



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

The Feast of St Stephen

Sunday 26 December 2021 at 10.00 am



“While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'”

The Gathering

Our worship begins at the sound of the bell, please stand as the sacred ministers enter and the introit hymn is sung.

**Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
*Come and worship
Christ, the new-born King:
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.***

**Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
Yonder shines the infant Light:
*Come and worship
Christ, the new-born King:
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.***

**Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In his temple shall appear:**

Come and worship

Christ, the new-born King:

Come and worship,

Worship Christ, the new-born King.

**Though an infant now we view him,
He shall fill his Father's throne,
Gather all the nations to him,
Ev'ry knee shall then bow down:**

Come and worship

Christ, the new-born King:

Come and worship,

Worship Christ, the new-born King.

Words: J. Montgomery (1771-1854)

Music: French or Flemish melody arr. C. Wood (1866-1926)

Hymn Tune: IRIS

**In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

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

Invitation to Confession

As Stephen rebuked God's people
for not listening to the word of God,
let us confess our stubbornness and sin
which resist the Holy Spirit.

Silence is kept.

You call us to listen to your voice

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

You command us to flee from idolatry.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

You ask us to forgive our persecutors.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through 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 that we may be strengthened by our communion Stephen and with all the saints.'

Gracious Father,
who gave the first martyr Stephen
grace to pray for those who took up stones against him:
grant that in all our sufferings for the truth
we may learn to love even our enemies
and to seek forgiveness for those who desire our hurt,
looking up to heaven to him who was crucified for us,
Jesus Christ, our mediator and advocate,
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 Acts of the Apostles.

Stephen said to the High Priest and to the counsel “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.”

When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their

coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

Acts 7.51-end

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.

**Stephen, first of Christian martyrs,
Let the Church in hymns proclaim;
Foll’wing close the Saviour’s passion,
Thus he won immortal fame.**

**For his foes he prayed forgiveness
While they stoned him unto death,
To the Lord his soul commending
As he yielded up his breath.**

**Holy Spirit, gift of Jesus,
Shed thy light upon our eyes,
That we may behold with Stephen
That fair realm beyond the skies.**

**Glory be to God the Father,
Glory to his only Son,
Dying, ris'n, ascending for us,
Who the heav'nly realm has won.**

**Glory to the Holy Spirit,
To One God in Persons Three,
From the saints in earth and heaven,
Glory, endless glory, be.**

Words: partly based on verses by C. Wordsworth (1807-1885)

Music: German melody arr. C. F. Witt (c.1660-1716)

Hymn Tune: STUTTGART

Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia.

I see the heavens opened
and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.

Acts 7.56

Alleluia.

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

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to the twelve 'Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.'

Matthew 10.17-22

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

Jesus said, 'In the world you face persecution.
But take courage; I have conquered the world.'

John 16.33

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.

**For all the saints who've shown your love
In how they live and where they move,
For mindful women, caring men,
Accept our gratitude again.**

**For all the saints who loved your name,
Whose faith increased the Saviour's fame,
Who sang your songs and share your word,
Accept the gratitude, good Lord.**

**For all the saints who named your will,
And showed the kingdom coming still
Through selfless protest, prayer, and praise,
Accept the gratitude we raise.**

**Bless all whose will or name or love
Reflects the grace of heav'n above.
Though unacclaimed by earthly pow'rs,
Your life through theirs has hallowed ours.**

Words: J. Bell (b. 1949) and G. Maule (1958-2019)

Music: Somerset folk song collected by C. Sharp (1859-1924)

arr. N. Tredinnick (b. 1949)

Hymn Tune: O WALY WALY

Taking of the Bread and Wine

Look upon us in mercy not in judgement;
draw us from hatred to love;
make the frailty of our praise
a dwelling place for your glory.

Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer (A)

Please kneel or sit.

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,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For love of us fallen sinners
he most wonderfully and humbly chose to be made human,
and to take our nature upon him,
so that we might be born again by your Spirit
and restored in your image.

The love that brought him down to earth
lifted your martyr Stephen from earth to heaven.

By that love he spoke your word
with wisdom and the Spirit;
by that love he saw your glory
and Jesus at your right hand;
by that love he overcame the anger of his accusers

and forgave their cruelty;
by that love he committed his spirit into your hands
and won the crown of righteousness.

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.**

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood;
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.

Therefore, heavenly Father,
we remember his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross;
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
we look for the coming of your kingdom,
and with this bread and this cup
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Accept through him, our great high priest,
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts
in the presence of your divine majesty,
renew us by your Spirit,
inspire us with your love
and unite us in the body of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Through him, and with him, and in him,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty,
in songs of everlasting praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever.**

Amen.

Silence is kept.

The Lord's Prayer

With saints and martyrs through the ages,
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 this bread
to share in the body of Christ.

**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

*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

I heard the voice of a great multitude crying, Alleluia.
The Lord our God has entered into his kingdom.

**Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the
Lamb.**

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.

**Holy Lord, take us and make us holy,
make us yours and make us obedient,
make us faithful, make us joyful
and make us to be numbered with your saints;**

***in that glory which is everlasting;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God for ever.
Amen.***

Choir Anthem

Unto us is born a Son

From 'Piae Cantiones' (1582) arr. D. V. Willcocks (1919-2015)

A hymn is sung.

Please remain seated.

**The Lord is my light,
My light and salvation;
In God I trust,
In God I trust.**

*Words: based on Psalm 27
Music: J. Berthier (1923-1994)*

The Post Communion Prayer

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

**Merciful Lord,
we thank you for the signs of your mercy
revealed in birth and death:**

save us by the coming of your Son,
and give us joy in honouring Stephen,
first martyr of the new Israel;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Lord,
we have broken your bread
and received your life.
By the power of your Spirit
keep us always in your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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: C. Wesley (1707-1788)

Music: F. Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

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

Hymn Tune: MENDELSSOHN

The Dismissal

The Blessing

God give you grace to be faithful witnesses,
to see heaven opened
and the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;
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

Stephen, full of grace and power,

did great wonders and signs among the people.

Precious in the sight of the Lord

is the death of his saints.

Following God's saints in the ways of holiness and truth,
go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

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For all the saints who've shown your love
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