

# Sunday Service ~ December 25, 2025

## Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

### Welcome & Prayer

Good morning and welcome to our Christmas Day service at Charlestown Presbyterian. For the Christian, Christmas Day is typically a day for celebration so it is good perhaps to stop and pause and remember this even though it has been a difficult year and month. Some might even be asking what it is that we are celebrating? Well of course there is the birth of Jesus who would go on to be the Saviour for our sins. In Matthew 2 we read about the visit of the Magi to the newly born baby Jesus, "When they saw the star, they were overjoyed and on coming to the house they saw the child with his mother Mary and they bowed down and worshipped Him. It is our hope and prayer that this joy also fills your heart on Christmas Day.

Let's begin our service by turning to the Lord God in prayer...

Dear Lord, we thank you that in the midst of all the things that are going on right now, we have finally made it to Christmas and have the chance to remember your Son Jesus birth. What a present you have given to us in Jesus. Life, love, hope, joy all wrapped in the body of a little child. Help us to experience all these things again today. Help us to see this Christmas with wonder and awe. Help us to hear the stories of the shepherds and wise men afresh. And help us sing together "Joy to the world, the Lord has come." And we ask this in your Saviour name, Amen.

### Song – O Come all ye Faithful <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9P3zXXCTa0>

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| <p>1. Oh, come, all ye faithful,<br/>Joyful and triumphant!<br/>Oh, come ye, oh come ye to Bethlehem.<br/>Come and behold him,<br/>Born the King of angels;</p> | <p>2. Sing Choirs of angels<br/>Sing in exultation;<br/>Sing all ye citizens of heaven above<br/>Glory to God<br/>Glory in the highest</p>          |
| <p>[Chorus]<br/>Oh, come, let us adore him;<br/>Oh, come, let us adore him;<br/>Oh, come, let us adore him,<br/>Christ, the Lord.</p>                           | <p>3. Yea, Lord we greet thee<br/>Born that happy morning<br/>Jesus to thee be all glory given<br/>Son of the Father<br/>Now in flesh appearing</p> |

### Bible Reading – Isaiah 9:2-7 (NIV)

*Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future, he will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan— 2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. 3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. 4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. 5 Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.*

## Announcements

**Welcome.** We are so glad that you were able to join us at Church today. Christmas is such a special time and we are aware that there are plenty of other things you could be doing today. But it has been great that you have chosen to come to Church and join us in worshipping about great God who sent us His son Jesus. Our prayer is that our time together will fill you with faith, hope and love and set the scene for everything you do in the next day or so.

**Merry Christmas.** We really hope that you have a wonderful Christmas as you celebrate with your family and friends the birth of our Saviour, Jesus. Take time to rest and relax after a busy year. And when you recharge your batteries we look forward to a year where God's kingdom will grow and we serve our Saviour with the energy that he will provide.

**Tearfund.** This Christmas, supporting **TEARFUND** means partnering with local churches around the world to bring **hope, dignity and lasting change** to poor and vulnerable communities. Through TEARFUND's Christ-centred work, your gifts meet **both physical needs and spiritual transformation**—providing food, clean water, shelter and the good news of Jesus. In a season of giving, your generosity reflects the love of Christ to our global family who are in desperate need of compassion and practical help. Please consider giving to the **TEARFUND Christmas Appeal 2025** and be part of God's work of restoration and hope: <https://www.tearfund.org.au/tearfund-christmas-appeal-2025>.

## Pastoral Prayer

### For hearts awakened by the incarnation

Gracious Father, as we celebrate the birth of your Son, we pray that you would open blind eyes and soften hard hearts to see the glory of Christ in the gospel. In a culture distracted by comfort and consumerism, cause many in our nation to hear, repent, and believe the good news.

**For all those affected by the events at Bondi**—for those still grieving, traumatised, or fearful—that they may know the comfort of the God who drew near to us in the birth of Jesus. We ask that you would strengthen families, first responders, and community leaders with wisdom, compassion, and perseverance as they continue to care for one another. Above all, may the light of Christ shine in darkened hearts and places, bringing true peace, repentance, and hope through the gospel.

### For justice, compassion, and true hope

Merciful God, we pray for those in Australia and around the world who are lonely, displaced, grieving, or struggling under the weight of poverty, conflict, or disaster. As we remember the Saviour born in weakness, lead your church to acts of love and mercy that point clearly to the lasting hope found only in Christ.

**For those whose Christmas this year will be far from Merry.** Especially pray for those who will miss the loss of a loved one or whose families are dysfunctional or who are sick or away from loved ones or who have to work today and so miss out on the time together with others. That God would be especially close to them and fill their hearts with love, joy and peace.

## Bible Reading – John 1:1-18 (NIV)

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did*

receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") 16 Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known."

## Song – O Holy Night

[O Holy Night \(Hear the Gospel Story\) \[Acoustic Sessions\] - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1. O Holy Night!<br/>The stars are brightly shining<br/>It is the night of the dear Savior's birth!<br/>Long lay the world in sin and error pining<br/>Till he appear'd and the soul felt its worth.<br/>A thrill of hope the weary soul rejoices<br/>For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!</p> | <p>2. Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming<br/>With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand<br/>So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming<br/>Here come the wise men from Orient land<br/>The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger<br/>In all our trials born to be our friend</p>         |
| <p>Fall on your knees<br/>Oh hear the angel voices<br/>Oh night divine<br/>Oh night when Christ was born<br/>Oh night divine<br/>Oh night divine</p>  | <p>3. Truly He taught us to love one another<br/>His law is love and His gospel is peace<br/>Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother<br/>And in His name all oppression shall cease<br/>Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,<br/>Let all within us praise His holy name</p> |

## Sermon – A Quiet Revival (Stephen T)

Christmas in Australia is loud. Walk through Charlestown Square in December and you're hit with flashing lights, Mariah Carey on loop, crowds driving like it's the apocalypse, kids screaming in the Santa line, and trolleys crashing like dodgems. Even ducking into Woollies for milk feels like entering a Christmas theme park. Christmas is loud, crowded, chaotic. As if it is a bully wanting to push everyone and everything out of its way.

But the first Christmas? Well, there was no crowds. No music. No advertising. Just a manger. A stable. A silent night. A beam of light entering a dark world. This is God's way. Not entering the world with a big song and dance. But sending the world its first Christmas present in a way that God has often works in history. Doing his work of revival, renewal, restoration not through the high and mighty but through the small, the humble, the weak.

Slide 2

In Bethlehem we see that God's revival of his whole world begins quietly. It begins quietly in the hearts of a Mary & Joseph, before reaching out to some shepherds in the fields and later to some wise men from afar. And God continues to do his work of revival quietly even today.

During the year a number of small, & to our news cycle, insignificant reports, have come our way. From Scripture Union in Britain. Across university campuses in USA. In a small Christian denomination in France. Even here in Churches in Australia. What has been dubbed the Quiet Revival is slowly but surely gaining momentum. Young people, often young males aged 15-25, disillusioned with what the world around them

is offering them, are quietly returning to Church, seeking out more information about Jesus, embracing the Christian faith.

It's not new, even though for many of us here it looks new. There have been times like this in many places and at many times in the past. But all these revivals trace their roots back to the first Christmas. So, let's see what God did to bring about a quiet revival through the arrival of His Light in a really dark place as described by John 1:1–18 and Isaiah 9:1–7. Firstly, we see

Slide 3

### 1. The Dark Outside

John 1:5 — “*The light shines in the **darkness**...*” Isaiah 9:2 — “*The people walking in **darkness** have seen a great light.*” Both Isaiah and John begin with **realism**. Before there is Christmas joy, there is Christmas honesty. Isaiah describes people as living in *gloom*, carrying *burdens*, under *oppression* & surrounded by *thick darkness*.

John 600 years later, begins his gospel by describing the same sort of world, a world marked by sorrow, sin, and confusion. He says its due to people being spiritually blind, rejecting their Creator God, unable to understand or simply **not wanting to understand** the light of God that he had previously shed on the world.

Slide 4

Friends, the Christmas story, assumes the world is broken. It's not morally neutral, but darkened. And isn't that the world we look out on in 2025? A place where war and conflict grab the news headlines every day, where whole societies are turning on themselves and breaking down, where shootings and massacres of innocent people happen before our very eyes, where there are deep fractures in many of our families, anxiety is rising, loneliness is taking hold, cost of living pressures are beginning to bite and injustice and greed seems to be the order of the day.

Slide 5

Is that why we make Christmas so loud in Australia? To hide the silence that we are currently feeling? For silence reveals loneliness. It exposes sadness & brings our emptiness to the surface. Every December, chaplains, counsellors, and ministers say the same thing: Christmas amplifies whatever is already inside. Some Australians are celebrating loudly — because they're hiding something quietly. While others are removing themselves from these loud celebrations because they feel in their hearts there is nothing good to celebrate.

They miss loved ones who are no longer there. They don't want to join families that are openly dysfunctional. They're too tired or stressed to join in the Christmas merry go round. Either way Christmas often hides the darkness that many of us are feeling. But today I want to tell you that Jesus came to do something about this dark, dark work. He came because people were walking in the darkness & he came in a way that shines forth with God's light.

Slide 6

### 2. The Light Inside

Here is the astonishing truth: Light does not come from the world. **Light breaks into the world**. Isaiah says: “**A great light has dawned.**” Not risen from within humanity — but dawned upon us from above. John writes: “**The true light... was coming into the world.**” So, light intrudes. Light invades. Light pursues. Light awakens. Christmas is not humanity reaching up to God. Christmas is God shining down into humanity with his wonderful light.

**So, what is the nature of this light?** According to John, the Light is **Life** (1:4) — spiritual vitality, renewal. The light is **Revealing** (1:5) — exposing truth, revealing God. It is **Universal** (1:9) — for all people. While still being **Personal** (1:12–13) — making us children of God.

Slide 7

The miracle of Christmas is not just that Light came into the world, but that the Light came as a person. Isaiah promises a child who will be a **Wonderful Counsellor**, one who will bring wisdom to us in the midst of our confusion. Who is **Mighty God**, who will bring with him the strength of the Lord Almighty and make it available to us in our weakness. This child is also described as an **Everlasting Father**, someone who will bring us a father's unconditional love, even to those whose own fathers didn't love them that way. And he will be called **the Prince of Peace** because he can bring us peace with God, peace with our neighbours, peace in our families, even peace within our hearts.

Then John tells us that *"The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us."* Meaning this person enters the world to live amongst us. To understand us. To save us from darkness. And that's what this quiet revival is all about. It isn't loud. There are no headlines. But it is real. Young people turning up to church who haven't been to Church before. Alpha courses running out of space. Interest in University ministries growing. Young men asking the hard questions and willing to wrestle with the hard answers that the Bible is giving to them.

Slide 8

It's not a cultural moment. It's not a program. It's not hype. It's light entering people. A quiet revival — one heart at a time. Maybe that's what happening this Christmas in you? You come to the Christmas services because your family makes you come but today something is stirring within you. Or maybe this is a new experience for you and you were willing to give up precious time this Christmas to scratch an itch that has been growing within you.

Or maybe you are already a Christian but this Christmas you are particularly tired or stressed or anxious. You need a quiet revival of your faith to go on inside of you as well. You want the light to shine in your darkness today. Well, let it shine. Welcome it. Embrace it. God wants to break into our world. God wants to enlighten our world. Let him. Allow him. Trust him.

Slide 9

### 3. For the beam of this light focuses on Jesus.

God brings revival by focusing our eyes on Jesus. Not on spirituality. Not on tradition. Not even on "the Christmas spirit." And certainly not on vague belief in God. But Jesus.

John 1 says: He is the eternal Word. He is the Light. He is God made flesh. He reveals the Father. He gives new birth. He brings grace and truth which means that Jesus is the centre of history. He is the force behind the Quiet Revival. So, God's revival has one focus: His Son.

Slide 10

Imagine a cloudy, smoky Australian morning. Then suddenly: One beam of sun breaks through the cloud cover. It hits a tree, a house, or a patch of ground — and everything it touches is warmed and transformed. That is how God works. He focuses the beam of heaven on Jesus — his birth, death, resurrection — & everyone who steps into that beam finds life.

Slide 11

Today we celebrate his birth and what a thing to celebrate. Immanuel. God is with us. God steps into our world in order to fully experience the world, understand our world. You see God is not distant, aloof, uncaring. He has come close. That is what the beam of this light tells us about Jesus. He cares. He understands. He has stepped into our shoes.

But the beam of light also focuses on Jesus' death as well. Because Jesus came to die. And it is his death that offers us the chance of eternal life. For there is something that is stopping us from fixing up our own relationship with God. And it is not the darkness of the world around us but the darkness of the world within us. We are part of the problem. I've done things wrong. I've let others down. I've haven't lived the way that God wants me to live.

But the solution to that problem is not the birth of Jesus but the death of Jesus. Where he takes on the punishment for our sins in order to gift us the reward that would be given to him for his perfect life. The beam of heaven then highlights Jesus' birth and his death and then finally his resurrection.

Because this Jesus died on the cross. Was taken to hell for the punishment that our sins deserved but on the third day he rose from the dead. He proved stronger than death. He took on Satan on his own ground and defeated him convincingly. He proved that light was stronger than darkness, that life was more powerful than death, that God had triumphed over the devil.

Slide 12

The beam of light that God is shedding into the world is focused on Jesus. His birth, yes. But also, his death and resurrection. Which means that is what God wants you to see today. Not just the food. Or the presents. Or the family. Or the fun. But Jesus. His present to you this Christmas is Jesus. Jesus' presence that can then be with you each and every day of the year.

Look at him. Walk in the light. Rejoice in the light. Receive the word. Believe in his name. See his glory. Live in his grace and truth. Be born of God. Today step into His light.

The message of Christmas is simple yet world-changing: The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The darkness around us is real, we all know that. But the Light that God offers us through his son Jesus Christ is greater. And those of us who have put our trust in Jesus know that this truth changes absolutely everything for us. The quiet revival began in Bethlehem. It is spreading quietly across Australia, the USA, England —and it can reach us today and change the world we live in tomorrow.

Slide 13

Let me finish with something that actually happened in Perth last Christmas. A small suburban café started something simple: a "Pay It Forward" board. Buy an extra coffee or meal, and they'd save it for someone doing it tough. They weren't expecting much. Maybe a handful. Maybe one or two meals. But within days, the board was full — covered in handwritten notes from ordinary Aussies quietly giving to people they would never meet.

By Christmas Eve, they had enough prepaid meals to feed every homeless person who walked in... and then some. And do you know what happened next? People from the neighbourhood — tradies, retirees, students, mums with prams — started turning up asking, "Can I help serve?" One spark of generosity lit another. One small act of light set off a chain reaction. And that little café became a bright spot in its whole community.

Slide 14

That's what Jesus does. That's what the Light does. He enters a dark world quietly... and suddenly something begins to spread. Grace spreads. Hope spreads. Love spreads. A quiet revival begins — one heart, then another. This Christmas, the Light has come. So, step into it.

Christmas is the story of Light entering darkness — not abstract ideas, but the personal, living Light of Jesus Christ. Isaiah paints the promise. John paints its fulfilment. But you and get to walk in this light. Amidst a world full of darkness, those who put their trust in Jesus can live in the light, the light that God himself gives us in the person of Jesus Christ.

## Song – Once in Royal David's city

[once in royal davids city - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1. Once in royal David's city<br/>         Stood a lowly cattle shed<br/>         There a mother laid her baby<br/>         In a manger for His bed<br/>         Mary was that mother mild<br/>         Jesus Christ her little child</p> <p>2. He came down to earth from heaven<br/>         Who is God and Lord of all<br/>         And His shelter was a stable<br/>         And His cradle was a stall<br/>         With the poor, oppressed and wholly<br/>         Lived on earth our Savior holy</p> | <p>3. And our eyes at last shall see Him<br/>         Through His own redeeming love<br/>         For that child, so dear and gentle<br/>         Is our Lord in heaven above<br/>         And He leads His children along<br/>         To the place where He is gone</p> |
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**Benediction.** 6 *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, & the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.”*

## Closing. We wish you a Merry Christmas

We wish you a Merry Christmas  
 We wish you a Merry Christmas  
 We wish you a Merry Christmas  
 And happy new year  
 God tidings we bring  
 To you and your kin  
 We wish you a Merry Christmas  
 And happy new year