



Christmas Carol Service

Christmas Eve 2024
6.00 pm



Welcome to the Church of St. Michael and All Angels

We are a Christian church within the Anglican tradition and we welcome people of all Christian traditions as well as people of other faiths and people of little or no faith. Christian worship has been offered to God here for over 135 years. By worshipping with us today, you become part of that living tradition. Our regular worshippers comprising of three congregations (English, Sinhala, Tamil) supported by members of staff and a large number of volunteers, make up the church community.

We are committed to the diversity, equal opportunities and personal and spiritual development of all who work and worship here because we are followers of Jesus Christ. Thank you for being with us today. If you need any help, please speak with the Vicar.

Holy Communion is celebrated daily at 7.00 am
and every Wednesday at 12.00 noon
On Sundays Holy Communion is celebrated at
7.30 am in English;
9.00 am in Sinhala;
10.30 am in Tamil; 12.00 noon in English;

For further information telephone 112 343 471
or visit our website: www.stmichaelspolwatte.lk



As you prepare for worship, please be sensitive to the needs of those around you who may wish to pray in silence. Please silence mobile telephones and do not use photographic, video or recording equipment at any time.

Music before the Service

Vom himmel hoch	Johann Pachelbel (1653–1706)
In dulci jubilo	Dietrich Buxtehude (1637–1707)
Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich, BWV 605	J. S. Bach (1685–1750)
Prelude on 'Whence is that goodly fragrance'	Harrison Oxley (1933–2009)
Prelude on 'Quem pastores'	Healey Willan (1880–1968)
Vom himmel hoch BWV 606	Johann S. Bach (1685–1750)

Order of Service

*The congregation is asked to join in all text printed in **bold***

All stand as the choir and clergy enter and take their place in the Quire

Remain standing to sing

Hymn

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.

**And through all his wondrous childhood
He would honour and obey,
Love, and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms he lay;
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as he.**

**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.**

**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 wait around.**

Words: C. F. Alexander (1818–95)

Tune: Irby

H. J. Gauntlett (1805–76)

Descant: Christopher Robinson (b.1936)

Remain standing as the vicar gives

The Bidding

My brothers and sisters, welcome to this Church of St. Michael and All Angels, as we come together as the family of God, in our Father's presence, to celebrate the great festival of Christmas. In this service we hear and receive the good news of the birth of Christ and we offer to God our thanksgiving in the joyful singing of carols.

As we gather together in the name of Christ, we pray for the world he came to save:
for the Church, that it may be enabled in our generation to surrender anew to God's holy Wisdom, and bear the good news of God's love to a needy world;

for the world, which is already Christ's, that all its peoples may recognize their responsibility for its future, and may be inspired by the message of Christmas to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace everywhere;

for all in special need, the sick, the anxious, the lonely, the fearful and the bereaved, that the peace and light of the Christ-child may bring hope and healing to all who sit in darkness.

We commend all whom we love, or who have asked for our prayers, to the unfailing mercy of our heavenly Father, and say together, as Christ himself taught us:

**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.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Lord Jesus, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth; accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you now, our Saviour and incarnate God. **Amen.**

All sit

Adam lay y-bounden,
Bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter
Thought he not too long.

And all was for an apple,
An apple that he took,
As clerkes finden
Written in their book.

Ne had the apple taken been,
The apple taken been,
Ne had never our lady
A-been heavené queen.

Blessed be the time
That apple taken was,
Therefore, we moun singen,
Deo gracias! [*Thanks be to God*]

Words: Anon. 15th cent.

Music: Peter Warlock (1894–1930)

Reading

A member of the Sunday school

The Prophecy of the Messiah's Birth

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9. 2, 6, 7

Thanks be to God

Remain seated. The choir sings

Carol

On Christmas night all Christians sing,
To hear the news the angels bring,
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.

When sin departs before his grace,
Then life and health come in its place,
Angels and men with joy may sing,
All for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light,
Which made the angels sing this night,
'Glory to God and peace to men,
Now and for evermore. Amen!'

Words: English, Traditional

Music: English, Traditional

Arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

All stand to sing

Hymn

**Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.**

**Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.**

**Born thy people to deliver;
born a child and yet a king;
born to reign in us for ever;
now thy gracious kingdom bring.**

**By thy own eternal Spirit,
rule in all our hearts alone:
by thy all-sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Words: Charles Wesley (1707–88)

Tune: Cross of Jesus
John Stainer (1840–1901)

All sit

The Annunciation to Mary

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you."

But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1. 26–38

Thanks be to God

Remain seated. Members of the Youth Fellowship sing

A ray of hope flickers in the sky
A tiny star lights up way up high
All across the land, dawns a brand new morn
This comes to pass when a child is born

A silent wish sails the seven seas
The winds of change whisper in the trees
And the walls of doubt crumble, tossed and torn
This comes to pass when a child is born

A rosy hue settles all around
You've got to feel you're on solid ground
For a spell or two, no one seems forlorn
This comes to pass when a child is born

And all of this happens because the world is waiting
Waiting for one child
Black, white, yellow, no one knows
But a child that will grow up and turn tears to laughter
Hate to love, war to peace and everyone to everyone's neighbour
And misery and suffering will be words to be forgotten forever

It's all a dream, an illusion now
It must come true, sometime soon somehow
All across the land, dawns a brand new morn
This comes to pass when a child is born

**Of the Father's heart begotten
Ere the world from chaos rose,
He is Alpha: from that Fountain,
All that is and hath been flows;
He is Omega, of all things
Yet to come the mystic Close,
Evermore and evermore.**

**By his word was all created;
He commanded and 'twas done;
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,
Universe of three in one,
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,
All that breathes beneath the sun,
Evermore and evermore.**

**O how blest that wondrous birthday,
When the Maid the curse retrieved,
Brought to birth mankind's salvation,
By the Holy Ghost conceived,
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
In her loving arms received,
Evermore and evermore.**

**Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;
Angels and Archangels, sing!
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
Let your joyous anthems ring,
Every tongue his name confessing,
Countless voices answering,
Evermore and evermore.**

Words: Prudentius (b. 348)

Tune: Divinum Mysterium

Melody from 'Pie Cantiones'

Arranged by Sir David Willcocks CBE (1919–2015)

All sit

Reading

A member of the mother's union

The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2. 1–7

Thanks be to God

*During the singing of the next carol
children (with their gifts) and clergy will
gather at the crib*

The choir sings

Carol

Good Christian men, rejoice
With heart and soul, and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before Him bow;
And He is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

Good Christian men, rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened the heavenly door,
And man is blessed evermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

Good Christian men, rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all,
To gain His everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

Words: Heinrich Suso (d.1360)

Music: Sir Philip Ledger, CBE (1937–2012)

All stand and face the crib as the vicar says,

The Blessing of the Crib

Let us pray that God our Father will bless this crib,
and that all who worship his Son,
born of the Virgin Mary,
may come to share his life in glory.

God our Father,
on this night 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 lives and reigns for ever.

Amen.

*The crib is censed. During which the children offer their gifts
and sing*

(Children alone):

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.

Remain standing to sing

Carol

**Unto us is born a son,
King of choirs supernal:
See on earth his life begun,
Of lords the Lord eternal.**

**Christ, from heav'n descending low,
Comes on earth a stranger;
Ox and ass their owner know
Becradled in a manger.**

All men: **This did Herod sore affray,
And grievously bewilder,
So he gave the word to slay,
And slew the little childer.**

All women: **Of his love and mercy mild
Hear the Christmas story:
And O that Mary's gentle Child
Might lead us up to glory!**

**O and A and A and O,
Cum cantibus in choro,
Let our merry organ go,
*Benedicamus Domino.***

Words: Piae Cantiones (1582)

Music: Piae Cantiones
Arranged by Sir David Willcocks CBE

All sit

Reading

A member of the adult fellowship

The shepherds go to the manger

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

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

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.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Luke 2. 8–20

Thanks to be God

Remain seated. The choir sings

Carol

Born in a stable so bare
Born so long ago
Born 'neath light of star
He who loved us so

*Far away, silent he lay
Born today, your homage pay
For Christ is born for aye
Born on Christmas Day*

Cradled by mother so fair
Tender her lullaby
Over her son so dear
Angel hosts fill the sky

Wise men from distant far land
Shepherds from starry hills
Worship this babe so rare
Hearts with his warmth he fills

Love in that stable was born
Into our hearts to flow
Innocent dreaming babe
Make me thy love to know

Words: Sir John Rutter CBE (b.1945)

Music: Sir John Rutter

All stand to sing

Carol

during which a collection will be taken

**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 field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant Light:**

**Sages, leave your contemplations;
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of Nations;
Ye have seen his natal star:**

**Though an infant now we view him,
He shall fill his Father's throne,
Gather all the nations to him;
Every knee shall then bow down:**

Words: James Montgomery (1771–1854)

Music: Iris

French Melody

Harmony by Charles Wood (1866–1926)

All sit

Reading

A member of the choir

The Wise—men are led by a star to Jesus

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2. 1–11

Thanks be to God

Remain seated. The choir sings

Carol

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day:
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance:

*Sing, O my love, O my love, my love, my love;
This have I done for my true love.*

Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance;
Thus was I knit to human nature,
To call my true love to my dance:

In a manger laid and wrapped I was,
So very poor, this was my chance,
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass,
To call my true love to my dance:

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day:
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance:

*Sing, O my love, O my love, my love, my love;
This have I done for my true love.*

Words: English, Traditional

Music: David Illif (b.1939)

All stand to sing

Hymn

**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!*

**God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten, not created:**

**Lo! Star-led chieftains,
Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer him incense, gold, and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child
Bring our hearts' oblations:**

Remain standing

Reading
The Vicar

St. John unfolds the mystery of the great incarnation

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 or of the will of the flesh or 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.

John 1. 1–14

Thanks be to God.

All continue singing the hymn

**Sing, choirs of Angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God
In the Highest:**

**O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing.**

Words: Latin, 18th century

Tune: *Adeste Fideles*
trans. Frederick Oakeley (1802–80)
John Francis Wade (1711–86) and others
arranged by Sir David Willcocks, CBE

All kneel or sit

Prayers

In peace let us pray to the Lord. Father, in this holy night your Son our Saviour was born in human flesh. Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

In this holy night there was no room for your Son in the inn. Protect with your love those who have no home and all who live in poverty.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

In this holy night Mary, in the pain of labour, brought your Son to birth.

Hold in your hand all who are in pain or distress.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

In this holy night your Christ came as a light shining in the darkness.

Bring comfort to all who suffer in the sadness of our world.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

In this holy night the angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.' Strengthen those who work for peace and justice in all the world.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

In this holy night shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy.
Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redemption.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

In this holy night strangers found the Holy Family,
and saw the baby lying in the manger.

Bless our homes and all whom we love.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

In this holy night heaven is come down to earth,
and earth is raised to heaven.

Hold in your hand all those who have passed through death
in the hope of your coming kingdom.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

Remain kneeling. The vicar gives

The Blessing

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
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 among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

All stand to sing

Hymn

**Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born 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.**

*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 a Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.**

**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 them second birth.**

***Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.***

Words: Charles Wesley (1707–88)
and others.

Tune: Mendelssohn
Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47)
Last verse by Sir David Willcocks CBE

*Remain standing as the Procession of choir, servers and clergy
make their way from the Quire to the Vestry.*

Forthcoming Christmas Services

December

Later Tonight 11.30pm Sung Eucharist - *Sinhala*

CHRISTMAS DAY

5.30am	Sung Eucharist - <i>Tamil</i>
7.30am	Sung Eucharist - <i>English</i>
9.30am	Sung Eucharist - <i>Sinhala</i>
12noon	Said Eucharist - <i>English</i>

You are all welcome to attend any of these services

The Vicar, The Wardens and the
whole Church Community wish you a
happy and a holy Christmas



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