



St James' Old Cathedral

25th December 2025 at 10:00am

Christmas Day

The Sign in the Manger

*Service of Holy Communion from
A Prayer Book for Australia (1995)*

Acknowledgement of Country

We worship our creator God on the ancestral lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge them as the traditional and continuing custodians of this land and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Child Safety Officer

We are committed to continuous improvement in a safe culture for all, and especially vulnerable persons. Our parish's Child Safety Officer is Una Ebsworth. Una is an accredited specialist in criminal law. All correspondence and questions relating to safety checks should be forwarded to her at safety@sjoc.org.au

The Old Cathedral Voices

Formed in March 2009 from some of Melbourne's finest choral soloists, The OCV are a consort choir directed by Alex Ritter. Today's singers are:

Monika Harris	Roslyn White	Maggie Dunleavy	
Alex Ritter	Jenny George	Spencer Chapman	
Clyde Saniga	Andrew Anderson	Mike Mews	Matthew Crossley

The Organ

The present organ was built in 1991 by Australian Pipe Organs, restoring and expanding the 1866 Fincham organ. 2 manuals, 18 speaking stops, 8 couplers. Gt: 8.8.4.4.2.III. Sw: 8.8.8.4.2.III.8. Ped: 16.16.10-2/3.8.4.

The Old Cathedral's organist is David Brown. David undertook studies as an organ scholar at the Universities of Cambridge and St Andrews. He also serves as College Organist for Scotch College.

The Bells

Melbourne's first peal of bells were the six bells hung in St James' Cathedral in 1853, replacing an old ship's bell. Two more were added in 1885. All were cast by Mears and Stainbank of Whitechapel Road, London, and are reputed to be the finest ever cast there. They are still rung regularly by a team of volunteers.

Processional

What Child is this?

The Old Cathedral Voices

R. Chilcott (b. 1955)

*What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him praise,
the babe, the son of Mary.*

*Why lies He in such mean estate,
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear: for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spears shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the Babe, the Son of Mary.*

*So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
come, peasant, king, to own him!
The King of kings salvation brings:
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
the Virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy! Joy! for Christ is born,
the babe, the Son of Mary.*

Acclamation

Bridget Chapman

This will be a sign for you: you will find a child
wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.

Luke 2:12

(The Christmas Candle is lit.)

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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

The Lord be with you:

And also with you.

Let us pray.

All glory to you, gracious God,

for the gift of your Son, whom you sent to save us.

With the angels, let us praise your name, and tell the earth his story,

that all may believe, rejoice, and proclaim your love;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Christians, awake, salute the happy morn
whereon the Saviour of the world was born;
rise to adore the mystery of love,
which hosts of angels chanted from above;
with them the joyful tidings first begun
of God incarnate and the Virgin's son.**

**Like Mary, let us ponder in our mind
God's wondrous love in saving lost mankind;
trace we the Babe, who has retrieved our loss,
from his poor manger to the bitter cross;
tread in his steps, assisted by his grace,
till man's first heavenly state again takes place.**

**Then may we hope, the angelic thrones among,
to sing, redeemed, a glad triumphal song;
he that was born upon this joyful day
around us all his glory shall display;
saved by his love, incessant we shall sing
eternal praise to heaven's almighty King.**

Commandments

Bridget Chapman

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind,
and with all your strength.

This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Gloria

Bridget Chapman

**Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his 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.

Gathering for Children's Chapel

Dr Matthew Champion

We offer an age-appropriate experience of the Ministry of the Word for children, led today by Dr Matthew Champion. They are invited to process out to the conference centre, as the following hymn is sung.

Childsafe Policy: Children's Chapel is supervised at all times by at least two unrelated adults with current Working with Children Check approvals.

Meditation

The Old Cathedral Voices

The Shepherd's Carol

R. Chilcott (b.1955)

*We stood on the hills, Lady, our day's work done,
watching the frosted meadows that winter had won.
The evening was calm, Lady, the air so still,
Silence more lovely than music folded the hill.*

*There was a star, Lady, shone in the night,
Larger than Venus it was and bright, so bright!
Oh, a voice from the sky, Lady, it seemed to us then,
telling of God being born in the world of men.*

*And so we have come, Lady, our day's work done,
Our love, our hopes, ourselves, we give to your son.*

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14

Dan Fleming

¹⁰ Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying,

¹¹ “Ask a sign of the Lord your God;
let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.”

¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask,
and I will not put the Lord to the test.”

¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David!
Is it too little for you to weary mortals
that you weary my God also?

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

Look, the young woman is with child
and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.

Hear the Word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 103:1-13, 20-22

Bridget Chapman

Praise the Lord, O my soul :
and all that is within me, praise his holy name.

Praise the Lord, O my soul :
and forget not all his benefits,

Who forgives all your sin :
and heals all your infirmities,

Who redeems your life from the Pit :
and crowns you with mercy and compassion;

Who satisfies your being with good things :
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

The Lord works righteousness :

and justice for all who are oppressed.

He made known his ways to Moses :

and his works to the children of Israel.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy :

slow to anger and of great goodness.

He will not always be chiding :

nor will he keep his anger for ever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins :

nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

For as the heavens are high above the earth :

so great is his mercy over those that fear him;

As far as the east is from the west :

so far has he set our sins from us.

As a father is tender towards his children :

so is the Lord tender to those that fear him.

(...)

Praise the Lord, all you his angels, you that excel in strength :

you that fulfil his word,

and obey the voice of his commandment.

Praise the Lord, all you his hosts :

his servants who do his will.

Praise the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion :

praise the Lord, O my soul!

**While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down
and glory shone around.**

**‘Fear not,’ said he (for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind),
‘glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind.**

**‘To you in David’s town this day
is born of David’s line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:**

**‘The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling clothes
and in a manger laid.’**

**Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus
addressed their joyful song:**

**‘All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace;
goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
begin and never cease.’**

Epistle: Hebrews 1:1-6

Jenny George

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors

in many and various ways by the prophets,

² 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.

³ 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,
⁴ having become as much superior to angels
as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say,
"You are my Son;
today I have begotten you"?

Or again,

"I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son"?

⁶ And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,
"Let all God's angels worship him."

Hear the Word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn 227 (Mendelssohn)

C. Wesley (1707-88)

**Hark! The herald angels sing
glory to the newborn king,
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem'.**

***Refrain: Hark! The herald angels sing
glory to the newborn king!***

**Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb!
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.**

Refrain

**Mild he lays his glory by,
born that man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth.
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.**

Refrain

The Gospel is written in the second chapter of the Gospel according to Luke, beginning at the first verse.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

^{2:1} In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus
that all the world should be registered.

² This was the first registration and was taken
while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

³ All went to their own towns to be registered.

⁴ 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.

⁵ He went to be registered with Mary,
to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

⁷ 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 in the guest room.

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields,
keeping watch over their flock by night.

⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them,
and the glory of the Lord shone around them,
and they were terrified.

¹⁰ 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:

¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour,
who is the Messiah, the Lord.

¹² This will be a sign for you:
you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth
and lying in a manger.”

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel
a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven,
the shepherds said to one another,
“Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place,
which the Lord has made known to us.”

¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph
and the child lying in the manger.

¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known
what had been told them about this child,

¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed
at what the shepherds told them,

¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words
and pondered them in her heart.

²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God
for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

For the gospel of the Lord: **praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Sermon

Canon Matt Williams

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 mean and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

All: 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 has 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
when, like stars, his children crowned
all in white shall gather round.

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.**

Prayers

Chris White

Father, we pray for your holy catholic Church;

that we all may be one in Christ.

Grant that every member of the Church

may truly and humbly serve you;

that your name may be glorified by everyone.

We pray for all bishops, priests and deacons;

that they may be faithful ministers

of your word and sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and exercise authority

in the nations of the world;

that there may be peace and justice among all.

Have compassion on those who suffer or are in grief or trouble;

that they may be delivered from their distress.

We praise you for all your saints who have entered into joy;

may we also share in your heavenly kingdom.

(Other Intercessions may follow.)

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.

Carol

Why are you sleeping?

The Old Cathedral Voices

A. Anderson (b. 1971)

Premiered at St James' Old Cathedral 15th December 2019.

Andrew Anderson is our Composer-in-Residence.

*This carol is also featured on the CD of Andrew's music,
available on the back table.*

Why are you sleeping, precious Jesus?

The ox again longs to sound your praise.

*Your closed lids hide your mother's face,
while night holds you in deep embrace.*

*You're wrapped securely, precious Jesus,
and gently laid, though not in a bed.*

*The wise are here with their gifts of myrrh,
why is it that you do not stir?*

*We too come near you, precious Jesus,
from worlds stained through with guilt and sin.*

*We cry, and plead not to be reprov'd,
How do our calls leave you unmoved?*

*Do you not hear us, precious Jesus?
How can you sleep through our cries of woe?*

*Maybe it is all for our sake
you sleep, to on the third day wake?*

Confession

Bridget Chapman

Christ the grace of God has dawned upon the world
with healing for all. *(Pause for silent reflection.)*

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

Heavenly Father,

**You have loved us with an everlasting love,
but we have broken your holy laws
and have left undone what we ought to have done.**

We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them.

**For the sake of your Son who died for us,
forgive us, cleanse us and change us.**

**By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Absolution

Canon Matt Williams

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness
to all who turn to him in faith:
pardon you and set you free from all your sins,
strengthen you in all goodness
and keep you in eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Greeting of Peace *(All Stand.)* ***Bridget Chapman***

We are the body of Christ.

His Spirit is with us.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Hymn 228 v1,4,6,7 (Adeste Fideles)

J. F. Wade (1711-1786)

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:

**Refrain: *O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
 O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.***

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? *Refrain*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,

sing all ye citizens of heaven above,

‘Glory to God, glory in the highest’: *Refrain*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,

Jesus, to thee be glory given;

Word of the Father now in flesh appearing: *Refrain*

The Great Thanksgiving

Canon Matt Williams

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.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,
mighty creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary
and lived as one of us.

In your Word made flesh
you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts,
to give knowledge of your glory
in the face of Jesus Christ.

By his death on the cross
and rising to new life,
he offered the one true sacrifice for sin
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore with angels and archangels
and with all the company of heaven,
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.**

Merciful God, we thank you
for these gifts of your creation,
this bread and wine,
and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit,
we who eat and drink them
may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;
and when he had given you thanks
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup,
and again giving you thanks
he gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Drink from this, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant
shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded:
proclaiming his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross,
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming again,
we celebrate, with this bread and this cup,
his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice
for the sins of the whole world.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit,
unite us in the body of your Son,
and bring us with all your people
into the joy of your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom, and in whom,
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
we worship you, Father,
in songs of never-ending praise:

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

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

Come, let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ
in remembrance that he died for us,
and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

*All baptised believers in the Lord Jesus Christ
including children at their parents' discretion
are welcome to join us at the Lord's Table.*

Gluten free wafers are available on request.

*If you prefer an individual cup of grape juice,
simply decline the common cup of wine when it is offered to you.*

During Communion
I Sing the Birth

The Old Cathedral Voices
C. H. Parry (1848-1918)

*I sing the Birth was born tonight,
The Author both of life and light,
The Angels so did sound it:
And like the ravish'd shepherds said,
Who saw the light and were afraid,
Yet searched, and true they found it.*

*The Son of God, the eternal King,
That did us all salvation bring,
And freed the soul from danger:
He whom the whole world could not take,
The Word which heav'n and earth did make,
Was now laid in a manger.*

*What comfort by Him do we win,
Who made Himself the price of sin,
To make us heirs of glory:
To see this Babe, all innocence,
A martyr born in our defence!
Can man forget this story?*

Ben Jonson (1572-1637)

After Communion

Canon Matt Williams

God of heaven, dwelling among us,
 we thank you for feeding us with this holy food.
By your grace keep us ever faithful to your Word made flesh
 that as his body in the world
 we may bring your presence to all people.

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.

Hymn 224 (Antioch)

I. Watts (1674-1748)

**Joy to the World! The Lord is come;
let earth receive her king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing...**
**Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns;
let men their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy...**
**He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love...**

Blessing

Canon Matt Williams

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,
fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Recessional (BWV729)

David Brown (Organ)

Fantasia on “In Dulci Jubilo”

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

*Instead of collecting offertories during the service, we gratefully
receive free offerings made at the exit, or by electronic transfers to:*

St James' Old Cathedral

BSB: 013 377

Acc. No.: 008 684 064

*Tax deductible giving to support our music program is also possible
through the St James' Gift Fund:*

Melbourne West ITF Gift Fund

BSB: 013 377

Acc. No.: 526 890 909

Cover Art: Geertgen tot Sint Jans (1465-1495): The Nativity at Night c.1490.
Oil on Wood, 340x253. Collection of The National Gallery, London.

National Trust Appeal: Roof Replacement

In 2010 a Heritage Review identified the replacement of our slate roof as an urgent work for the next two years.

We have not been able to fund this, and have continued to tolerate regular leaks in the rain, which are damaging other parts of the church in turn.

Parish Council and the National Trust have authorised an appeal. **We are seeking to raise \$500,000** for the full replacement of the slate roof and the restoration of other things which are urgent or best done at the same time. We have engaged Extent Heritage to guide this process and optimise outcomes.

Just before Tony died, Tony and Wendy Greenwood donated the first \$200,000 to this appeal. They hoped to inspire others.

Donations through the National Trust are Tax Deductible. The National Trust take an 8% administration fee.

Please direct Tax Deductible Donations to:

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

BSB: 033000

Account number: 937419

Description: St James Old Cathedral

Please follow up any donations with an email

to both accounts@nattrust.com.au and office@sjoc.org.au
so that we can track donations.

**Should we raise more than is needed for urgent works,
we are approved to use donations to repay the outstanding loan
for the 2011 Tower Restoration.**

St James' Old Cathedral in 2026

Many of St James' Old Cathedral's regular ministries are in recess after Christmas until 27th January 2026.

This includes our Friday night Youth Group
and our twice daily zoom prayer services,
and The Old Cathedral Voices.

Children's Chapel will still be provided at each Sunday Service.



St James' Old Cathedral

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www.sjoc.org.au