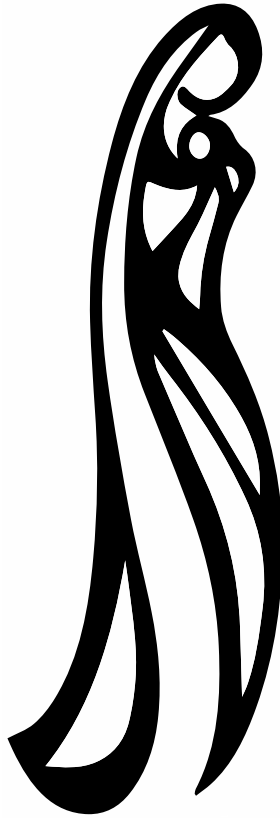


St Matthew-in-the-City



First Sunday of Christmas

Sunday 28 December 2025

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

## WELCOME

Come people of God,  
turn your hearts and minds to the light of Christ  
even as we turn to the warmth of our summer sun.  
Let us be ready to welcome the events and the people  
who may become turning points in our lives.

**We welcome with eyes and hearts open,  
ready to see God present in our summer world;  
in the people we meet and in the things we do.**

*Liturgist:* This is what God asks of you:  
to act justly, to love tenderly,  
and to walk humbly upon our earth.

**God of grace,  
in whom we live and move and dance for joy,  
guide our steps through the complexities of life;  
widen our vision that our sight be not limited  
by what we see,  
nor our wisdom by what we know,  
nor our love by what we can accept. Amen.**

## THE GLORIA

**Glorious are you, Mystery of Life,  
essence of all creation.  
You are the symphony of stars and planets.  
You are the music of the atoms within us.  
You are the dawn on mountain peaks,  
the moonlight on evening seas.  
Forest and farm, the rush of the city,  
everything is embraced in your love.**

Glorious are you, O Jesus Christ,  
Cosmic love in human form.  
You graced the smallness of time and place  
to teach us to dance to the music.  
You walk on our seas and heal in our streets.  
You make your home in our lives,  
revealing that cross and resurrection  
are one on the road to freedom.

**Glorious are you, O Spirit of Truth,  
wisdom and breath of our being.  
You are the wind that sweeps our senses.  
You are the fire that burns in our hearts.  
You are the needle of the inner compass,  
always pointing to true North,  
guiding us on the sacred dance  
into the Mystery of Life. <sup>1</sup>**

*Please be seated.*

## RECONCILIATION

In this time of quiet  
we invite you to reflect on life this holiday season.  
Bring into the presence of God, in this place,  
the joys and and burdens you carry with you this morning.  
If you need forgiveness, seek it in the renewing love of God.  
If you need healing, or courage, or wisdom,  
seek it in the peace of God.  
Jesus says, “Ask, and it will be given to you;  
search, and you will find;  
knock, and the door will be opened for you”

*Luke 11:9*

*Silence.*

**Gracious God,  
give us the wisdom to hold to what we need,  
grace to let go of those things  
that we can do without,  
and a vision of your breadth, height, and depth  
that will challenge our smallness of heart,  
and bring us humbly together.**

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<sup>1</sup> Joy Cowley, adapted

*Priest:*

Spirit of God hold us,  
Spirit of God move us, Spirit of God burn within us,  
so that we may light up the world with your love.

## SENTENCE AND PRAYER FOR THE DAY

I will tell you of Yahweh's unfailing love for all that Yahweh did for us,  
with motherly compassion and many kindnesses.

*Isaiah 63:7*

**God of the refugees,  
sharing the exile road with all who flee  
the violence that enslaves and kills:  
as your Son sought asylum in a foreign land  
make us ready to welcome the refugee  
and receive from her a new language of life and hope;  
through Jesus Christ, Rachel's child. Amen.** <sup>2</sup>

## FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of the prophet Isaiah.

*Isaiah 63:7-9*

May we hear angel voices.

**May we see the star.**

## THE GOSPEL

Hear the Gospel of Christ according to Matthew,  
chapter two, beginning at verse thirteen.

**Shine on our pathways.**

*Matthew 2:13-23*

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**May we hear wisdom.**

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<sup>2</sup> *Stephen Shakespeare*

# SERMON

## SILENCE

*Please stand.*

### THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**You, O God, are supreme and holy.  
You create our world and give us life.  
Your purpose overarches everything we do.  
You have always been with us. You are God.**

**You, O God, are infinitely generous,  
good beyond all measure.  
You came to us before we came to you.  
You have revealed and proved  
your love for us in Jesus Christ,  
who lived and died and rose again.  
You are with us now. You are God.**

**You, O God, are Holy Spirit.  
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.  
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.  
You are our God. We worship you.**<sup>3</sup>

*Please be seated.*

### 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.*

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<sup>3</sup> NZ Prayer Book, p. 481

# 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

Hope is among us.

**We are God's light.**

Shine then with freedom  
**into all the corners of the world.**

Lest fear overcome the brilliance  
**of life and light and liberty.**

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 in this season Jesus was born among us,  
a baby, 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 saying:

**Holy, Holy, Holy One, God of power and might.**

**Heaven and Earth are full of Your Glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Bless the One who comes in the power of love.**

**Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!**

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.

**We offer bread to eat with eyes and hands held open.**

**We pass this cup to share.**

**We take, break, bless and give kindling hope everywhere.**

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.**

*Please be seated.*

## 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.**

# 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.*

*There is a chalice for dipping –  
simply hold the bread in front of you to signify your choice.*

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

*If the stairs are a barrier please sit in the front pews  
and communion will be brought to you.*

Te Taro o te Ora. *The Bread of Life.*

Te Kapu o te Ora. *The Cup of Salvation.*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*Priest:*

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

Go now into the world carrying the good news of Christ's birth.  
And the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer and Giver of life,  
be with you all this day and always. **Amen.**

*Deacon from the rear of the church:*

Go now to live the Gospel. Go in peace.

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

*You are invited to keep this copy of the liturgy and take it home with you  
to share with another member of your family, or with a friend.*