



Midnight Mass



24th December 2023,
11.30pm

St John's, Kidlington

The Gathering

If you would like to, please stand as we hear the first verse of O Little Town of Bethlehem as the clergy process to the crib

Opening Hymn: (AMNS 40) – O Little Town of Bethlehem (Solo)

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.

The Greeting

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

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 Christ child is placed in the crib
We all sing the remaining verses of O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Hymn: (AMNS 40) – O Little Town of Bethlehem vs 2 - 4

**For Christ is born of Mary;
and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and Peace to men on earth.**

**How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
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 to us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.**

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) alt.



Lighting the Advent Wreath

Please sit

God our Father;
today the Saviour is born
and those who live in darkness are seeing a great light.
Help us, who greet the birth of Christ with joy,
to live in the light of your Son
and to share the good news of your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who has come into the world.

Amen

Prayers of Penitence

Christ the light of the world has come
to dispel the darkness of our hearts.
Let us turn to the light 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.

The president uses this absolution

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 cleanse you from all your sins,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Gloria

Please stand: to the tune of 'Hark the Herald'

**Hark! The Herald angels sing
Glory to our new-born King.
Glory be to God above,
To all people, peace and love.
O Lord God our heavenly King,
Worship, thanks and praise we bring.
Jesus Christ, God's only Son,
Lamb of God, the Holy One.
Hark! The Herald angels sing
Glory to our new-born King.**

**Show us mercy, Lord we pray,
You take all our sin away;
Jesus Christ at God's right hand,
Humbly we before you stand.
For you are the Holy One,
Jesus Christ, our Lord alone,
With the Spirit we adore,
And the Father evermore.
Hark! The Herald angels sing
Glory to our new-born King.**

The Collect

The president introduces a period of silent prayer:

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. **Amen**

The Liturgy of the Word

Please sit for the reading

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 9: 2-7

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

At the end the reader says:

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

Please stand for the Gradual hymn and Gospel reading

Hymn: (AMNS 41–omit verse 4) – It came upon the midnight clear

**It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
`Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.**

**Still through the cloven skies they come,
with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing;
and ever o'er its Babel-sounds
the blessed angels sing.**

**Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel-strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and man, at war, with man, hears not
the love-song which they bring;
O hush the noise ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing!**

**For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophet-bards foretold,
when, with the ever-circling years,
comes round the age of gold;
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world give back the song
which now the angels sing.**

Edmund Hamilton Sears (1810-1876)

Gospel Reading

This acclamation heralds the Gospel reading:

Alleluia, alleluia.

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

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel reading: Luke 2:1-14

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ

Please sit for the Sermon
Sermon

Please stand for the Creed

The Creed

We say together in faith:

**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

Please sit or kneel to pray

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

. These responses may be used

Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

And at the end

Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The Peace

Please stand

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
and also with you.

A minister says:

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

Preparation of the Table

Hymn: (AMNS 39) – Angels from the realms of glory

- 1. 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.***

- 2. Shepherds, in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man 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.***

- 3. Sages, leave your contemplations;
brighter visions beam afar:
seek the great Desire of Nations;
ye have seen his natal star:
*come and worship Christ, the new born king:
come and worship, worship Christ the new-born
King.***

**4. Though and infant now we view him,
he shall fill his father's throne,
gather all the nations to him;
every knee shall then bow down:
come and worship Christ, the new born king:
come and worship, worship Christ the new-born
King.**

Taking of the Bread and Wine

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.

Amen.

Please remain standing or sit or kneel

Eucharistic Prayer B

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 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 St Mary,
St John, 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

The Lord's Prayer

Please sit or kneel

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

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.**

Giving of Communion

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

Lord, give us this bread always.

The president and people receive communion. If you prefer a blessing, please do come forward too.

Prayer Hymn: (CA 729) What child is this?

**1. What child is this who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Come, greet the infant Lord,
The babe, the Son of Mary.**

**2. Why lies he in such mean estate,
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The babe, the Son of Mary.**

**3. So bring him incense, gold and myrrh,
Come rich and poor, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone him.**

**Raise, raise the song on high,
The Virgin sings her lullaby:
Joy, joy for Christ is born,
The babe, the Son of Mary.**

William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898) alt.

Prayer after Communion

Silence is kept.

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

**Father of all,
we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

The Sending Out

Please stand

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.

Final Hymn: (AMNS34) O come, all ye faithful

**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...***

**Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven 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;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:
*O come, let us adore...***

Latin 18th cent., tr F. Oakeley (1802-80)

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Gloria by Kat Campion-Spall*

**We wish you a very blessed
Christmas
and a Happy New Year!**