

The First Eucharist of Christmass 2023

7.00pm Christmas Eve

St. Paul's, Glenrowan.



**ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF WANGARATTA
PAROCHIAL DISTRICT OF WANGARATTA WEST & THE WARBYS**

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*When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the shepherds are back with the flocks,
then the work of Christmas begins:*

*To find the lost,
to heal the broken in spirit,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoners
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among all peoples,
to make a little music with the heart,
and to radiate the Light of Christ,
in all that we do and in all that we say.*

This is the work of Christmas.

LOVE (III) by George Herbert

Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lack'd anything.

"A guest," I answer'd, "worthy to be here";
Love said, "You shall be he."

"I, the unkind, the ungrateful? ah my dear,
I cannot look on thee."

Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord, but I have marr'd them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."

"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?"
"My dear, then I will serve."

"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."
So I did sit and eat.

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

The Welcome and The Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

And also with you.

Opening Hymn: AHB 237/TiS 312. tune Irby

1. **Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.**
2. **He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor, despised and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.**
3. **And through all his wondrous childhood,
day by day like us he grew;
he was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feels for all our sadness,
and he shares in all our gladness.**
4. **And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love,
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.**
5. **Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him: but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high,
when his children gather round
bright, like stars, with glory crowned.**

Cecil Frances Alexander 1818–95 alt.

Blessing 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 of peace and joy,
we thank you for this crib,
prepared for the celebration of your Son's birth.
May all who worship him be strengthened in faith
and receive the fullness of life he came to bring,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Invitation to 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.

Lord of grace and truth, we confess our unworthiness
to stand in your presence as your children.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

The Virgin Mary accepted your call to be the mother of Jesus.
Forgive our disobedience to your will.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

Your Son our Saviour was born in poverty in a manger.
Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

The shepherds left their flocks to go to Bethlehem.
Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

The wise men followed the star to find Jesus the King.
Forgive our reluctance to seek you.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

Absolution

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

Hymn: AHB 221/TiS 301—The First Nowell

1. **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.***
2. **When they looked up they 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, ...***
6. **Now let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
who has made heaven and earth from naught,
and with his blood salvation brought.
*Nowell, nowell ...***

Anon., English c.17th cent.
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The Collect

Good and gracious God,
on this holy night you gave us your Son,
the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes,
the Saviour of all, lying in a manger.
On this holy night draw us into the mystery of your love.
Join our voices with the heavenly host,
that we may sing your glory on high.
Give us a place among the shepherds,
that we may find the one for whom we have waited,
Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
in the splendour of eternal light,
God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

A Reading from the prophecy of Isaiah [52. 7-10]

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

Hear the Word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn: AHB 236/TiS 311. Tune, Silent Night

- 1. 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.**
- 2. 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.'**
- 3. Silent night, holy night:
wondrous star, lend your light;
with the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King;
Christ our Saviour is born, Christ our Saviour is born.**

Joseph Mohr 1792–1848
tr. John Freeman Young 1820–85 alt

Please remain standing for the Gospel Reading

The Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Luke [2. 1-14]

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

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

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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 the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

For the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

The Sermon

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Please kneel or sit

Brothers and sisters, on this most holy night of our Lord's birth, that we may find peace, joy, and contentment in this holy season, let us pray for ourselves and all those in need of our prayers, saying:

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the church of Christ, that it may faithfully proclaim the good news of salvation and may care for the needs of God's people in all corners of the world, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For peace in our troubled world, that the darkness of war and injustice may be replaced by the light of peace and love, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all those in need of our prayers: the homeless; the unemployed; the hungry; those who are hospitalized; those who are imprisoned in body or soul; and all those for whom this season is one not of joy but of trial and sadness, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the sick [*especially N.*], that their illnesses may be turned into health and their sorrow into rejoicing, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who labour this night on behalf of others: doctors and nurses, police officers and firefighters, petrol station attendants, bus and taxi drivers, and all those whose work prevents them from sharing this evening with those they love, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

[pause for silent prayers]

we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

In thanksgiving we remember the lives of those who have gone before us in the faith [*especially your servant/s N.*].

That we, like them, may remain faithful to the end and live forever in the light of your eternal glory, we pray to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to 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.

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.**

Please stand

THE GREETING OF PEACE

Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to all in whom he delights.

Luke2. 14

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

*You are invited to share the Peace of Christ
with your neighbours*

Offertory Hymn: AHB 228. tune, Adeste Fidelis

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;
*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 of light eternal,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father, Begotten, not created.
*O come, let us adore him,***
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.
*O come, let us adore him, . . .***
4. **Child, for us sinners, poor and in the manger,
fain we embrace thee with love and awe;
who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
*O come, let us adore him,***
5. **Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
'Glory to God in the highest.'
*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.***
6. **Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning.
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father now in flesh appearing:
*O come, let us adore him,***

Possibly by John Francis Wade c.1711–1786. trans. Frederick Oakeley 1802–80,
William Thomas Brooke 1848–1917 (vv.3–5) and others

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING PRAYER

It is customary to remain standing for this prayer.

If circumstances do not permit this, please feel free to kneel or sit for the prayer.

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.

We give you thanks, O God, through your beloved servant Jesus Christ, through whom you have created all things.

By the power of the Holy Spirit Christ was born of Mary, and shared our human nature.

With loving arms outstretched upon the cross for us, Jesus broke the chains of evil and destruction.

By the resurrection your will was fulfilled and you gathered a holy people to offer you praise.

Now with all creation we raise our voices to proclaim your glory, as we say:

**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.**

To you indeed be glory, almighty God, because on the night before he died, your Son, Jesus Christ, took bread; when he had given you thanks, he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said:

Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you;
do this to remember me.

After supper he took the cup;

when he had given you thanks, he gave it to them and said:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out for you;
do this as often as you drink it to remember me.

God of hope and joy, we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.

With this bread and this cup

we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

**Christ has died, Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

Therefore, loving God, recalling now Christ's death and resurrection, we ask you to accept this our sacrifice of praise.

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and our celebration, that we may be fed with the body and blood of your Son and be filled with your life and goodness.

Strengthen us to do your work, and to be your body in the world. Unite us in Christ and give us your peace.

May we praise you and give you glory through your First-born, Jesus Christ.

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, we worship you, O God, in songs of everlasting praise.

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION

The priest breaks the bread.

We who are many are one body in Christ,
For we all share in the one bread.

The following is said or sung

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.

The priest says

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Come for the feast is prepared

happy are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

Please come forward for Communion or a Blessing.

*If you want to receive a Blessing only,
please hold your hands behind your back
when you are at in front of the Priest,
this will signify you do not want Communion.*

*Communicant members of all Christian churches
are welcome to receive Communion today.*

After Communion Hymn: AHB 242. tune, CRADLE SONG

1. *Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.*
2. *The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes,
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from on high,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.*
3. *Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.*

Anon.

Let us pray.

God our Father,
tonight you have made known to us again
the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;
may our Christmas celebration confirm our faith
and fix our eyes on him until the day dawns
and Christ the morning Star rises in our hearts.

**Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

Hymn AHB233. tune, God Rest You Merry

1. God rest you merry people all,
let nothing you dismay,
remember Christ our Saviour
was born on Christmas Day,
to save us all from Satan's power
when we were gone astray,
*and it's tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy:
and it's tidings of comfort and joy.*
2. From God our heavenly Father
the blessed angels came
and unto certain shepherds
brought tidings of the same,
that there was born in Bethlehem
the Son of God by name:
and it's tidings of . . .
3. The shepherds at those tidings
rejoiced much in mind,
and left their flocks a feeding
in tempest, storms and wind,
and straight they came to Bethlehem,
the Son of God to find:
and it's tidings of . . .
4. And when they came to Bethlehem
where our sweet Saviour lay,
they found him in a manger
where oxen feed on hay;
the blessed Virgin kneeling down
unto the Lord did pray:
and it's tidings of . . .
5. Now to the Lord sing praises,
all you within this place,
and with true love and brotherhood
each other now embrace:
the merry time of Christmas
is drawing on apace:
and it's tidings of . . .

Anon., English 18th cent.

THE BLESSING & DISMISSAL

May the Father,
who has loved the eternal Son
from before the foundation of the world,
shed that love upon you his children.

Amen.

May Christ,
who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace.

Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
by whose overshadowing
Mary became the God-bearer,
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

Amen.

And the Blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

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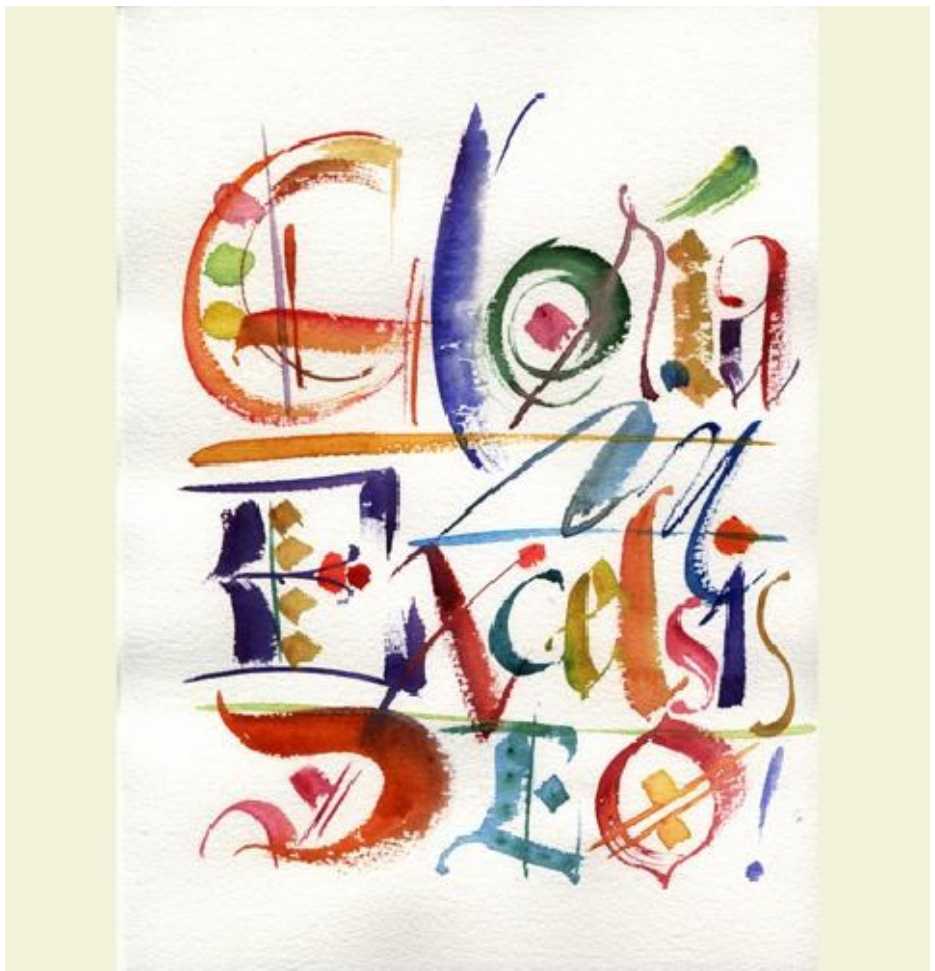
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<http://liturgy.co.nz/worship-resources/epce3>. Compiled December 2022





Aboriginal Nativity
Sue Orchison, 2009