

The Anglican Province of Victoria
Liturgical Committee

Prayer and Intercession

Seasonal Prayers for Christmas

*Authorised for use
by the Archbishop of Melbourne
on 6 December 2022*



Christmas

Bidding Prayer

This Bidding Prayer for use at Carol Services is closely modelled on that composed by Eric Milner-White for use at the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College Cambridge. It acknowledges the reversal of seasons in Australia, with Christmas falling at midsummer:

Beloved in Christ,
as we, like the magi of old,
are drawn from the east to the radiant light of the manger,
let us also prepare – in heart and mind – to go to Bethlehem
and hear again from Scripture and celebrate with our carols
the glorious news the Christ-child brings.

But first let us pray in his name for the needs of the whole world:

Silence is kept.

As he was born, poor and in a manger,
we pray for the poor, the hungry, and the homeless.
As he fled to Egypt from persecution,
we pray for all refugees, and victims of oppression and injustice.
As he came to bring life, light and healing to all,
we pray for the sick, the suffering, and those who mourn.
As he came to reconcile us to one another and to God,
we pray that we may bear witness to his glory
by working for peace on earth and goodwill among all people.

Finally, let us remember before him those who rejoice with us,
but upon another shore and in a greater light,
that multitude which no-one can number,
whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom
in the Lord Jesus, we are forever one.

These prayers and praises let us offer up to the throne of heaven
in the words Christ himself has taught us:

Our Father in heaven... /Our Father, who art in heaven...

Bidding Prayer

One or more persons may share in leading this Bidding Prayer for use at Carol Services.

Sections 1, 2 and 6 should always be used, together with all or a selection of the other sections.

- 1 Beloved in Christ, as we are drawn to the radiant light of the manger let us also prepare – in heart and mind – to go to Bethlehem, and hear again from Scripture, and celebrate with our carols, the glorious news the Christ-child brings.

But first let us pray in his name for the needs of the whole world:

Silence is kept.

- 2 As he came to reveal your sovereignty over all time and space, we acknowledge the *sovereignty/custodianship* you gave to the *Wurundjeri people* of the *Kulin Nation*, whose unceded country lies beneath our feet and all around us. We give thanks for ancestors and elders who received this gift and honoured it with care and with wisdom; and we pray that he, who is the light of truth, would give us strength to work for justice where there is none.
- 3 As he deigned to be robed in the dust of the earth and be born in human flesh, we acknowledge that we have mistreated God's good creation which surrounds and sustains us. We give thanks for this world, the lands and waterways, the sea and sky; and we pray that he, through whom all creation came into being, would embolden us in our work to safeguard our planet.
- 4 As he fled from persecution to Egypt and was a refugee, we acknowledge the poor and powerless and those who have been displaced because of war and terror. We give thanks that Christ is revealed in the least of these our sisters and brothers, and pray that he, whom his own accepted not, would equip us for our work in making refugees fully welcome in our city and nation.
- 5 As he came to reconcile us to one another and to God, we acknowledge our own part in making this world a place of suffering and sorrow. We give thanks and praise for his saving work, and pray that he, who has made known to us the Father's will, would empower us to work for peace on earth and goodwill among all people.
- 6 Finally, let us remember before him all those who have gone before us, and who rejoice with us, but in a greater light: that multitude which no one can number, who believed in his name and whom he has given power to become children of God, and with whom, in Christ Jesus, we are forever one.

These prayers and praises let us offer up to the throne of grace in the words Christ himself has commanded and taught us:

Our Father in heaven... /Our Father, who art in heaven...

(1, 2)

Prayers and Thanksgiving

Prayers for Christmas-tide

1 Christmas Day

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you that by your birth we also may be reborn. Thank you that you came among us as a child, so that we may become God's children. Give us grace to turn to you, repent of our sins and reject all evil, so that, clothed with you, we may share in the inheritance of all God's children: life with our heavenly Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

(2)

2 St Stephen, First Martyr

God of glory, you raise up witnesses in every generation. May we, like your servant Stephen, testify boldly to the Lordship of your Son and show forth his life-giving power: in word and witness, by service and sacrifice, in our love and by our lives. For you are alive and gift life, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

(2)

3 St John the Evangelist

Lord Jesus, Word from the beginning, made flesh and born in a manger: come and enter our lives. Day by day feed us with your life-giving word until, at the last, you welcome us with your words of eternal life. For you live and reign, with the Father and the Spirit, God in time and eternity. **Amen.**

(2)

4 The Holy Innocents

Father of mercy, look with compassion on our world, in which the innocent still suffer. Forgive us, when we failed to stand up to violence and abuse, or remained silent. Forgive us, when we were complicit in causing suffering, or closed our hearts to the distress of survivors. Let your justice flow like streams of living water: purify us from our sins and set us free to bring the reconciling love of your Son to this world. **Amen.**

(2)

5 St Joseph, Guardian of the Christ child

Almighty God, whose promise is true and holds fast: we give you thanks for the trust of your servant Joseph, who believed the good news of the Incarnation. Grant us the same trust in your gracious promises and fulfil them in our own lives, for you are alive and change lives, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always. **Amen.**

(2)

Acknowledgements

*These resources have been compiled by the Liturgical Committee of the Anglican Province of Victoria, except for any material to which acknowledgement is made by a number that refers to the list of sources or authors below. A text accompanied by the symbol * indicates that alterations have been made.*

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