and use us to love and serve you and all people, in the power of your Spirit and in the name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing

May the Light of Christ, born into the world long ago, fill your hearts and homes with peace and joy. And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.** May this season be a celebration of the love, joy and peace that comes with the birth of our Saviour! **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Closing Song: The Light of Christ

*The light of Christ
has come into the world;
the light of Christ
has come into the world.*

We all must be born again
to see the kingdom Of God;
the water and the Spirit
bring new life in God's love.

The light of Christ...

God gave up His only Son
out of love for the world,
so that all men
who believe in Him
will live for ever.

*The light of Christ...The
light of God has come to us
so that we might have salvation;
from the darkness of our sins
we walk into glory with Christ Jesus.*

The light of Christ ...

© Mission Praise CCL Licence no: 8993