

# ST MICHAEL'S UNITING CHURCH



Christmas Day  
25 December 2024

“Light in the Darkness:  
Hope that Transforms”



Liturgy & Reflection: Professor Liz Boase

Music: The St Michael's Singers,  
Nicholas Corkeron (Trumpet)  
& Rhys Boak (Organ)

## Welcome to St Michael's

St Michael's is a vibrant, progressive, inclusive church with a long tradition of nurturing the spiritual well-being of the human person and working for the common good.

As a congregation of the Uniting Church in Australia, we are committed to the Covenant with First Peoples and to social and ecological justice. We hold foundational Christian values of the worth of every human being, the need for integrity in public life, and concern for the welfare of the planet and its peoples, irrespective of race, creed, gender, sexuality, status, or age.

### Minister

Rev Dr Margaret Mayman

### Church Council

**Chairperson:** Laura Beckett

**Treasurer:** Ian Cox

**Secretary:** Brian Smith

#### Property

Chair: Peter Anderson

Deputy: Brian Smith

#### Church Services

Chair: Lorraine Woolley

Deputy: Val Gill

Anthony Bendall

John Coppock

#### Culture of Safety Contact

(Keeping Children Safe)

Val Gill

#### Contact & Care

Chair: Lyndell O'Brien

Deputy: Catherine Jones

#### Mission Coordinating

Chair: Ann Kinnear

Jess Hand

Chris Phillips

### Organist & Manager of Music

Rhys Boak

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### Church Office

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♥ Open hearts. Open minds. Open hands! ♥

Sunday Gatherings are offered Online and In-Church

[stmichaels.org.au](http://stmichaels.org.au)

## Processional

### Acknowledgement of Country

The land on which St Michael's stands is the sovereign and unceded country of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

***We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present,  
who have cared for this country for millennia.***

***We commit ourselves again to the work of reconciliation  
in these lands now called Australia.***

### Welcome & Gathering

*Wherever you are on your spiritual journey,  
wherever you've come from, wherever you're going to,  
whatever you believe, whatever you do not believe,  
you are welcome.*

## Carol

### O come all ye faithful

The image shows the musical notation for the Carol 'O come all ye faithful'. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is written on the top staff, and the accompaniment is written on the three lower staves. The music is in a simple, hymn-like style with a clear melody and accompaniment.

O come, all ye faithful  
joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem:  
come and behold the  
fond desire of nations

*O come in adoration, O come in adoration,  
O come in adoration, Christ is born.*

Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in expectation,  
sing all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God,  
all glory in the highest!  
*O come in adoration, O come in adoration,  
O come in adoration, Christ is born.*

Yes, child, we greet you,  
born on Christmas morning,  
Jesus, to you be all glory given.  
Word of creation,  
now in flesh appearing.  
*O come in adoration, O come in adoration,  
O come in adoration, Christ is born.*

Words: John Francis Wade (1711-1786)

Tune: Adeste Fideles

Later form of melody, probably by  
John Francis Wade (c.1711-1786)

Descant: Rhys Boak

## Lighting the Christmas Candle

*The Advent candles of hope, peace, joy and love are lit again.*

Sophia, Holy Wisdom,  
Christ, light of the world,  
growing from creation's birth  
source of life and hope;  
Jesus, child in the manger,  
we give thanks for this day of celebration,  
for the renewal of love that never fails.

*The Christ candle is lit.*

***We pray for all people and for all creation,  
that today even in the darkest places  
a lamp of hope may be lit  
and eternal light may shine  
bringing joy and peace.  
Amen.***

## Prayer of Awareness

### Jesus' Prayer

*God, you are life for us,  
holy be your name.  
Your new day come, your will be done,  
on earth as in your vision.  
Give us this day our bread for the morrow;  
And forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Strengthen us in the time of test,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the power and the splendour  
and the fulfilment are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.*

### Sharing a Sign of Peace

May the joy of Christmas and  
the peace of Divine Presence be with you!

*And also with you.*

### Santa's Favourite Story by Hisako Aoki

Carol (Australian words)

Away in a manger



Away in a manger, no pillow or bed,  
the baby boy Jesus is born in a shed;  
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the baby boy Jesus asleep on the hay.

While cattle are standing, the baby's asleep  
sought after by shepherds who leave all their sheep;  
and wise ones bring treasures; they've come from afar  
to give gifts to Jesus; they followed a star.

Yes, Jesus is near me, I know he will stay  
close by me for ever and love me each day;  
he blesses all children; we know we will share  
a wonderful friendship in his tender care.

New Words: George Stuart

Tune: Cradle Song

William James Kirkpatrick (1838-1921)

Harmony and descant: Rhys Boak

Hebrew Bible: Isaiah 9: 2-7

Anthony Bendall (he/they)

For the hope-filled courage of prophets, in ancient times and in ours,  
***We give thanks.***

Carol

It came upon a midnight clear



It came upon a midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold;  
“Goodwill to all, and peace on earth:  
great news of joy we bring!”  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the clouds of time they come  
with peaceful wings unfurled;  
and still their heavenly music floats  
through all the weary world;  
above its sad and lonely plains  
they bend on hovering wing;  
and still, through all its babbled sounds  
the blessed angels sing.

But with the woes of sin and strife  
the world has suffered long.  
Beneath the angel-hymn have rolled  
two thousand years of wrong,  
as warring armies clash and drown  
the love song which they bring;  
O hush the noise of bomb and gun  
and hear the angels sing!

For still the days are hastening on,  
by prophets seen of old,  
when in our planet's circling years  
shall come a time foretold,  
when peace shall over all the earth  
its newborn splendours fling;  
as all the world sends back the song  
which now the angels sing.

Words: Edmund H. Sears (1810-1876)

Adapted by Brian Wren

Tune: Carol

Richard Storrs Willis (1819-1900)

## Gospel: Luke 2: 1-7

### Music for contemplation

'When Heaven's bright with mystery' (Sussex Carol)  
– English traditional melody arranged by David Willcocks  
The St Michael's Singers and Rhys Boak (Organ)

## Gospel: Luke 2: 8-20

For Wisdom in the Word of old  
for contemporary Wisdom in poetry and song  
for Wisdom made flesh in a baby—and in us,  
***We give thanks.***

Carol

Angels from the realms of glory



Angels from the realms of glory,  
wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
ye who sang creation's story,  
now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
*come and worship Christ, the new-born king,  
come and worship, worship Christ, the new-born king.*

Shepherds, in the fields abiding,  
watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing,  
yonder shines the infant Light:  
*Refrain.*

Sages, leave your contemplations,  
brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great desire of nations,  
you have seen the natal star:  
*Refrain.*

Words: James Montgomery (1771-1854)

Tune: Iris

French traditional melody arr. Martin Shaw (1875-1958)



## Contemporary Reading

“Amazing Peace” by Maya Angelou

## Reflection

Professor Liz Boase (she/her)

“Light in the Darkness: Hope that Transforms”

## Music for Contemplation

'The Silver Stars are in the Sky' – W.G. James  
The St Michael's Singers & Rhys Boak (Organ)

## Prayers of the people

*In silence, let us pray for the earth, for all creatures and people...  
for particular people, places and situations known to us...*

Our prayers are as fragile, O God,  
as the life you chose to enter in vulnerability.

***Give us faith to believe that even in frailty,  
signs of your love will be found in all the earth today.  
In your many names, we pray. Amen.***

## Sharing Gifts & Holding the Light

### Carol

### Now the star of Christmas



Now the star of Christmas  
shines into our day,  
points a new direction:  
change is on the way:  
there's another landscape  
to be travelled through,  
there's a new-born spirit  
broadening our view.

When the Christ of Christmas  
speaks to heart and mind,  
clears the clouded vision  
hurting humankind,  
kindred spirits gather,  
drawn toward the light,  
sharing revelation,  
joyful at the sight.

If we choose to follow,  
we may yet be wise.  
Where the three kings travel  
three great faiths arise:  
Jesus Christ for Christians,  
Jesus, Judah's son,  
Prophet for the Muslim,  
wisdom in each one.

Where the star enlightens,  
light is shared around.  
God has drawn no borders,  
faith sees common ground:  
Peace the hopeful journey,  
Justice without bar,  
God's illumination  
from the Christmas star.

The three faiths carol  
Words: Shirley Murray (1931-2020)  
Tune: Noël Nouvelet  
French traditional carol

## Offering Prayer

*We bring our gifts, and we bring our lives,  
blessing upon blessing,  
that the earth and its peoples  
may be reconciled and renewed.  
Amen.*

## Carol

## Joy to the world



Joy to the world! The promised one  
has come shalom to bring;  
let ev'ry heart prepare a room,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns;  
let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

Graceful and true, the Saviour rules,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of the ways of peace,  
and wonders of God's love,  
and wonders of God's love,  
and wonders, wonders of God's love.

Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Tune: Antioch

Arranged from G. F. Handel (1685-1759)

by Lowell Mason (1792-1872)

Notices

Ann Kinnear

## Carrying the Light

*We, angels and mortals, believers and nonbelievers,      Unison  
look heavenward and speak the word aloud:*

*Peace.*

*We look at our world and speak the word aloud:*

*Peace.*

*We look at each other, then into ourselves,  
and we say without shyness or apology or hesitation.*

*Peace, my brother.*

*Peace, my sister.*

*Peace, my sibling.*

*Peace, my soul.*

## Blessing and Sung Amen

The blessing of the manger,  
God's creation all around.

The blessing of the shepherds,  
God's people with feet on the ground.

The blessing of the angels,  
good news for all, and peace for the world...  
be with us and all creation  
now and forever.

## Postlude

Variations on 'Infant Holy, Infant Lowly' – Alexandre Guilmant  
Rhys Boak (Organ)

## Acknowledgements

Art: "Nativity" by Brian Kershisnik

Jesus' Prayer by David B. Royer and Jonathan C. Nelson in Ruth C. Duck, ed. *Flames of the Spirit*.

Contemporary reading: "Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem" by Maya Angelou. *First read in 2005. Published in Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem, 15 May 2014 by Random House Group.*

"O come all ye faithful" Words: John Francis Wade.

Tune: Adeste Fideles. Later form of melody, probably by John Francis Wade. Descant: Rhys Boak.

"Away in a manger" New Words: George Stuart. Tune: Cradle Song. William James Kirkpatrick. Harmony and descant: Rhys Boak.

"It came upon a midnight clear" Words: Edmund H. Sears, Adapted by Brian Wren. Tune: Carol, Richard Storrs Willis.

"Angels from the realms of glory" Words: James Montgomery. Tune: Iris. French traditional melody arr. Martin Shaw.

"Now the star of Christmas" The three faiths carol. Words: Shirley Murray. Tune: Noël Nouvelet. French traditional carol melody.

"Joy to the world." Words: Isaac Watts. Tune: Antioch.

Arranged from G. F. Handel by Lowell Mason. Descant: Rhys Boak.

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## Music Notes

'When Heaven's bright with mystery' (Sussex Carol)

– English traditional melody arranged by David Willcocks (1919-2015)

This traditional carol melody is of uncertain origin but was notated down by the English composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Vaughan Williams heard the melody being sung near Sussex in the UK and this is where the carol derives its name.

This beloved arrangement was made by David Willcocks for the Choir of King's College, Cambridge.

The St Michael's Singers and Rhys Boak (Organ)

'The Silver Stars are in the Sky' – W.G. James (1892-1977)

Over in Lonsdale Street, during the 1930s, the organist and choir master of Melbourne's Wesley Church wrote several sets of Australian Carols, avoiding references to snow and winter and instead focusing on Christmas as it is experienced in the southern hemisphere.

'The Silver Stars are in the sky' is one of the best known of these, along with 'The north wind is tossing the leaves.'

The St Michael's Singers & Rhys Boak (Organ)

Variations on 'Infant Holy, Infant Lowly'

– Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)

The French organist and composer Alexandre Guilmant published several volumes of 'Noels' for the organ for use at Christmas time.

This work is a setting of the much-loved traditional Polish carol.

Rhys Boak (Organ)

## Musicians

You can find biographical profiles of St Michael's Guest Musicians on our website. [stmichaels.org.au/musicians-bios](http://stmichaels.org.au/musicians-bios)

## Giving

Offerings and donations enable us to continue the mission and ministry of St Michael's. Your generosity is appreciated.

Information about ways to give is available on our website.

[stmichaels.org.au/giving](http://stmichaels.org.au/giving)

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