



Where all find a welcome and are nurtured in their journey with Christ.

Midnight Eucharist

Friday 24 December 2021 at 11.30 pm



“And we have seen his glory, the glory as of a Father’s only son, full of
grace and truth.”

John 1.14

The Gathering

Please stand at the sound of the bell as the sacred ministers enter, during which the introit hymn is sung.

**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 our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heav'n 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;
When like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.**

Words: Cecil F. Alexander (1818-1895)

Music: Henry J. Gauntlett (1805-1876)

Verses 1-3 harmonised by Arthur H. Mann (1850-1929)

Verse 4 arranged by David V. Willcocks (1919-2015)

Hymn Tune: IRBY

Welcome all wonders in one sight!
Eternity shut in a span.
Summer in winter, day in night,
heaven in earth and God in man.

Great little one whose all-embracing birth
brings earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth.

The Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you

and also with you.

Words of Welcome

Blessing of the Crib

Dear friends, as we meet to celebrate the birth of Christ, let us pray that God will bless this crib, that all who worship his Son, born of the Virgin Mary, may come to share his life in glory.

God our Father,
on this night,
your Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary
for us and for our salvation:
bless this crib,
which we have prepared to celebrate that holy birth;
may all who see it be strengthened in faith
and receive the fullness of life he came to bring,
who is alive and reigns for ever.

Amen.

The crib is sprinkled and censed.

Prayers of Penitence

Christ the light of the world has come
to dispel the darkness of our hearts.
In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

Silence is kept.

God our Father,
you sent your Son full of grace and truth:
forgive our failure to receive him.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Jesus our Saviour,
you were born in poverty and laid in a manger:
forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Spirit of love,
your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:
forgive the hardness of our hearts.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw you to himself
and cleanse you from all your sins,
that you may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

The Collect

The president introduces a period of silent prayer with the words 'Let us pray in the peace of this Christmas celebration that our joy in the birth of Christ will last forever.'

Eternal God,
who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness of your one true light:
bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth,
to see the radiance of your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

Please sit.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'

Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the

Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Isaiah 52.7-10

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand as the gradual hymn is sung. During the hymn a procession will make its way to the centre of the nave from where the Gospel for the day is read. To symbolise our desire to turn to Christ in our daily lives, at the end of the hymn we remain standing and turn to face the place where the Gospel is proclaimed.

**Of the Father's heart begotten.
Ere the world from chaos rose,
He is Alpha: from that Fountain
All that is and hath been flows;
He is Omega, of all things
Yet to come the mystic Close,
Evermore and evermore.**

**O how blest that wondrous birthday,
When the Maid the curse retrieved,
Brought to birth mankind's salvation,
By the Holy Ghost conceived;
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
In her loving arms received,
Evermore and evermore.**

**This is he, whom seer and sibyl
Sang in ages long gone by;
This is he of old revealèd
In the page of prophecy;
Lo! he comes, the promised Saviour;
Let the world his praises cry!
Evermore and evermore.**

**Sing, ye heights of heav'n, his praises;
Angels and Archangels, sing!
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
Let your joyous anthems ring,
E'vry tongue his name confessing,
Countless voices answering,
Evermore and evermore.**

*Words: (Latin) Aurelius C. Prudentius (348-413)
translated by Robert F. Davis (1866-1937)
Music: Plainsong melody adapted by Theodoricus Petrus
in 'Piae Cantiones' (1582)
Hymn Tune: CORDE NATUS (DIVINUM MYSTERIUM)*

Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
and we have seen his glory.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with
God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through him, and without him
not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did
not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all
might believe through him. The true light, which
enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was

in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

John 1.1-14

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Please sit after the preacher leads us in prayer.

The Nicene Creed

Please stand with the president.

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and
glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Following an invitation to pray from the intercessor we kneel or sit to pray.

The response to the bidding

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Then at the end.

Merciful Father,

**Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Please stand with the president.

The Peace

This holy night the angels sang,
'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to all in whom he delights.'

Luke 2.14

The peace of the Lord be always with you

and also with you.

Preparation of the Table

The table is prepared and bread and wine are placed upon it.

A hymn is sung.

**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 th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.**

*Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.*

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come
Offspring of a virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.**

*Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.*

**Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n with healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
*Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.***

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Music: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Verse 3 arr. David V. Willcocks (1919-2015)

Hymn Tune: MENDELSSOHN

Taking of the Bread and Wine

Word made flesh, life of the world,
in your incarnation you embraced our poverty:
by your Spirit may we share in your riches.

Amen.

Please kneel or sit.

The Eucharistic Prayer (B)

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,
mighty creator, ever-living God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who for love of our fallen race humbled himself,

and on this night was born of the Virgin Mary

by the power of your Spirit, and lived as one of us.

In this mystery of the Word made flesh

you have caused his light to shine in our hearts,

to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

In him we see our God made visible

and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven

we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name

and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will,
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;
who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world;
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming in glory,
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
we bring before you this bread and this cup
and we thank you for counting us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people
and gather into one in your kingdom
all who share this one bread and one cup,
so that we,
in the company of Blessed Mary, St. Joseph and all the saints,
may praise and glorify you for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord;

By whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

Amen, amen, amen. (Sung)

Silence is kept.

The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.

We break the bread of life,
and that life is the light of the world.

God here among us,

**light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.**

*The **Agnus Dei** is sung as the bread is broken for distribution.*

**Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace.**

Invitation to Communion

Christ is the true bread
which has come down from heaven.

Lord, give us this bread always.

The president and people receive communion. All baptised Christians are welcome to receive the sacrament. Please follow the guidance offered by the stewards.

If you are not baptised, or would prefer to not receive then do still come forward for a blessing bringing this book with you so the president knows your intention.

The sacrament is for the moment available in one kind only. To the words 'The Body of Christ' the communicant replies "Amen".

For those at home it might be helpful to use this prayer during the distribution.

**God of grace and truth,
whose word brings light to birth
in the heart of a darkening world
which fears a love it cannot name:
may flesh be blessed and born anew
by a truth which leaves the heavens
and walks the waiting earth;
through Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate.
Amen.**

Choir Anthem

‘Ding dong! merrily on high’

Ding dong! merrily on high,
In heav’n the bells are ringing.
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv’n with angel singing.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

E’en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And i-o, i-o, i-o,
By priest and people sungen.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers.

Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Words: George R. Woodward (1848-1934)

Music: 16th century French carol melody

arranged by Charles Wood (1866-1926)

The Communion Hymns are sung.

Please remain seated.

**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.**

**How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav'n.
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.**

Words: Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)

Music: English traditional melody

Verses 1 & 2 arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Verse 3 arranged by Thomas Armstrong (1898-1994)

Hymn Tune: FOREST GREEN

**In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.**

**Our God, heav'n cannot hold him
Nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away
When he comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
Jesus Christ.**

**What can I give him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give him,
Give my heart.**

Words: Christina G. Rossetti (1830-1894)

Music: Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

Hymn Tune: CRANHAM

The Post Communion Prayer and The Lighting of the Advent Candle

Please stand as the president introduces a time of silent prayer with the words 'Let us pray'.

God our Father,
in this night you have made known to us again
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:
confirm our faith and fix our eyes in him
until the day dawns
and Christ the Morning Star arises in our hearts.
To him be glory both now and for ever.

Amen.

The president then moves to the Advent Wreath to light the last candle of the wreath, as we celebrate the Birth of Jesus.

The five candles of the wreath will remain in the sanctuary and lit until we celebrate the Epiphany on the 6th January.

The candle is lit and this prayer is said.

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, King of peace:
to you be praise and glory for ever.

The new light of your incarnate Word
gives gladness in our sorrow,
and a presence in our isolation.

Fill our lives with your light,
until they overflow with gladness and praise.

Blessed be God for ever.

A hymn is sung.

**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!**

**God of God,
Light of light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten, not created:
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 ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God
In the highest:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!**

*Words: John F. Wade (1711-1786)
translated by Frederick Oakley (1802-1880) and others
Music: John F. Wade (1711-1786)
arranged by David V. Willcocks (1919-2015)
Hymn Tune: ADESTE FIDELES*

The Dismissal

The Blessing

May the Father,
who has loved the eternal Son
from before the foundation of the world,
shed that love upon you his children.

Amen.

May Christ,
who by his incarnation gathered into one

things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace.

Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer,
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

The Dismissal

Go in peace.
Proclaim the Word made flesh.

Glory, thanks and praise to God.

Once in royal David's city
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Communion setting
© The Royal School of Church Music

Gospel acclamation
© The Royal School of Church Music

Hark! the herald-angels sing
© Oxford University Press

Organ music played during Holy Communion
© Kevin Mayhew Ltd

O little town of Bethlehem
© Oxford University Press

O come, all ye faithful
© Oxford University Press

Organ voluntary
© G. H. Taylor

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