

Christingle Service



Christmas Eve



**The Anglican Parish
of Greater Hastings**

encompassing
St Matthew's, Hastings & St Peter's, Riverslea

O Little town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see you lie!
Above your deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by:
yet in your dark streets shining
is everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in you tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary
and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love:
O morning stars, together,
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all the earth.

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.

Opening Prayer

Gracious God,
you showed your love for us in the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem:
help us to welcome Jesus into our homes this Christmas time
and to make room for him in our lives,
so that we may always care for one another,
and live at peace with all of your family.

**Son of God, Child of Mary,
born in the stable at Bethlehem,
be born again in us this day
that through us the world may know
the mystery and wonder of your love. Amen**

About that time ... a census Luke 2:1-7

Narrator:

About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books. These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed. So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee & go to Bethlehem in Judea.

Commentator:

Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

Narrator:

Mary was engaged to Joseph and travelled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, & while they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes & laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.

While Shepherds Watched

**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;
'Good news of greatest joy I bring
to you and all mankind.'**

**'To you in Bethlehem 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,
in simple clothing tightly wrapped,
and in a manger laid.'**

**Thus spoke 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!
To those on whom his favour rests
good will shall never cease.'**

The Angels announce... Luke 2:8-14

Narrator:

That night in the fields near Bethlehem, some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. But the angel said:

Angel:

Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in David's hometown a Saviour was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay.

Narrator:

Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God.

Everyone:

Praise God in heaven! Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God.

The Shepherds go and see... Luke 2:15-20

Narrator:

After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each another.

Shepherds:

Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about.

Narrator:

They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay. When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. Everyone listened was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant. As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

The First Nowell

**The first nowell the angels 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 ...***

**And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
they travelled on by night and day
to reach the place where Jesus lay: *Nowell...***

**Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
for Christ has our salvation wrought
and with his blood our life has bought: *Nowell...***

Following the star... Matthew 2:1-12

Narrator:

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and said:

Magi:

Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.

Narrator:

When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. Herod brought together the chief priests and teachers of the Law of Moses and he asked them:

Herod:

Where will the Messiah be born?

Teachers:

He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote: Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader, who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel.

Narrator:

Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. He told them

Herod:

Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too.

Narrator:

The wise men listened to what the king had said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were thrilled and excited to see the star. When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshipped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him. Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road.

Blessing of the Christmas Crib

God of Mary and Joseph, of shepherds, animals, and kings,
bless us and all who look at this manger scene.

Through all the days of Christmas may these figures
tell the story of how humans, angels and animals
found Christ in this place,
and may the presence and peace of Christ
be with each one of us. **Amen.**

Carol our Christmas

**Carol our Christmas, an upside down Christmas;
snow is not falling and trees are not bare.
Carol the summer, and welcome the Christ Child
warm in our sunshine and sweetness of air.**

**Sing of the gold and the green and the sparkle,
water and river and lure of the beach.
Sing in the happiness of open spaces,
sing a nativity summer can reach!**

Shepherds and mustersers move over hillsides,
finding, not angels, but sheep to be shorn;
wise ones make journeys whatever the season,
searching for signs of the truth to be born.

Right side up Christmas belongs to the universe,
made in the moment a woman gives birth;
hope is the Jesus gift, love is the offering,
everywhere, anywhere, here on the earth.

Prayers

Lord Jesus, we thank you
that when the world was very dark
you came to bring light into our darkness.
Thank you for your birth at Bethlehem.

You came in the night
to bring light into the lives of Mary and Joseph.
Bless children and parents everywhere
and help them to love each other.
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

You came to Bethlehem –
then, as now, a very troubled town –
bringing light to all who came to trust you.
Bring peace into the troubled places in the world.
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

You come to us now,
into our lives and into our world,
bringing light still to your people.
As we come again to the manger,
help us to see there the light that will shine for us,
not just at Christmas but every day of the year.
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

God is with us, and so we 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 forever. Amen**

Christingles

'Christingle' means 'Christ-Light'. It reminds us of the light of Christ coming into our world with the birth of Jesus. The orange is a symbol of our world that God created, the four toothpicks stand for the four seasons of the year. The fruits and sweets on the toothpicks remind us of all the good things that we are constantly provided with. The red band around the orange, the colour of blood, reminds us of God's love not only in sending Jesus into the world, but in allowing him to die for us. The candle in the orange is the Christ Light, Jesus who was born to be the Light of the World.

It's Rounded Like an Orange (*Tune: THE HOLLY AND THE IVY*)

**It's rounded like an orange,
this earth on which we stand
And we praise the God who holds it in
the hollow of his hand.**

*So Loving God we thank you
For all that you have done,
and for all that you have given us
Through the coming of your Son.*

**A candle burning brightly
can cheer the darkest night
and these candles tell how Jesus
came to bring a dark world light. *So Loving God ...***

**The ribbon round the orange
Reminds us of the cost
How the shepherd strong and gentle
Gave his life to save the lost. *So Loving God ...***

**Four seasons with their harvest
supply the food we need
and the Spirit gives a harvest
that can make us rich indeed. *So Loving God ...***

**We come with our Christingles
To tell of Jesus' birth
And we praise the God who blesses us
By his coming to this earth. *So Loving God ...***

The Christingles are lit and distributed by the children.

Away in a manger

**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 you, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.**

Closing Prayer

(Robert Louis Stevenson's Christmas Day Prayer)

O God our loving Father,
help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the songs of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and the worship of the wise men.

**May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be your children,
and the Christmas evening
bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.**

The Blessing

May the humility of the shepherds.
the faith of the wise men,
the joy of the angels,
and the peace of the Christ Child,
be God's gifts to you and to all people,
this Christmas and always.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

***An offering to support the ministry and mission of the Anglican
Parish of Greater Hastings can be made as you leave the church***

*The clergy team in the Parish of Greater Hastings,
and all who have their spiritual home here,
wish you a happy and holy Christmas.
May you know and experience in your life
the hope, peace, joy, and love of this holy night.*

Christmas Services here at St Matthew's

11.00pm tonight – The first Eucharist of Christmas

10.00am tomorrow – Christmas Morning Eucharist

There is no service in the parish on Sunday the 29th December

We are invited to join with St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Market Street.

Thereafter, every Sunday in January at St Matthew's there is a 10.00am Eucharist.

