

Prayers to share this season (sourced from the World Wide Web)

Opening gifts

Let me just for a moment, Lord, hold this time in my heart. It is about mysteries and gratitude, unknowing and wrong sizes, snippets of ribbon and screams of delight. Help me to remember the immense love you have for each of us in this room. With each gift that is opened, no matter how perfect or not, let me feel again the many ways you gift us each day, especially with your presence in our hearts and the presence of each other in our lives.

Amen

Prayer before Christmas Dinner.

God of all gifts, we thank you for the many ways you have blessed us this day. We are grateful we are gathered around this table. We ask you to bless us and our food and to bless those we love who are not with us today. In our gratitude and love, we remember your humble birth into our lives and pray for those who are without enough to eat. We remember the stable in which you were born and pray for those who have no place to live. We remember your challenging message of caring and giving and we pray for peace in families and nations throughout the world. We bless you and give you thanks in your Spirit who brings our hearts to life the Christmas Day and forever. **Amen.**

Prayer as I reflect on all the people you place in my life today.

I think about my family, my relatives, the neighbours, people with whom we will spend this day. Loving God, as I look at their faces and remember their stories, there are feelings of gratitude and some fear and anxiety. Thank you for these loved ones and please forgive me for the ways I have been less than accepting and loving. Please heal the wounds, division and conflicts that stand between us and help me to remember how dearly you love all people. Gift us with peace and love. **Amen**

Please pray for:

The victims of violence
Those who live in fear and terror
Those who are in captivity
Those who harm and hurt others
The leaders of all faiths and nations
Those who mourn and those who are ill.

The residents, families and staff of Kankinya Nursing Home
St Philip's Care at Northbourne Community Centre helpers and attendees
The parish council and leadership

CALENDAR

Sunday 28th Dec Holy Innocents - 8.00 am & 10.00 am
Saturday 3rd Jan Communion Kankinya Nursing Home - 10.30 am
Sunday 4th Jan The Epiphany of the Our Lord - 8.00 am, & 10.00 am
Thursday 8th Jan Communion St Philip's - 10.00 am

January Worship Services as usual:
Saturday 10.30 Holy Communion Kankinya
Sunday 8.00 & 10.00 am Holy Communion St Philip's
Thursday 10.00 am Holy Communion St Philip's

NB: Ash Wednesday 18th of February
AGM 22nd of February (Reports due the beginning of February - Thank you!)



St Philip's Come & See

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Christmas 2014

Christmas Eve Music

Hymns: 276, 309, 299, 304 (no verse 4)

During Communion - Duet for Soprano and Alto by J.S Bach,
Die Armuth, So Gott auf Sich Nimmt (Bmv 91)
Sung by Fiona Fraser and Maartje Sevenster
Piano - Colin Forbes
(Text inside)

Christmas Day Music

Hymns: 268, 303, 100 (vss 1,4,5,7), 304 (no verse 4)



Readings

Christmas Eve: Isaiah 9.2-7, Psalm 98, Titus 2.11 - 14, Luke 2.1-14
Christmas Day: Isaiah 62.6-12, Psalm 98, Titus 3.4-8a, Luke 2. 8 - 20

Psalm 98

1. O sing to the Lord a new song:
for he has done marvellous things;
2. His right hand and his holy arm:
they have got him the victory.
3. The Lord has made known his salvation:
he has revealed his just deliverance
in the sight of the nations.
4. He has remembered his mercy and faithfulness
towards the house of Israel:
and all the ends of the earth
have seen the salvation of our God.
5. Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth:
break into singing and make melody.
6. Make melody to the Lord upon the harp:
upon the harp and with the sounds of praise.
7. With trumpets and with horns:
cry out in triumph before the Lord, the king.
8. Let the sea roar, and all that fills it:
the good earth and those who live upon it.
- 9 Let the rivers clap their hands:
and let the mountains ring out together
before the Lord;
10. For he comes to judge the earth:
he shall judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.

Text of Christmas Eve Communion Music:

*The poverty that God takes upon himself
has appointed for us an everlasting salvation,
the abundance of the treasures of heaven.
It's human existence makes you
like the glory of the angels
and places you among the choir of angels.*

"Die Armuth, So Gott auf Sich Nimmt"
The Poverty that God takes upon himself
J.S. Bach (Bmv 91)

Lighting of the Christmas Candle

Let us pray:
God our Father, today the
Saviour is born and those who
live in darkness see a great
light. Help us, who greet the
birth of Christ with joy, to live
in the light of your Son and to
share the good news of your
love. We ask this through
Jesus Christ, the light who has
come into the world. Amen.

*The Christmas candle is lit.
We pray together:*

**Lord Jesus, Light of light,
you have come among us.
Help us who live by your
light to shine as lights in
your world. Glory to God in
the highest. Amen**



FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Family, Friends, Neighbours, Visitors, Brothers and Sisters,

On behalf of the St Philip's Community I wish you all the most blessed Christmas!

Laurence Freeman OSB from the World Community for Christmas Meditation writes these words about the birth of Christ:

The story is not as nice as we have made it seem in our long cultural reworkings and evasions. It begins, even before his birth, with the slur of illegitimacy – not a nice way for the Son of God to appear. Then he becomes homeless – no room in the inn. And then an exile, fleeing for his life from the butcher Herod who like the butchers at the massacre of Peshawar was blinded by fear and anger. What a strange story to fill us with hope. And we in whom the story does awaken hope – that is more than optimism and much more than easy consolation – are charged with sharing this hope with a world that, in every generation and culture, veers towards madness. It is gift....

This past year it does indeed seem as if the world has veered towards madness. There is no sugar coating some of the tragedies we have seen and heard about. Political ideology, tribalism, religious mania, prejudice and fear, state revenge, the poor treatment of the most vulnerable and the almost terminal distrust in political leadership and vision have, I think, wounded our collective hearts and minds. I know my soul and heart feels bruised and shaken.

In the face of such loss and tragedy the birth of Jesus the Christ is a strange story to fill us with hope. If, as the word according to Wikipedia puts it, "Hope is an optimistic attitude of mind based on an expectation of positive outcomes related to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large", then what we face can compel us more to despair than anything else.

However, the message of this simple story of Jesus birth is that God is with us and part of our lives and the lives of all human beings. No matter if we loose faith in God, cannot make sense of it all, cannot be bothered, turn our backs and fall into despair and dismay, God is still with us. In the birth of Jesus God's promises are fulfilled.

Whatever difficulties may arise—if the world we see is far from justice, peace, solidarity and compassion—for believers this is not the definitive situation. For those who grasp the hope inherent in God's faithfulness and presence there is the expectation of a world according to God's will or, to put it another way, according to God's love.

It is part of following Jesus Christ – the one born in the middle east, a Jew, a refugee, a compassionate lover of humans, the teacher and healer and the one who died on a cross and rose to bring us into peace and reconciliation with God and all else, the one who forgave – to bring this message again and again to the world. To let this message of God's unconditional love shine forth in the midst of chaos, violence and despair. To treasure this gift and to make sure we get the message straight and true, in gentleness and love, word and deed.

As you celebrate with family and friends and as you ponder the year ahead, 2015, may you be filled with peace. May you find in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, inspiration, comfort, purpose and above all hope. May you know and sense God's loving presence with you – the creative Power, the compelling Word and the sustaining Spirit.

Peace and blessings
Rev'd Rebecca

P.S. Please note there will be NO Thursday 10am Service on 1st January.