

SAINT JOHN'S  FINCH STREET

CRIB SERVICE



**EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR
LORD**

24th December 2024

5PM

Before the service as people gather, the organist plays a selection of Christmas voluntaries, including

*'Pastorale' by Josef Seger,
reflecting the shepherds' environment.*

*'Fugue in G' by Josef Seger,
on the theme of an ancient carol 'Christ our Lord was born'.*

*'Chorale prelude' by Michael Fischer,
on the carol 'O little one sweet'*

*'Chorale prelude' by J.S. Bach,
on 'Glory to God in the highest'*

*'Noel' by Louis Daquin,
the tenth of twelve 'Noels'.*

Please be seated in the pews, children are welcome to sit on the floor closer to the crib scene. Silence descends as the bells ring...

THE STORY BEGINS

This night is like no other night. It is a time to dream and sing our way to Bethlehem.

In the centre of the village is a small house. On this night, it is overflowing with people who have arrived as guests. Alongside, the animals gather seeking shelter too from the dark night.

A grey donkey chews his straw and barley while a weary cow slumps and rests after her long day ploughing in the valley. A sheep nearby is nearly asleep. All is still and quiet in the little town.

The donkey and oxen are brought to the manger scene as we sing...

♪ **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.

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.

THE BIRTH OF THE BABY JESUS

As night gathers, the last two travellers come slowly up the road. There is a young woman about to be a mother. She is walking with her husband. They are Mary and Joseph from Nazareth! They have walked for six days to come to this city where King David was born, so long ago. They have come, like so many others, because the Roman emperor wants to count each one, so he can take their money as a tax. But it is late, and Mary is so weary. Where will they sleep? There is no space in the guest room of the house. They decide to sleep downstairs, making room amongst the animals. Stars brighten slowly in the sky. All creation holds its breath. Suddenly, there comes the cry of a newborn child! Mary gently wraps the baby in a blanket and lays him in a manger that Joseph has filled with straw.

Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus are brought to the manger as we sing...

♪ **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 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.**

THE ANGELS VISIT THE SHEPHERDS

In the hills outside Bethlehem, shepherds watch their sheep. All of a sudden, the dark is lost in the strange but dazzling light, and in the midst of the light is something even brighter: the faces of angels! The fearful shepherds then hear music in the sky, and a voice says clearly, "Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by all people. Today in the City of David a Saviour is born! He is Christ, the Lord."

♪ **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.**

**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, nowell, nowell,
born is the king of Israel.**

THE ANGELS SING

Then more angels appear, a whole heavenly host of them, praising God and singing: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all people of good-will.”

The shepherds with their sheep are brought to the manger scene as we sing...

♪ **Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains:
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

**Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing,
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

THE SHEPHERDS VISIT THE HOLY FAMILY

The shepherds run with joy across the fields to Bethlehem to seek the baby in the manger. There they find the Holy Family and creep forward, overwhelmed with mystery, and the baby Jesus in the middle of all that love. But they are careful not to break the silence of the holy night.

♪ **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.'**

WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

Three camels plod up the road to Bethlehem. They have come from the East, far beyond the Arabian Desert. The camels carry wise men, called the Magi. They are following the bright star, the sight of which they had never seen before, and they are following it, wherever it goes, to find the great King it is leading to.

Arriving at the manger, they fall to their knees and give the Christ-Child bright gold, sweet-smelling frankincense and bitter myrrh, brought from so far with so much love.

The wise men with their gifts are brought to the manger scene as we sing...

**♫ We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.**

*O star of wonder, star of light,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

**Glorious now behold Him arise;
King and God and sacrifice;
Alleluia, Alleluia,
Sounds through the earth and skies.**

*O star of wonder, star of light,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

O COME ALL YOU FAITHFUL

So now we all come, following the star, to find God-with-us in the baby Jesus. We come, as people have come all through the ages, to bring our own gifts of love and devotion to this Child, who is God's gift to us.

During this song, the children are invited to come forward to offer frankincense while we sing...

♫ **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!
Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of Heaven above!
Glory to God,
glory in the highest:
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!**

THE PRAYERS

On this holy night,
we pray for ourselves and our loved ones,
we pray for all the things we care about,
we pray for those who need our prayers,
and we pray as Jesus taught us, saying:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil. Amen.**

THE CHRISTMAS BLESSING

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Mary and Joseph,
and the peace of the Christ-child
be yours this Christmas;
and the blessing of God almighty
the Father, ✠ the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

*During this final song, a collection is taken up to support the continued life
and mission of the Parish...*

♪ 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!

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

Hail the heaven-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 man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King!

A short ten-minute service of Holy Communion will take place in the chapel (located behind the main altar) for those who wish to receive the Sacrament, and would not otherwise, during this Christmas season.

All baptised Christians who seek the Lord Jesus are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

Please join us on Finch Street for a Christmas BBQ

SAINT JOHN'S



FINCH STREET

CHRISTMAS

Sunday 8th December 7:30pm Nine Lessons & Carols

Christmas Eve 5pm Children's Crib Service
Tuesday 24th December 11pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day 8am Eucharist
Wednesday 25th December 9:30am Choral Eucharist

SAINT JOHN'S EAST MALVERN

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A festive illustration for a New Year's Eve event. At the top, there are colorful bunting flags in shades of yellow, grey, and pink. Below them are several circular ornaments with orange and white radial patterns. In the center, two champagne flutes filled with bubbly liquid are clinking. The background is dark with stylized fireworks in orange and white, and small stars. A faint, large watermark of a lion's head is visible in the background.

New Year's Eve

DRINKS

IN THE GAZEBO BEHIND
SAINT JOHN'S FINCH STREET

FROM 5PM

ALL WELCOME

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