

THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD ACCORDING TO THE SHEEP



**St John's Anglican Church
Riddells Creek**

**Christmas Eve 2019
5.30 pm**

*The Parish of Gisborne acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land,
the peoples of the Kulin Nations,
and we pay our respects to their elders, living, past and emerging.
The Parish of Gisborne is committed to being a Child Safe organisation.*

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Holy God, Shepherd of Israel, you have chosen us:

we come to you with love.

Lord Jesus Christ, you laid down your life for the sheep:

we come to you in faith.

Spirit of Peace, you bring us together as one flock:

we come to you in prayer.

Holy Trinity, one God,

we come to you in praise.

The Coming of Hope

Each year as we approach Christmas, the Church lights one candle on each Sunday before as a reminder to us of the coming of Jesus into the world. Each week, there is a different focus.

Let us journey with the Church as we prepare for Christmas.

The people who walk in the darkness have seen a great light:

shines upon everyone who lives in the land of darkest shadows.

The first candle is placed on the candle stand

We seek to bring to people who are feeling there is no future a word of hope.

Our hope is like a seed that will become a mighty tree;

our hope is like a single light showing the way in the night.

Our hope is that we can make our world a better place.

The first candle is placed on the candle stand, the word "Hope" is placed in the Hymn board as we sing:

Hope, hope, hope -

The light of Christ is hope.

In all our darkness Christ is shining,

Leading upward, faith refining.

Hope, hope, hope -

The light of Christ is hope.

A reader begins the Christmas story:

“That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord’s glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in King David’s hometown a Saviour was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay.”

Luke 2.8-12

When God first got the idea of sheep it was just one small idea in a much bigger idea called ‘the universe’. Indeed, this Big Idea was so big it has taken billions of human lifetimes to get as far as we have today in understanding it – and we’re still quite a long way from really getting God’s Big Idea.

Along the way, some human beings remembered stories of God’s ideas and wrote them down in what is now the Bible. This is not all the good ideas God ever had, just some of the ones that have been remembered and written down. But amongst those ideas are things about sheep.

Sheep may not seem that great to some of you, but the fact is, God rates sheep and included them in the Big Idea. Human beings, and sheep too, have remembered that. In the Bible there are lots of stories about sheep. And we’re going to tell you some today.

**While Shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down
and glory shone around.**

**To you in David’s town this day
is born of David’s line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:**

**‘the heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling clothes
and in a manger laid.**

The Big Idea didn’t begin with sheep. It began with space and time, and light and dark, and a thing called the firmament.

All sheep: What’s that?

The firmament is the sky above us and the earth beneath us – together they make up the firmament. Without the firmament there would be no place for sheep and humans to live.

Reader:

In the beginning God
created the heavens and the earth.
The earth was barren, with no form of life;
it was under a roaring ocean covered with darkness.
But the Spirit of God was moving over the water.
God said, “I command light to shine!” And light started shining.
God looked at the light and saw that it was good.
He separated light from darkness and named the light “Day” and the
darkness “Night.” Evening came, then morning—that was the first day.

Genesis 1:1–5

A sheep: What about the sheep?

Well, sheep didn’t appear straight away. It took God a couple of days to get round to them, and all the other animals, including people.

God: Now, let me see. Let the water be filled with many kinds of living creatures, and the air be filled with birds. Let the earth produce all kinds of animals, tame and wild, large and small ...

And God saw all that and was very pleased.
Time went by. Sheep and people lived side by side.

All sheep: Sounds good.

There is a special name for people who look after sheep, and they are called:

Shepherds! Baaaaaaaaa!

Settle! Yes, shepherds, and in the Bible there are lots of stories about shepherds, like the one we heard before. One of the most famous of all shepherds went on to be the King of South Israel, then all of Israel, and he reigned for 40

years. His name was David. As well as being a shepherd, he was a musician and loved to sing to his sheep, and his own king, Saul. One of his most famous songs is called “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

A Prayer for Peace

Let’s learn a new version tonight, but first, we light the second candle.

Fr Dennis: We seek a world of peace where all people can live together, free from hunger and violence, free to be the person whom God has created.

As the second candle is placed and lit, we sing:

**Peace, peace, peace -
The gift of Christ is peace.
We walk with God, our past forgiven.
All in Him is life and heaven.
Peace, peace, peace -
The gift of Christ is peace.**

The word “Peace” is placed on the board.



And I will trust in you a - lone, and I will trust in you a - lone, for your
5
end - less mer - cy fol - lows - me, your good - ness will lead me home.

The Lord’s my shepherd, I’ll not want.
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
his goodness restores my soul.

**And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.**

He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil,
and my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.

**And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.**

Stuart Townsend 1963–

God: I will give to you a new king, born of a young girl, who will be the Saviour of the World. His title is Emmanuel, God is with us; He will be born as an ancestor of King David and will be born in his town; and his father Joseph and mother Mary shall name him Jesus: the One who Saves.

Reader:

About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books. These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed. So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

Mary was engaged to Joseph and travelled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, and while they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 1.1-6

**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, despised and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.**

**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 his children gather round
birth like stars, with glory crowned.**

Reader:

Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said: "Glory to God in heaven! Peace and joy on earth to everyone who pleases God." After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about." They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. Everyone listened and was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

Eight days later Jesus' parents did for him what the Law of Moses commands. And they named him Jesus, just as the angel had told Mary when he promised she would have a baby.

The Coming of Joy into the World

The Third Candle is lit:

This candle is rose pink and is different to the others. Despite being different, it is not alone but stands with the others. The colour of the candle is that of joy, and as a candle, the colour does not matter. The flame burns brightly like the others to show that we are all one in this world and on the same journey.

**Joy, joy, joy -
We praise You, Christ, with joy!
Our peace, our hope, our love and treasure,
Highest calling, deepest pleasure!
Joy, joy, joy -
We praise You, Christ, with joy!**

And whilst the Shepherds were away, who was looking after the sheep, mmm?
You okay, my dear sheep?

All Baaa!

And what do you think of being left alone?

All Baaaaad!

Reader:

After Jesus had been named and lots of wonderful things were said about him, Mary and Joseph took him back to the town in which Joseph was working, Nazareth, and there, Jesus grew into a strong young man who knew his bible. When he was twelve or so, he was presented in the Temple.

Mary and Joseph were on the way back to Nazareth when they realised he was missing. They rushed back to Jerusalem and found him in the Temple discussing religion with the wise people.

Running off without telling Mum and Dad?

All Baaaad!

But could we say Jesus was really bad? I hope not!

Reader:

When Jesus grew and started teaching about God, he told this story about the sheep and the shepherd: showing just how much a shepherd loves his sheep.

Then Jesus told them this parable: "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the pasture and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, comes home, and calls together his friends and neighbours to tell them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep!' In the same way, I tell you that there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous ones who do not need to repent.

Luke 15.3-7

God so loved the world he gave his only Son.

The fourth candle is placed on the candle stand.

Fr Dennis: The world is looking for hope, peace, and joy, and all three of these gifts are joined by the thing that binds them together: love.

Love is full of hope; patient, understands, never gives up, is kind, humble and makes us feel complete. Love is the fulfilling of God's word. Love knows what it means to say sorry and helps us accept others back into our lives.

Love, love, love -
The heart of Christ is love.
On all who come He pours His presence,
Life and love in holy essence.
Love, love, love -
The heart of Christ is love.

Fr Dennis The heart of Jesus is love.

It was night, and all was quiet, with only the sound of angels wings, soft singing in the distance, and the quiet talking of sheep that disturbed the *Silent Night*.

The fifth candle is lit and the Christ-child is placed into the Crib

**Silent night, holy night:
all is calm, all is bright
round the virgin mother and child,
holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night:
wondrous star, lend your light;
with the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King;
Christ our Saviour is born,
Christ our Saviour is born.**

So, this is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, born of Mary, raised by Joseph, who is God with us, and calling us to be saved.

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

So this is the Good Shepherd of the Sheep who gave up his life for us so that we can walk through the darkest places and fear no evil.

Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

So, this we remember tonight, not because of the date, but because of God's love and goodness to all people, now and for ever.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us,
✠ forgive us as we forgive others
when something has gone wrong,
and lead us home to him in heaven
in Jesus most beautiful name we pray. **Amen.**

The Greeting of Peace

We are the sheep of our Lord Jesus.

His rod and staff bring us comfort.

The fleece of God...oops!

The peace of God born today be with you all, and ever more.

And also with you.

We share the sign of peace.

Offertory 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.*

**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 we no more need die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.**

chorus

With this bread that we bring

We shall remember Jesus.

With this wine that we bring:

We shall remember Jesus.

Bread for his body,
wine for his blood
gifts to God to his table we bring.

**Heavenly child,
born as one of us yet still one with God,
bless us and our gifts we share
to the greater glory of your Holy Name. Amen.**

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Thanksgiving Prayer begins

We love to praise you, holy God,
for your beautiful world
and your wonderful ways.
You are the shepherd of your people.

You gave us good commandments
and you sent your messengers to guide us.

Why Jesus had to come

When we disobeyed you
or forgot you
and when we lost our way,
you came to our rescue every time.

The story of the baby who is also the Shepherd and Lamb of God

And best of all, the Son of God was born as Mary's child.
You gave us Jesus, the Good Shepherd.
When he died on the cross
so our sins could be forgiven,
the Shepherd gave up his life for the sheep.

But no evil power could defeat your truth and love in him.
You raised him from the dead
and gave him back to us,
to bring us life and peace for ever.

So we praise you, living God,
singing our song with angels and saints
and Christians everywhere:

The eternal song:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,---

Holy, holy, holy Lord

God of pow'r and might

God of pow'r and might!

Heaven and earth are full,---

Heaven and earth are full

are full of your glory.

are full of your glory.

✕ Blessed is the one who comes

Blessed is the one who comes

in the name of the Lord.

in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

Hosanna in the highest!

Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna in the highest

Hosanna in the highest

Hosanna in the highest

Hosanna in the highest

Hosanna in the highest!

in the highest!

St Bride Setting
John L Bell

And now, Lord Jesus Christ,
we thank you
for the meal you shared with us
on the night before you died.

With this bread that we bring:

You took the bread
and blessed it
and broke it
and gave it to your friends.

You said:

“This is my body.

Take it and eat it

in memory of me.”

With this wine that we bring:

Then you took the cup of wine,
and blessed it,
and gave it to your friends to drink.
You said:
“This is my blood.
It is God’s guarantee that sins will be forgiven.
Every time you drink it,
do this in memory of me.”

Remembering the command to do this

So we do what you command us,
and we remember:
you lived and died,
you rose in glory,
you sent your Holy Spirit,
and you will come again
at the end of time
to bring us home to God.

The Mystery of our Faith

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

TiS 756

The sending of the Holy Spirit on us, our thanksgiving, and our going back into the world

Now, Holy Spirit, we praise you
because you help us pray.
Come to us in this celebration,
and make us your holy people.
Feed us at this table
with the body and the blood of Christ.
Make our faith grow.

Send us to be your messengers to the world.
Spread the Good News of Jesus
by our words, our actions and our love.
Teach us to praise the living God,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ,
with every breath you give us:

Doxology:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

TiS 756

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to 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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread and Communion

Jesus said: I am the good shepherd.

I know my own and my own know me.

Be known to us, Lord Jesus, in the breaking of the bread.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Come, this is the table, not of the Church but of the Lord.

All are welcome at his supper. Come.

As Communion is distributed the following lullabies may be sung:

Mary's Lullaby (Away in a Manger)

**"Away in a manger, asleep on the hay,
I will watch over you at the end of the day,
The stars in the bright sky shine down where you lie,
As angels sing 'Glory be to God on high.'"**

**"My spirit rejoices, for news of your birth
Like wildfire will spread over all of the earth;
A light in our darkness, a hope for the poor,
God's gift to all people of life evermore."**

**“Your name shall be Jesus, for this holy night
Is fulfilment of promise through God’s saving might;
But now sleep in peace, as I sing lullaby,
I will stay by your side ‘til your dawning is nigh.”**

– Lyrics adapted by Ruth and Robb Sutherland

**Infant holy,
infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing,
little knowing
Christ the babe is Lord
of all;
swift are winging
angels singing,
nowells ringing,
tidings bringing,
Christ the babe is Lord
of all,
Christ the babe is Lord
of all.**

**Flocks were sleeping,
shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new
saw the glory,
heard the story,
tidings of a gospel true;
thus rejoicing,
free from sorrow,
praises voicing,
greet the morrow,
Christ the babe was born
for you,
Christ the babe was born
for you**

TiS 292

After a period of quiet, and prayer candles have all been lit at the back of the Church, we wait for the sign to go back into the world.

Prayers and Carol after Communion

Living God, Shepherd of your people,
thank you for gathering your flock
and for feeding us today.

Thank you for the company of all your faithful friends
to share your story and the meal.

**Take our hands and work through them.
Take our lips and speak through them.
Take our minds and think through them.
Take our hearts and set them on fire
with love for you**

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 !

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing
 all you citizens of heaven above,
 Glory to God, glory in the highest' : *Chorus*

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; *Chorus*

A Christmas Blessing

May the presence of **HOPE** in our lives lead others to know that in Christ, they are never alone and together, we can build a better world.
Amen.

May the song of the angels bring **PEACE** to this world, now and into the future, taking our voices and will as a starting place right now. **Amen.**

May the **JOY** we share this Christmastide be infectious and bring delight to all whom we meet. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God-with-us: ✠ the Creator, the Risen One and the Spirit of life and **LOVE** be with us all, evermore. **Amen.**

Sheep may safely graze!

Baaaa!

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

SERVICES OVER THE CHRISTMAS BREAK

Sunday December 29 th :	The Holy Family	Church of the Resurrection
Sunday January 5 th :	The Epiphany	St John's Riddells Creek
Sunday January 12 th :	The Baptism of Jesus	St Paul's, Gisborne
Sunday January 19 th :	The Beginning of Jesus' Work	St Paul's, Gisborne
Sunday January 26 th :	Epiphany 3;	10 am Church of the Resurrection
		7 pm St Paul's SUNDAY "I am".

All services are at 10 am. **CODE RED** DAYS: NO SERVICE

Wednesday 10 am

January 8	Church of the Resurrection
January 15	St John's Riddells Creek
January 22 and 29	St Paul's, Gisborne