

Midnight Mass

Service of Holy Communion

Friday 24th December 2021

*The first reading in darkness – **Isaiah 9: 1-7** (an Old Testament prophecy of salvation) after which we observe a period of silence.*

Musical Meditation – Sussex Carol

The Greeting

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.

‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’ says the Lord.

All Now the Word is made flesh and laid in a narrow manger.

**All From eternity to eternity, you are God,
and now we see you as a newborn child.**

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

All and also with you.

The lights are turned on and an informal welcome is given.

Lighting the Advent wreath

Rejoice, people of God! The light has come into the world.

The four Advent candles are lit.

O God, now we light the candle of your nativity!

The centre white Christ candle is lit.

With the company of heaven and with sounds of great joy,
you come to us.

This is the time of light and resplendent joy.
God has been born among us.

All God, our Life and Light, thank you for coming this night to us.
Thank you for touching all heaven and earth
with your splendour.
In every corner of the world, shine this night with your peace.
In every corner of our hearts, shine this night with your grace.
Amen.

Carol – Hark, the herald-angels sing (no.266)

All 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!*

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 us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King!*

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness
Light and life to all He brings
Risen with healing in His wings
Mild He lay 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!*

Saying sorry to God

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

The Virgin Mary accepted your call
to be the mother of Jesus.
Forgive our disobedience to your will.
We have sinned:

All forgive and heal us.

Your Son our Saviour
was born in poverty in a manger.
Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.
We have sinned:

All forgive and heal us.

The shepherds left their flocks
to go to Bethlehem.
Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision.
We have sinned:

All forgive and heal us.

The wise men followed the star
to find Jesus the King.
Forgive our reluctance to seek you.
We have sinned:

All forgive and heal us.

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

All Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis

All *Glory to God
Glory to God
Glory to God in the highest.*

**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.**

*Glory to God
Glory to God
Glory to God in the highest.*

**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.**

**Glory to God
Glory to God
Glory to God in the highest.**

**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.**

*Glory to God
Glory to God
Glory to God in the highest.*

The Collect

Let us pray in the peace of this Christmas celebration
that our joy in the birth of Christ will last for ever.

Silence is kept.

Eternal God,
in the stillness of this night
you sent your almighty Word
to pierce the world's darkness with the light of salvation:
give to the earth the peace that we long for
and fill our hearts with the joy of heaven
through our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

All Amen.

Carol – Silent Night (no.597)

**All Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright,
round yon virgin mother and child;
holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace,**

**Silent night, holy night.
Shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing alleluia:
Christ, the Saviour is born,
Christ, the Saviour is born.**

**Silent night, holy night.
Son of God, love's pure light,
radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace:
Jesus, Lord at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord at thy birth.**

Gospel Reading – John 1.1-14

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

All Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
All Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Affirmation of Faith

**All We believe in God the Father,
God almighty, by whose plan
earth and heaven sprang to being,
all created things began.
We believe in Christ the Saviour,
Son of God in human frame,
virgin-born, the child of Mary
upon whom the Spirit came.**

**Christ, who on the cross forsaken,
like a lamb to slaughter led,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
he descended to the dead.
We believe in Jesus risen,
heaven's king to rule and reign,
to the Father's side ascended
till as judge he comes again.**

**We believe in God the Spirit;
in one Church, below, above:
saints of God in one communion,
one in holiness and love.
So by faith, our sins forgiven,
Christ our Saviour, Lord and friend,
we shall rise with him in glory
to the life that knows no end.**

Prayers of Intercession

Between each petition:

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

at the end:

All Amen.

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.'

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All and also with you.

We offer one another a sign of peace.

Carol – The first Nowell (no.641, v1,2,5,6)

All The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay:
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

***Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!***

**They looked up and saw a star,
shining in the east, beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!***

**Then entered in those wise men three,
full rev'rently upon their knee,
and offered there, in his presence,
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!***

**Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,
who with the Father we adore
and Spirit blest for evermore.
*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!***

The Eucharistic Prayer

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

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

All Amen.

The Lord is here.

All God's Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All 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 say our joyful hymn of praise:

**All 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.**

Life-giving God, as you Word became flesh and lived among us,
come among us now in the fullness of your grace and truth.
Make us holy as you are holy,
that your Word may become fresh anew today.
Send your Holy Spirit upon this bread and wine
and make them be for us the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Who, on the night before he died,
came to supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he gave you thanks.
He broke it and gave it to them, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,
he gave you thanks, and said:
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:
**All Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.**

God of glory, make our lives and your church a sign
of newborn hope in your kingdom.

Be born in us today.

Where your children are faced with ruin, show them redemption.

Where sorrow endures, bring your holy comfort.

Where division excludes, give your grace.

Where bondage confines, sing your new song.

Restore our hope in you, until the day

when all that you have brought into being finds its everlasting destiny
in the glory of your only Son,

when nothing in heaven or on earth

falls outside your redeeming purpose,

and when all things shall be full of grace and truth in you,

one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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

The Lord's Prayer

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

**All 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.

All God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.

The Agnus Dei is said:

All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.

Giving of Communion

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

All Lord, give us this bread always.

The table is set and ready.
We are here because Jesus has called us –
strangers and friends,
locals and visitors,
believers and doubters,
the certain and the curious.
It is always a mixed company that Jesus gathers
and invites all to his table where,
in bread ,
he meets us
and through him we,
who are different,
are joined to each other.

So come to this table,
you who have much faith
and you who would like to have more;
you who have been here often
and you who have not been for a while
you who have tried to follow Jesus,
and you who have struggled to do so;

Come just as you are.
It is Jesus Christ who invites us to meet him here.

We move forward to receive communion one row at a time.

For those unable or those who choose not to receive, you might like to pray:

My Jesus,
I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

Prayer after Communion

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 on him
until the day dawns
and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts.

All To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

**All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory. Amen.**

Carol – O come, all ye faithful (no.479, v1,2,6,7)

All 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.

Closing Litany

All The Word of life which was from the beginning
we proclaim to you.

The darkness is passing away
and the true light is already shining;
All the **Word of life which was from the beginning.**

That which we heard, which we saw with our eyes,
and touched with our own hands,
All we **proclaim to you.**

For our fellowship is with the Father,
and with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
All The **Word of life which was from the beginning**
we **proclaim to you.**

Blessing & Dismissal

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

May Christ,
who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace.
All **Amen.**

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

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

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.
All **Glory, thanks and praise to God.**

*Revd. Joe Roberts and the Churchwardens would like to wish you
all a Merry Christmas and God's blessing for 2022.*