



CHRIST CHURCH

CATHEDRAL • GRAFTON

open doors ... open hearts ... open minds



**Families & Children Service
Christmas Eve**

GATHERING AROUND THE MANGER

Welcome by Bishop Murray

First Song: *Come and join the celebration*

***Come and join the celebration.
It's a very special day.
Come and join the celebration;
there's a new King born today!***

**See the shepherds
hurry down to Bethlehem,
gaze in wonder
at the Son of God who lay before them**

Come and join the celebration ...

**Wise men journey,
led to worship by a star,
kneel in homage,
bringing precious gifts from lands afar, So**

Come and join the celebration ...

**'God is with us,'
round the world the message bring.
He is with us,
'Welcome,' all the bells on earth are pealing**

***Come and join the celebration.
It's a very special day.
Come and join the celebration;
there's a new King born today!***

Valerie Collinson, 1933–
Anglican Hymns Old and New, #117

Opening Acclamation

The people who walked in darkness

All have seen a great light.

For to us a child is born

All to us a Son is given.

His name will be called

All Wonderful counsellor, mighty God,

the everlasting Father,

All the Prince of Peace.

Glory to God in the highest

All and peace to his people on earth.

The Christmas Collect

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.

HEARING THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS

Reading 1: Looking for the promised child (Isaiah 11:1–4a)

A green Shoot will sprout from Jesse's stump,
from his roots a budding Branch.

The life-giving Spirit of God will hover over him,
the Spirit that brings wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit that gives direction and builds strength,
the Spirit that instills knowledge and Fear-of-God.
Fear-of-God will be all his joy and delight.

He won't judge by appearances,
won't decide on the basis of hearsay.
He'll judge the needy by what is right,
render decisions on earth's poor with justice.
His words will bring everyone to awed attention.

The Message: The Bible in Contemporary English. © Eugene H. Petersen, 1993–2002

Reading 2: God invites Mary to be the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26–38)

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary.

Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her: Good morning! You're beautiful with God's beauty, Beautiful inside and out! God be with you.

She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus. He will be great, be called 'Son of the Highest.' The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; He will rule Jacob's house forever - no end, ever, to his kingdom."

Mary said to the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man."

The angel answered, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Highest hover over you; Therefore, the child you bring to birth will be called Holy, Son of God.

"And did you know that your cousin Elizabeth conceived a son, old as she is? Everyone called her barren, and here she is six months' pregnant! Nothing, you see, is impossible with God."

And Mary said, Yes, I see it all now: I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve. Let it be with me just as you say. Then the angel left her.
Blessed Among Women.

The Message: The Bible in Contemporary English. © Eugene H. Petersen, 1993–2002

Song: Long ago, prophets knew [TIS 283]

**Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew,
come to make all things new;
bear his people's burden,
freely love and pardon.**

***Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes, when he comes,
who will make him welcome?***

**God in time, God in man,
this is God's timeless plan:
He will come, as a man,
born himself of woman,
God divinely human.**

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring ...

**Mary hail! Though afraid,
she believed, she obeyed.
In her womb, God is laid:
till the time expected,
nurtured and protected.**

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring ...

**Journey ends! Where afar
Bethlehem shines, like a star,
stable door stands ajar.
Unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry.**

***Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
Jesus comes! Jesus comes!
We will make him welcome!***

Fredrick Pratt Green, 1903–

Reading 3: Jesus is born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory - this was during Herod's kingship - a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him."

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

The Message: The Bible in Contemporary English. © Eugene H. Petersen, 1993-2002

Song: *O little town of Bethlehem* [TIS 316]

**O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see you lie!
Above your deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by:
yet, in your dark streets shining
the everlasting light,
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in you tonight.**

**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 to all on earth.**

**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.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in,
be born is us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
their great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel.**

Phillips Brooks, 1835–93 alt.

Reading 4: Angels announce the birth of the Christ Child (Luke 2:8–20)

There were shepherders camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This

is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights,

Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherders talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherders were impressed.

Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself.

The shepherders returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!

The Message: The Bible in Contemporary English. © Eugene H. Petersen, 1993–2002

Blessing of the Christmas Crib

Children's Talk

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS

Jesus, whose mother was Mary:

we pray for ... [families].

Lord Jesus,

All hear our prayer.

Jesus, cradled in a manger:
we pray for ... [the homeless, refugees].
Lord Jesus,
All **hear our prayer.**

Jesus, sharing the stable with the animals:
we pray for ... [the creation].
Lord Jesus,
All **hear our prayer.**

Jesus, worshipped by shepherds and kings:
we pray for ... [nations, races, peoples].
Lord Jesus,
All **hear our prayer.**

Jesus, our Emmanuel:
we pray for ... [those in particular need].
Lord Jesus,
All **hear our prayer.**

All **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 for ever. Amen.

AT THE TABLE OF JESUS

Reconciliation

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

All 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.

All Christ, have mercy.

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

All Lord, have mercy.

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive us our sins
and make us holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Greeting of Peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

— Isaiah 9.6

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All And also with you.

Song: The First Nowell [TIS 301]

**The first nowell, the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell.

born is the King of Israel!

**They looked up and saw a star
shining in the East beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light
and so it continued both day and night.**

Nowell, nowell ...

**And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent
and to follow the star wherever it went.**

Nowell, nowell ...

**This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay
right o'er the place where Jesus lay.**

Nowell, nowell ...

**Then entered in those wise men three
and reverently, upon their knee,
they offered there in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.**

Nowell, nowell ...

**Now let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
who has made heaven and earth from nought
and with his blood salvation bought.
*Nowell, nowell ...***

Anon. English, c. 17th cent.

Bringing our gifts to the Table

Holy One, Creator of life,
we offer you thanks for the gift of children.
We pray that all children may have cause in life to rejoice,
may share in the fruits of your creation,
and may grow into the persons you are calling them to be.

A Christmas Thanksgiving Prayer

The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Gracious God,
we thank you for showing your love for us
by sending your child, Jesus on this night,
to grow up in a family surrounded by a community of faith,
to know the joys and challenges we have in our own families.

Jesus cared about children.

He drew them to him,
held them in his arms,
and told them stories.

Jesus said we could enter the reign of God only as a little child.

And so we join the saints and angels
in proclaiming your glory, as we say,

**All 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.**

One night after supper, Jesus took a piece of bread.

He said the blessing, broke the bread,
and shared it with everyone around the table.

He said,

"Take this bread, and as you eat it, remember me."

Then Jesus took the cup of wine.

He gave thanks to God and passed the cup around the table.

He said, "Take this wine, and as you drink it, remember me."

God of love, we ask you to bless this bread and this wine
with your empowering spirit.

Grant that we, filled with the Spirit's grace and power,
may be renewed for the service of your kingdom.

Challenge us, nourish us, and guide us,
for the sake of the children,
for the sake of the human family,
and for the sake of the world.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ.
By him, and with him, and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours,
Almighty Father, now and for ever.

All Amen

The Bishop breaks the bread.

As this broken bread was once many grains,
which have been gathered together and made one bread:

**All so may your Church be gathered
from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.
Holy things for holy people.
Broken things for broken people.

All the children of God have a place at God's Table.

*Anyone who would normally receive Holy Communion in their own
Christian tradition is welcome to receive the Sacrament with us here
today.*

*Those who prefer to receive a personal blessing from the priest rather
than Holy Communion are invited to come to the Altar and simply cross
their arms in front of them so the clergy know their desire.*

Gluten-free wafers are available.

Away in a Manger [TIS 318]

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky 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 cradle till 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.

Anonymous.

Silent Night [TIS 311]

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round the virgin mother and Child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born!

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

Josef Mohr, c. 1792-1848 alt.

PRAYERS AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

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.

All To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

The Blessing

God sent his angels from glory to bring to shepherds
the good news of Jesus' birth.

All Amen. We thank you, Lord.

You have heard his story,
the story of God's own Son.

All Amen. We thank you, Lord.

May he fill you with joy
to bring this good news to others today.

All Amen. We thank you, Lord.

The Dismissal

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

All Glory, thanks and praise to God.

Song: Joy to the World [TIS 268]

**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 make the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and, wonders, wonders of his love.**

Isaac Watts 1674–1748 alt.

The order of service is adapted from Common Worship published by the Church of England and reproduced with permission. The Thanksgiving Prayer was composed by the Rev. Tom Wilson, Anglican Parish of Blyth & Brussels, Ontario, Canada. Except where otherwise indicated, hymns are from Together in Song and are reproduced with permission under CCLI Licence No. 1966.

WELCOME TO CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Welcome to the Cathedral Church of Christ the King, commonly referred to as *Christ Church Cathedral*.

The Cathedral stands on the traditional lands of the Bundjalung nation. We acknowledge and pay our respect to their elders past and present, as well as to indigenous people with us today.

You are sharing in worship from *A Prayer Book for Australia*, which stands in the long Anglican tradition of 'common prayer' in which people, choir and clergy offer God and each other the best of ourselves ('our souls and our bodies') for the common good. We seek the peace and well-being of our nation, and especially our local community.

We are delighted that you are here: please come and worship with us again.

Whether you are Anglican, from another Christian Church or from another faith tradition, you are warmly welcome to take part in the service. If you want to find out more about the Christian faith, please make yourself known to a member of the clergy after the service.

The service today includes a celebration of the Eucharist during which there will be an opportunity for people to receive Holy Communion. Communicant members of other Christian churches are invited to receive the Sacrament here today, as their own conscience allows. Everyone is welcome to come for a blessing, even if not receiving the consecrated Elements.

The Cathedral is open every day. Free WIFI is available in the Cathedral and throughout our gardens.

You are always welcome to use the Cathedral and its grounds for prayer and reflection, and we encourage you to make this House of Prayer a place of pilgrimage and prayer for our City.



Visit our web site for the latest news and information

www.graftoncathedral.org.au

BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES

There is no more important task and no more rewarding role than nurturing the spiritual capacities of our children and other family members. As a Cathedral community, we work with parents, godparents, grandparents and other members of the extended family to offer our children the best support as they grow in their knowledge, in their sense of connection with God, in their compassion for others and in their care for the fragile web of life. To check the growing collection of online resources for parents and families simply scan the QR code or visit:



<https://www.graftoncathedral.org.au/building-strong-families>

Parents Resources for parents →	Milestones Celebrating the special stages →	Faith@Home Nurturing the spirit →	Seasons Holy days and holidays →
Family Life Ideas for healthy family life →	Compassion Make a difference in the world →	Faith@Church Finding spiritual community →	Sacraments Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation →

DAILY MORSELS

Are you getting the Dean's daily inspirational message on your smart phone? To get these daily morsels of wisdom for everyday life, just download the Cathedral app on your phone and activate notifications when prompted. To download the app simply scan the QR code or visit:



<https://www.graftoncathedral.org.au/app-1>



It began on Christmas Day 1949, when a minister named Rev Frank Byatt in Victoria placed a simple empty bowl on the table before him. He humbly asked his friends and family to contribute what they felt the cost of the meal had been. Rev Byatt asked that they consider their own good fortune in being able to share a Christmas meal together in comfort and safety. And he invited them to share God's blessings of love and friendship in the form of a gift to help people who had fled the horrors of World War Two and were suffering as refugees.

This invitation to Australian Christians to stand by men, women and children living through conflict and displacement is, sadly, more important than ever. For the first time in history, there are nearly 60 million displaced people in the world who need our help.

The Christmas Bowl appeal is our way of forging a loving connection between our Christian community here in Australia and people around the world who are experiencing dreadful hardship and suffering.

Christmas Day

Merry Christmas!

Today, we invite you to share the joy of your Christmas with a brother or sister in urgent need around the world. **Please give a gift today to provide food, shelter and support.**

Thank you for sharing God's love through the Christmas Bowl.

CALL: 1800 025 101
VISIT: actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188