



**ST GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH  
MALVERN**

**FESTIVAL EUCHARIST  
FOR THE  
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**



**9:30 a.m.**

## WELCOME

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and lived among us.” These remarkable sentences from the opening chapter of St John’s gospel, which we hear this morning, encapsulate the central point of the Church’s celebration of this great feast. Today, we celebrate Christ’s incarnation (literally, en-fleshment): when God, in the person of his eternal Son became fully human. The wonderful mystery of God’s dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, foretold by the prophets and born of Mary, provides the material of the feast:

*Hark, hark, the wise eternal Word,  
like a weak infant cries!  
In form of servant is the Lord,  
and God in cradle lies. (Thomas Pestel).*

While Christmas – and especially this ‘Festival Eucharist of Christmas Day’ – focuses on the infant in the manger, Christmas is much more than simply the celebration of Jesus’ birth. The task of the Christmas liturgy is to recall us, amid all the joyful customs and celebrations of this season, to this central truth: the Word is made flesh “for us and for our salvation” as the Nicene Creed (1700 years old this year) puts it. In Jesus, the eternal Son of God did not simply become *like* a human being, or take only the visible form of a human being. God *becomes* human – taking on *all* that being human means – subject to the difficulties and dangers of first century child-birth, growing up in relative poverty in an occupied land, and ultimately suffering death – all for our sake and to bring us salvation from death. And we also remember that he rose from the dead, ‘trampling down death by death’, yet then met with grieving friends and ate and talked with them – remaining fully human as well as fully God.

Thus, whatever brings you here; in whatever state of joy, expectation, disruption, uncertainty, grief you find yourself today, Christianity proclaims that in Jesus, God has encountered all of these feelings and states of mind or being; and transforms them by his presence with us. And, because God chose to “live among us”, you are always welcome in God’s church.

Christ’s birth (nativity) has provided the occasion for this festival of the Incarnation since the end of the third century. It occurs on a date (at least in the northern hemisphere, where placing it on December 25 began) just after the darkest point of the year: his birth marks the turn towards light, as days become gradually (even if barely noticeably at first) lighter and longer. The Christmas crib (and traditional nativity plays) descend from the tableau of Christ’s birth that Francis of Assisi arranged when he celebrated Christmas at Greccio in 1223. Christmas carols are a mediaeval tradition, which have been notably developed from the end of the nineteenth century.

The Christmas season continues for twelve days, ending with the Epiphany, observed this year on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The Church maintains this celebration until then.

May the Lord be with you.

## GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

*The Congregation stands as a bell is rung.*

**Deacon:** Let us proceed in peace.

**All:** **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

### PROCESSIONAL HYMN

1. O come, all ye faithful,  
Joyful and triumphant,  
O 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. God of God,  
Light of Light,  
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Very God,  
Begotten, not created:  
    *O come...*
3. See how the Shepherds,  
Summoned to his cradle,  
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;  
We too will thither  
Bend our joyful footsteps:  
    *O come...*

*The Procession having reached the Crib, the following prayer is offered:*

**Priest:** God our Father, on this most holy day we rejoice as we recall that your Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary for us and for our salvation: bless this crib, which we have prepared to celebrate that holy birth; may all who see it be strengthened in faith and receive the fullness of life he came to bring, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

**All:** **Amen.**

*The crib is censed, then the hymn continues:*

4. Child for us sinners  
Poor and in the manger,  
Feign we embrace thee with awe and love;  
Who would not love thee,  
Loving us so dearly?  
*O come...*
5. Sing, choirs of Angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above;  
Glory to God  
In the Highest:  
*O come...*
6. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
Born this happy morning,  
Jesu, to thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father,  
Now in flesh appearing:  
*O come...*

Words: Latin, 18<sup>th</sup> century,  
trans. Frederick Oakeley (1802–80) and others.  
Music: 'Adeste Fideles', melody prob. J. F. Wade (1711–86)  
arr. David Willcocks (1919–2015)

**Celebrant:** Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**All:** **Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

*The Celebrant welcomes the congregation, then this sentence of Scripture is read:*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth.

*John 1:1, 14*

Let us pray.

**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*We sing together:*

**Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.**

*The ancient hymn Gloria in excelsis, which echoes the song of the angels, is sung by all:*

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to God's people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Let us pray.

*The people pray silently, and then the Celebrant ‘collects’ the silent prayer:*

God Most High,  
whose eternal Word chose a dwelling among us,  
that we might live in your presence:  
grant us a spirit of wisdom  
to know how rich is the glory you have given us,  
and how great is the hope to which we are called  
    in the Word made flesh;  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

### First Reading

*Isaiah 52:7–10*

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah:

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.

**Reader:** Hear the word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

## Psalm 98

### Response:



<sup>1</sup> Sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done marvellous things.  
With his own right hand and with his holy arm  
he has brought salvation. R.

<sup>2</sup> The LORD has made known his salvation,  
and has shown his righteousness to the nations.  
he has remembered his mercy and truth,  
towards the house of Israel. R.

<sup>3</sup> All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.  
Let all the world be glad in him, sing, rejoice and give him thanks. R.

<sup>4</sup> Let music sound upon the harp, and psalms be offered to his praise;  
with trumpets and with sounds of joy  
proclaim the praise of God our King. R.

### Second Reading

*Hebrews 1:1–4*

A Reading from the letter to the Hebrews:

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets,  
but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son,  
whom he appointed heir of all things,  
through whom he also created the worlds.  
He is the reflection of God's glory  
and the exact imprint of God's very being,  
and he sustains all things by his powerful word.  
When he had made purification for sins,  
he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,  
having become as much superior to angels  
as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Hear the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*All stand.*

## GRADUAL HYMN

1. O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.
2. O morning stars, together  
Proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God the King,  
And peace to all on earth;  
For Christ is born of Mary;  
And gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wond'ring love.
3. 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.
4. O holy child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell:  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel.

Words: Phillips Brooks (1835–93)  
Music: 'Forest Green', English trad. melody,  
harm. by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

*Remain standing.*

*The Gospel will be read from among the people, as this symbolises Jesus coming to be with us.*

## **Gospel**

*John 1:1-14*



A holy day has dawned upon us. Come you nations and adore the Lord.  
Today a great light has come upon the earth.

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John.

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through him,

and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was life,

and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

He came as a witness to testify to the light,

so that all might believe through him.

He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him;

yet the world did not know him.

He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

But to all who received him, who believed in his name,

he gave power to become children of God, who were born,

not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us,

and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,

full of grace and truth.

For the gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*All sit.*

*A sermon is preached.*

*After the sermon, silence is kept.*

*All stand.*

## **The Nicene Creed**

Let us together affirm the faith of the Church:

**We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],  
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy Catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

*All kneel or sit.*

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Prayers are offered for the world and the church and all God's people.*

*At the end of each petition, the following is said:*

Lord in your mercy.

**Hear our prayer.**

*After the final petition, the prayers are concluded thus:*

**Celebrant:** Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.

**All:** **Grant that what we have asked in faith,  
we may by your grace receive,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## CONFESSiON AND ABSOLUTION

Christ the grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all.

*Silence is kept.*

Let us bring our weaknesses and infirmities to him,  
confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Merciful God,  
our maker and our judge,  
we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
and in what we have failed to do:**

**we have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;  
we repent and are sorry for all our sins.**

**Father forgive us.**

**Strengthen us to love and obey you  
in newness of life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*The Celebrant pronounces Absolution, and the people respond*

**Amen.**

## THE GREETING OF PEACE

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

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

*All are invited to share God's peace with those around them.*

## OFFERTORY HYMN

*During this hymn the offering of people's gifts will be brought forward for blessing.*

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 and mean 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 feeleth for our sadness,  
        And he shareth in 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,  
Where like stars his children crowned,  
    All in white shall wait around.

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander (1819–95)

Music: 'Irby', H. J. Gauntlett (1805–76)

revised by A. H. Mann (1850–1929)

## THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

*The gifts are set up on the altar and the Celebrant offers prayers, to which the people respond:*

**Amen.**

*The Celebrant then begins the Great Thanksgiving 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.**

*The Celebrant continues with a prayer appropriate to the season, concluding with:*

... we proclaim your great and glorious name,  
for ever 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.**

*The Celebrant continues the prayer until:*

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:  
**Christ has died,  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

*The Celebrant continues the prayer, which concludes:*

...we worship you, Father, in songs of never-ending praise:

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

*Silence is kept.*

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,  
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has 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 for ever. Amen.**

## **THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION**

*As the Celebrant breaks the bread, the following is said:*

We break the bread of life, and that life is the light of the world

**God here among us,  
light in the midst of us,  
bring us to light and life.**

*Together, we sing:*

**Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.**

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven.  
**Lord, give us this bread always.**

*The people and ministers receive the sacrament.*

**All who wish to come to receive communion are welcome.**

*Please note: in keeping with current health advice, Communion will be administered in both kinds, but 'Intinction' (the 'dipping' of the host into the chalice) is not permitted.*

*It is entirely appropriate to receive the sacrament in only one kind – the ancient and long-held practice of the Church – as the Church has always taught that full communion in the body and blood of Christ occurs in consuming either element.*

*If you wish to receive a blessing rather than the sacrament, please come forward and stand with your arms crossed.*

*Ushers will assist the movement of communicants to the altar rails.*

*During Communion, the choir will sing a selection from the following carols:*

*Nativity Carol*

*Text and Music: Sir John Rutter (1945–)*

*After Communion, silence is kept.*

## **THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

*Please stand when the clergy do.*

*A prayer is offered by the Celebrant, which ends*

**Father,**

**we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work to your praise and glory.**

## FINAL HYMN

1. Hark! the herald angels sing  
glory to the new-born King;  
peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled;  
Joyful, all you nations rise,  
join the triumph of the skies,  
with the angelic host proclaim,  
'Christ is born in Bethlehem'.

*Hark! the herald angels sing,  
glory to the new-born King.*

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of the Virgin's womb:  
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
hail the incarnate Deity,  
pleased in human flesh to dwell,  
Jesus, our Immanuel.

*Hark! the herald angels sing...*

3. 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 need die,  
born to raise all those on earth,  
born to give us second birth.

*Hark! the herald angels sing...*

Words: Charles Wesley (1707–88)  
Music: Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809–47)  
arr. David Willcocks

## THE BLESSING

*The Celebrant pronounces:*

May God the Father,  
who has loved the eternal Word from before the foundation of the world,  
now shed that love upon you without measure.

**Amen.**

May Christ our Redeemer, who by his incarnation,  
united heaven and earth, now make you one with each other and with him.

**Amen.**

May God the Holy Spirit,  
by whose overshadowing Mary became Mother of the Word,  
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ within your life.

**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.**

Postlude: Fantasia on *In dulci jubilo*, BWV 729

J. S. Bach (1685–1750)

*Please remain standing as the choir, clergy and servers leave.*

***All at St George's Malvern wish you  
and all whom you love***

***a very Happy Christmas***

***and every blessing for this joyful season  
and for a world filled with greater peace in 2026!***



This morning's eucharist:

Celebrant:

Deacon and Preacher:

The Reverend Fr Jeremy Cavanagh, Assistant Priest

The Reverend Dr Gregory Seach, Vicar

Director of Music:

Christopher Cook

and

The Choir of St George's

Setting of the Eucharist:

'Parish Eucharist' by Michael Dudman (1938–94)

The Service for Holy Communion (Second Order) is taken from A Prayer Book for Australia (Broughton Books, 1995), © The Anglican Church of Australia Trust Corporation.

The 'common texts' of the Eucharist are from a modern English translation, prepared by the English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988.

Other material comes from Common Worship: Times and Seasons (Canterbury Press, 2006), © The Archbishops' Council (The Church of England).

Words to hymns are taken from The New English Hymnal (Canterbury Press, 1986).

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The **Christmas season** continues until the **Feast of the Epiphany** (kept this year on January 6). In that time, the following services will be held at St George's. You are welcome at all of them:

December 26

**(St Stephen's day, aka Boxing Day)**

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer  
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

January 6

**(The Feast of the Epiphany transferred):  
the 'Twelfth day of Christmas'**

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer  
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

December 27

**(John, Apostle and Evangelist)**

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer  
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

From January 7

Normal services resume:

Sundays

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with  
meditation

Monday to Saturday

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer  
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer  
both also via Zoom:  
Thursday 10:15 a.m. Eucharist

**Morning & Evening Prayer**

Meeting ID: 709 867 2691; Passcode: 630283  
<https://zoom.us/j/7098672691?pwd=TFBBSGYxb2lhUI3RWR1dmIXWDQ4Zz09>

**Reflections on the Lections resuming  
in February**

with additional eucharists at 9:00 a.m.  
on Festivals (and as announced)

January 2 & 3

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer  
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

January 4

**(Second Sunday After Christmas)**

9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with  
meditation

January 5

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer  
5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

# PARISH DIRECTORY

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## HONORARY ASSOCIATE PRIEST

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## WARDENS

Malcolm Tadgell 0400 799 030

Robyn Whitehouse 0409 707 117

Vicar's Warden *To Be Appointed*

## CHILD SAFE OFFICER

*To Be Appointed*

*We acknowledge the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we meet.*

*We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, acknowledge their continuing spiritual connection to Country, and affirm our commitment to walk together the path of reconciliation.*