



CHRISTMAS  
EVE  
2025

11.30PM

Nau mai, haere mai;  
a warm welcome to St Matthew-in-the-City,  
a spirited place where people stand, connect,  
and seek common ground.

We are glad you have come  
to celebrate Christmas  
with this community.

We hope that you will find  
the Christmas spirit of peace and love  
in tonight's celebrations.

*Presider:* Rev Cate Thorn

*Preacher:* Rev Richard Bonifant

*Organist:* Nicholas Forbes

St Matthew's Voices

*At any time in the service when we invite you to stand  
you are welcome to remain seated if you need to.*

# PROCESSIONAL HYMN

*SOLO:*

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.

*CHOIR:*

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, and meek, and lowly lived on earth our Saviour holy.

**And through all his wondrous childhood  
he would honour and obey,  
love and watch the loving mother  
in whose gentle arms he lay.  
Christian children all should be  
mild, obedient, good as he.**

**For he is our childhood's pattern;  
day by day like us he grew;  
he was little, weak and helpless,  
tears and smiles like us he knew;  
and he feeleth for our sadness,  
and he shareth in our gladness.**

**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.**

**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;  
where like stars his children crowned,  
all in white shall wait around.**

*Words: Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)*

*Tune: Irby, H. J. Gauntlett (1803-1876), harm. by A. H. Mann; Carols for Choirs I 3*

# WELCOME

Son of God, light that shines in the dark,  
Child of joy and peace,  
help us to come to you  
and be born anew this holy night.

Grace to you and peace from God our Creator,  
the love at our beginning and without end,  
in our midst and with us.

**God is with us, here we find new life.**

# LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

*Liturgist:*

As pōhutukawa and rātā bloom  
on hillside and seashore  
We light the Christ Candle.  
Christ, our fragrant summer flower,  
may your hope, peace, joy and love  
fill all our hillsides and seashores;  
may your light shine strongly  
in places of violence and injustice  
in our world, this day and every day.

**We light the Christ Candle. Amen.** <sup>1</sup>

*Please be seated.*

# GLORIA

*from Coronation Mass, KV 317*

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cws.org.nz/get-involved/give/christmas-appeal/for-churches/>

# SENTENCE AND PRAYER FOR THE DAY

And the Word became flesh and lived among us.

*John 1:14a*

**God of light and life,  
You are born among us as a baby, as one of us.  
As we rejoice in the beauty of summer  
grant that we may also celebrate  
the wonder of your incarnation  
and rejoice in the mystery of God becoming human;  
through Jesus Christ who shares our human nature. Amen.** <sup>2</sup>

## FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of the prophet Isaiah.

*Isaiah 9:2-7*

May we hear angel voices.

**May we see the star.**

## GRADUAL HYMN

**Silent night, holy night,  
all is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy infant so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace,  
sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Märie te pō, tapu te pō  
Ka kite nga hepara  
Te korōria o te rangi  
Me nga ahera Hareruia  
Kua whanau te tamaiti  
E Ihu te Karaiti**

**Silent night, holy night,  
Son of God, love's pure light;  
radiant beams from Thy holy face  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.**

*Words: Joseph Mohr (1792-1848), tr. J. F. Young (1820-1885)  
Tune: Silent Night, melody by F. X. Gruber (1787-1863). TIS 311*

*We turn to face the Gospel reader.*

## THE GOSPEL

Hear the Gospel of Christ according to Luke,  
chapter two, beginning at verse one.



Shine on our path -ways.

*Luke 2:1-14*

This is the Gospel of Christ.



May we hear wis - dom. <sup>3</sup>

## SERMON

## ANTHEM

*O magnum mysterium*

*Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)*

# THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us be still and mindful of the world,  
the Church, this nation, our communities, and ourselves.

## THE PEACE

*Please stand for the Greeting of Peace.*

Blessed be Christ the Prince of Peace  
**who breaks down the walls that divide.**

The peace of God be always with you  
**and also with you.**

*Please turn and greet those around you with peace.*

## OFFERTORY HYMN \*

**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, nowell, nowell,  
born is the King of Israel!**

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*For electronic giving options:*

1. to make a fast one-off, or ongoing, donation to St Matthew-in-the-City text **stmatthew** to **818**, or **scan this QR code**:
2. use the Tap-n-Go terminal on top of the donation box.



**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, nowell, nowell,  
born is the King of Israel!**

**This star drew nigh to the north-west;  
over Bethlehem it took its rest,  
and there it did both stop and stay  
right over the place where Jesus lay.  
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,  
born is the King of Israel!**

**Then entered in those wise men three  
full reverently upon their knee,  
and offered there in his presence  
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.  
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,  
born is the King of Israel!**

*Words: Anon., English c. 17th cent.  
Tune: The First Nowell, English traditional melody  
harm. David Evans 1874-1948. TiS 301*

*Please be seated.*



# THE PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

Glory be to God who flows through all creation,  
blessing us with gifts to share.

**Blessed be God forever.**

# THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Spirit is here.

**God's hope is in us.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to God.**

Let us give thanks to the God of Peace.

**It is right to offer thanks and praise.**

All life is holy, sacred; worthy of respect and dignity.  
Let us give thanks for the power of the heart  
to sense the holy in the midst of the simple.

Power and possibility of Love,  
we praise you and give you thanks,  
for on this night Jesus was born among us,  
a baby needy and naked,  
born into poverty and oppression,  
in order to proclaim the gift  
of your transforming grace and justice.

Therefore with all the faithful, living and dead,  
with Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, Magi, and angels,  
we proclaim your great and glorious name,  
forever praising you and singing:

*Sanctus (from Coronation Mass, KV 317)*

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)*

On the night before he died Jesus 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:

Drink this, all of you,  
for this is my blood which brings new life;  
do this as often as you drink it, to remember me.

With this bread and wine we answer the call of God.

*Benedictus (from Coronation Mass, KV 317)*

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)*

Empower our celebration, Spirit of promise,  
feed us with your life, fire us with your love,  
confront us with your justice,  
and make us one with all who share your gifts of love.

**Amen.**

# THE LORD'S PRAYER

Kua akona nei tātou e to tātou Ariki, ka inoi tātou:

**E tō mātou Matua i te rangi,  
kia tapu tōu Ingoa.**

**Kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga.**

**Kia meatia tāu e pai ai ki runga ki te whenua,  
kia rite anō ki tō te rangi.**

**Hōmai ki a mātou āianeī  
he taro mā mātou mō tēnei rā.**

**Murua ō mātou hara,  
me mātou hoki e muru nei,  
i ō te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.**

**Aua hoki mātou e kawea kia whakawaia;  
engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino:**

**Nōu hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha, me te korōria,  
Āke, ake, ake. Āmine.**

# THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the life of Christ.

**We who are many are one body,  
for we all share the one bread.**

*“Hodie Christus natus est”<sup>4</sup>*

*Plainchant*

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<sup>4</sup> Translation: Today is Christ born; today the Savior has appeared;  
today the Angels sing, the Archangels rejoice;  
today the righteous rejoice, saying: Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia!

# TE POWHIRI THE INVITATION

Haere mai e te kahui a te Atua,  
Tangohia enei kai rangatira a te Karaiti.

Come bringing your varied faiths and backgrounds,  
for all are welcome to share in this act of communion.

*All are welcome to come and receive the bread and wine;  
there are gluten free wafers, just ask the serving priest.*

*The centre chalice is for dipping only.*

*If you do not wish to take communion you may come forward for a blessing.*

*Te Taro o te Ora. The Bread of Life.  
Te Kapu o te Ora. The Cup of Salvation*

## MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

*Agnus Dei (from Coronation Mass, KV 317)*

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)*

*Love came down at Christmas*

*Alexander L'Estrange*

*I sing of a maiden*

*Richard Madden*

*When Christ was born of Mary free*

*John Gardner (1917-2011)*

# PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Welcome, welcome,  
Jesus Christ our infant Saviour,  
baby who makes every birth holy.

**May we, who like the shepherds  
have witnessed in the stable a new kind of love  
return to our work with joy.**

**May we, for whom the heavens have opened  
to proclaim that God is with us,  
we who have fed on living bread  
and drunk the wine of heaven,  
go out to be instruments of your peace,  
day by day. Amen.**

# BLESSING

Do not be afraid  
the light still shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness cannot overcome it.  
Bear the light of Christ into the world  
with hope and great joy!  
The love of God,  
the light of Christ,  
and the joy of the Holy Spirit  
abide with you this holy night and forever.  
**Amen.**

# FINAL HYMN

**Hark! the herald angels sing:  
“Glory to the new-born King!  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!”  
Joyful, all ye nations rise,  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with th’angelic host proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem.”  
Hark! the herald angels sing:  
“Glory to the new-born King!”**

**Christ, by highest heav’n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
hail th’incarnate Deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel!  
Hark! the herald angels sing:  
“Glory to the new-born King!”**

**Hail the heav’n-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.  
Hark! the herald angels sing:  
“Glory to the new-born King!”**

*Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)  
Tune: Mendelssohn, from a chorus by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)  
adapted by William Hayman Cummings (1831-1915). TIS 303*

*Deacon from the rear of the church:*

Go now, so the world may know  
the wonder and mystery of grace.

**Amen. We go in the power of Love.**

## ORGAN VOLUNTARY

*Toccata in G*

*Théodore Dubois (1837-1924)*

**Christmas Day service times:**  
**8am** Christmas Eucharist  
**10am** Christmas Sung Eucharist

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If you want to know more about St Matthew's take a look at our website  
<http://www.stmatthews.nz/>, like us on Facebook.

Feel free to take **photos** during our services and share them on  
Facebook and Twitter. **No video** recording please.

**Toilets** are located down the stairs on the left hand side of the church.  
An **accessible toilet** is located on the right hand side past the kitchen.

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The **Parish Office** is now closed; reopening Monday 12 January 2026.

**Sunday services** on 28 December, 4, 11, 18, 25 January at 10am only.

**Sunday 8am services** resume on February 1, 2026

**Wednesday 12.20pm services** resume on February 4, 2026

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**Vicar:** Rev Richard Bonifant [richard@stmatthews.org.nz](mailto:richard@stmatthews.org.nz)

**Priest for Community Engagement:** Rev Cate Thorn  
[cate@stmatthews.org.nz](mailto:cate@stmatthews.org.nz)

**Curate:** Rev Grace Behm [grace@stmatthews.org.nz](mailto:grace@stmatthews.org.nz)

Parish Office **phone:** (09) 379 0625

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The service is being live streamed –  
the camera only shows the altar area, not the congregation.

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*We invite you to **keep** this copy of the Service and take it home with you  
to share with another member of your family, or with a friend  
**OR put in a recycling bin provided at the back of the church.***

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*Cover: Depiction of the infant Christ from the Great West window*