

St Matthew's Church, Croydon



Welcome to our
Christingle & Crib
Service

Christmas Eve

Welcome to our Christingle service at St Matthew's.

During the service, the Christingle candles will be lit for you.

To ensure everyone's safety, please hold the Christingle away from all clothes and hair. If you need to secure your hair, we have plenty of ties for this. Adults are asked to ensure their children behave in a safe manner with the candles and if in doubt, please hold the Christingle for them.

In the event of an incident, there are plenty of church members around who are able to assist.

Our collection is taken today for the work of The Children's Society. Please give generously.

Christ has brought us out of darkness.

To live in his wonderful light.

Welcome

Carol

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.

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.

For He is our childhood's pattern,
day by day like us He grew,
He was little, weak and helpless,
tears and smiles like us He knew.
and He feeleth for our sadness,
and He shareth in our gladness.

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;
where like stars His children
crowned
all in white shall wait around.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)

Saying sorry to God

**Father God,
We are sorry for the things
we say and do which make
you sad, and for not thinking
of others before ourselves.
We are sorry for times when
we have seen people in need
and ignored them and
walked on by.**

**Please forgive us and help us
to love you and other
people, so we may bring light
and hope to the world.
Amen.**

Carol

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.

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

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.

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!

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)

The Word of God

Luke 2:1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Talk & Blessing of the Crib

Prayers

Lord Jesus,
born in a
stable,
yet surrounded by love,
we pray for all children,
that they may be nurtured in
communities of care.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus,
cradled in a manger,
kept warm and protected from harm,
we pray for children and young
people who feel unsafe and afraid.
Help them to find places of safety.
Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus,
worshipped by shepherds and kings,
we pray for the work of The
Children’s Society and all those who
form communities of support
around vulnerable children and
young people.
Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus, God with us, we pray for
children and young people who feel
alone, please give them someone to
support and help them.
Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, 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.**

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Christingle Song

During this hymn a collection will be taken for the work of the Children's Society and Christingle collection boxes placed in front of the crib.

The Christingle begins with an orange,
like the world which the Lord God made.

For creation is full of his glory;
all around we see his love displayed.

*Sing Christingle! Sing Christingle!
Sing Christingle, it's the light of Christ.
Sing Christingle! Sing Christingle!
Sing Christingle, light of Christ.*

Every year we give thanks for the seasons,
and the fruits of the earth to share.
The Christingle is here to remind us
that the love of God is everywhere.

God of love, we give thanks now for Jesus;
we remember his birth again.
But the red ribbon round the Christingle
tells the story of his cross and pain.

To complete the Christingle:
a candle, telling us of the world's true light.

For the darkness shall not overcome it,
Jesus shines on in the darkest night.

Mark Earey (1998, 2003)

Presentation and Lighting of Christingles

Lord Jesus, Light of the world, I hold this Christingle as a sign of your love.

May your light shine in the darkness.

The candle, planted deep within the world, as a sign that you made your home among us, that you lived with the poor and neglected.

May your light shine in the darkness.

The ribbon, wrapped around the earth, a sign of your blood poured out on the cross, enfolding the whole world with your saving love.

May your light shine in the darkness.

The fruits and sweets, signs of all the good things you have made, given to us that we might share them fairly so everyone can have enough.

May your light shine in the darkness.

**Lord Jesus, Light of the world, as I hold this Christingle and think about your great love for me, help me to take this light out into the world and to share your love with others, especially those who need it most.
Amen.**

Carol

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round the virgin and her Child,
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace;
sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quail at the sight.
Glory streams from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing 'Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born!'

Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light:
radiant beams Your holy face
with the dawn of saving grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Your birth.

*Franz Xaver Gruber (1787-1863); words by
Joseph Mohr (1792-1848)
trans. John Freeman Young (1820-1885)*

We extinguish our candles.

Blessing

We go in peace.

**To share the peace
of God with all we
meet.**

We go in love.

**To share God's gift
of love with the
world.**

We go in the light of
Christ.

**To shine as lights in
the world.**

To the glory of God the
Father.

Amen.

*As you depart from this service, we
take this opportunity to thank you for
joining us and to wish you and all those
you love and care for a very happy and
healthy Christmas!*