



Welcome to
Midnight Mass 2023
A Celebration of the Birth of Christ



Kidlington with Hampton Poyle Anglican Churches

www.kidhp.org.uk

Facebook: KidlingtonAnglicanChurches

Tonight we come to contemplate one of the greatest
mysteries of the Christian faith:
that God in Christ took on our humanity
and joined us in our earthly life
so that we might join him in his divine life.

On this holy night we remember that God comes
to us in the lowly, the ordinary, and the humble.
In his coming he makes ordinary people and
ordinary things special, extraordinary, holy.

Bethlehem was not the hub of the universe,
nor was the stable a platform for the famous.
In an out-of-the-way place which people
never thought to visit –
there God keeps his promise;
there God sends his Son.

Whether you are visiting us for the first time
or are a more regular worshipper at St Mary's,
you are most welcome tonight.

If you are a visitor
and would like to keep contact with us,
please make yourself known to the clergy
or one of the welcoming team
at the back of the church.

You might like to leave your contact details
on our Welcome Form
and 'post it' into the wooden
Communications Box
which is also at the back of church.²

*Please note - any requests to stand or sit are invitations, not instructions.
Please adopt whatever posture most suits you.*

Please stand

The Processional Carol: Once in Royal David's City
verse 1 solo

Verse 2 choir only. During verse 2 we light our candles

And through all His wondrous childhood
He would honour and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms He lay:
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as He.

For he is our childhood's pattern;
Day by day, like us He grew;
He was little, weak and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feeleth for our sadness,
And He shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven 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;
Where like stars His children crowned
All in white shall wait around.



Welcome

We come together tonight, with our own joys and sorrows, not as a perfect group of people, but as a community of forgiven sinners seeking the light of the Christ Child in our lives and in our world.

We meet to celebrate the coming of Christ into the world.
The Word was made flesh,
and dwelt among us,
and we beheld his glory.

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

Please sit

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you
and worthily magnify your Holy Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

There is nothing we have done that is so awful that God cannot forgive us if we are truly sorry. We are also told to forgive those who hurt us. The priest declares God's promise of forgiveness in the absolution — Gloria is our joyful shout of gratitude.

Hear the words of the Angel to Joseph: "You shall call him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Therefore let us seek the forgiveness of God
Through Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world.
The Virgin Mary accepted your call
to be the mother of Jesus.
Forgive our disobedience to your will.
We have sinned:
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:
Forgive and heal us

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

The Wise men followed the star
to find Jesus the King.
Forgive our reluctance to seek you.
We have sinned:
Forgive and heal us

The Absolution

The God of all healing and forgiveness
draw you to himself, 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:

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

E'en so here below below,
Let steeple bells be swungen.
And io, io, io,
By priest and people sungen
Gloria, in excelsis deo!
Gloria, in excelsis deo!

Please sit

The Lighting of the Christmas Candle

The final candle on the advent wreath is lit



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 our Lord. **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

*God has made himself known to people through the ages. Now we
hear His Word through the Scripture readings and the sermon.
The sermon is not telling us what to do, but helps us to digest
God's Word and take it into our lives.*

Old Testament Reading: from the Prophet Isaiah (52:7-10)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light: They
that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the
light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder; And his name
shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his
government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne
of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with
judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The
zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this

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

Please stand

Carol

During the carol the Gospel is carried reverently to the centre of the congregation: God's word is to be at the heart of our community. We turn to face the gospel and remain standing as it is read.

On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring
On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring
News of great joy, news of great mirth
News of our merciful King's birth

Then why should we on earth be so sad?
Since our Redeemer made us glad
Then why should men on earth be so sad?
Since our Redeemer made us glad
When from our sin he set us free
All for to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before His grace
Then life and health come in its place
When sin departs before His grace
Then life and health come in its place
Angels and men with joy may sing
All for to see the newborn King

Gospel Reading: *John 1:1-14*

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.
The same was in the beginning with God.
All things were made by him;
and without him was not any thing
made that was made.
In him was life; and the life was the
light of men.
And the light shineth in darkness;
and the darkness comprehended it not.



There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light,
that all men through him might believe.
He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that
Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that
cometh into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him,
and the world knew him not.
He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as
many as received him, to them gave he power to become the
sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were
born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of
man, but of God.
And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we
beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Carol reprise:

All out of darkness we have light
Which made the angels sing this night
All out of darkness we have light
Which made the angels sing this night
"Glory to God and peace to men
Now and for evermore, amen!"

Please sit and carefully blow out your candle

A Reflection for Christmas Night
The Rev'd Canon Felicity Scroggie (Team Rector)

A Tale Of Two Gardens

God gave us all a garden once
And walked with us at eve
That we might know him face to face
With no need to believe.

But we denied and hid from him
Concealing our own shame
Yet he still came to look for us
And call us each by name.

He found us where we hid from him
He clothed us in his grace
But still we turned our backs on him
And would not see his face.

So now he comes to us again
Not as a Lord most high
But weak and helpless as we are
That we might hear him cry.

And he who clothed us in our need
Lies naked in the straw
That we might wrap him in our rags
Whom once we fled in awe.

The strongest comes in weakness now
A stranger to our door
The king forsakes his palaces
And dwells amongst the poor.

And where we hurt he hurts with us
And when we weep he cries
He knows the heart of all our hurts
The inside of our sighs.

He does not look down from above
But gazes up at us
That we might take him in our arms
Who always cradles us.

And if we welcome him again
With open hands and heart
He'll plant his garden deep in us
The end from which we start.

And in that garden there's a tomb
Whose stone is rolled away
Where we and all we've ever loved
Were lowered in the clay.

But Lo! the tomb is empty now
And, clothed in living light,
His ransomed people walk with One
Who came on Christmas night.

So come Lord Jesus, find in me
The child you came to save
Stoop tenderly with wounded hands
And lift me from my grave.

Be with us all Emmanuel
And keep us close and true
Be with us till that Kingdom comes
Where we will be with you.

Malcolm Guite - contemporary priest and poet. Written in 2022

Please stand and join the clergy at the crib if you would like to

The Blessing of the Crib

Loving Father,
as your light shines in our darkness
and your love comes to us at Christmas
bless this crib to our use.
May it stand as a sign
that your power is revealed in weakness,
your love in simplicity,
and your very presence with us
is found in the unexpected places.
Bless those who come to look,
to pray,
to wonder at the mystery of God come to earth;
and fill our hearts with holy joy
this night and always.
In the name of the Father,
the Son,
and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.



The Affirmation of Faith

We are joined in belief with Christians across the world and through the ages.

Let us affirm our common faith in Jesus Christ.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

I believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God, Father,
Son and Holy Spirit.**

We return to our seats and sit to pray

Prayers of Intercession

Hearing God's word draws us to get involved in the world and seek justice, peace, and healing. Praying is doing something and everyone can do it. Prayer changes the world and us.

*At the end of each petition, after 'Holy God,
we respond with '**Receive our Prayer**'*

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

Please stand



The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Jesus told his followers that they should make peace with each other and be reconciled before bringing their gifts to God. When the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples his greeting was 'Peace be with you'.

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.

*We exchange with our neighbour a sign of peace—
a hand shake, smile, or 'Happy Christmas; Peace be with you'*

Offertory Carol

*During which a collection is taken for the work of the church.
Thank you so much for your generosity. We really rely on your
donations to keep the ministry going. If you don't carry cash, don't
worry - we have a contactless card reader for your convenience.*

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 men,
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.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
and hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.



The Preparation of the Altar

Please sit

The altar is prepared as God's table. God is the host and we are his guests. The nourishment we are offered is Jesus himself.

At the centre of our faith is a person—Jesus.

At the centre of our worship is a meal—the Eucharist.

Our healing is around this table, together.

And ALL OF US are welcome

The Eucharistic Prayer

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.

Almighty God, good Father to us all,
your face is turned towards your world.

In love you gave us Jesus your Son
to rescue us from sin and death.

Your Word goes out to call us home to the city
where angels sing your praise.

We join with them in heaven's song:

(said)

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of pow'r and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory

Hosanna in the highest.

Father of all, we give you thanks
for every gift that comes from heaven.

To the darkness Jesus came as your light.
With signs of faith and words of hope
he touched untouchables with love and washed the guilty clean.

This is his story.

This is our song:

Hosanna in the highest.

The crowds came out to see your Son,
yet at the end they turned on him.

On the night he was betrayed
he came to table with his friends
to celebrate the freedom of your people.

This is his story.

This is our song:

Hosanna in the highest.

Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food;
he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
This is my body, given for you all.
Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;
he took the cup, gave it and said:
This is my blood, shed for you all for the forgiveness of
sins. Do this in remembrance of me.

This is our story.

**This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.**

Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup
we celebrate the cross
on which he died to set us free.
Defying death he rose again
and is alive with you to plead for us and all the world.

This is our story.

**This is our song:
Hosanna in the highest.**

Send your Spirit on us now
that by these gifts we may feed on Christ
with opened eyes and hearts on fire.
May we and all who share this food
offer ourselves to live for you
and be welcomed at your feast in heaven
where all creation worships you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit:



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

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
one 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, forever and ever, Amen.**

The Breaking of the 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.**

Sharing in Communion

God's Holy gifts for God's Holy people
**Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord,
To the glory of God the Father.**

If you would like to receive communion you are most welcome to receive with us tonight. You can choose to receive the bread first and the wine separately from the silver chalice which will be on your right. Or you can receive the bread and wine together (bread dipped by the priest into the wine) Please indicate which you would prefer.

Communion is served at two 'stations': the font and the altar, but gluten free wafers are at the altar.

If you would prefer a blessing please do come forward too. and keep your head bowed.

Carol:

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, heaven cannot hold Him, Nor earth sustain,
Heaven 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.

Enough for Him, whom Cherubim Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom Angels Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel Which adore.

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.



Prayer after Communion

**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 Blessing

Please stand

*The service ends with us being sent out into the world.
Christian life and faith does not start and stop at the church
door: the way we choose to live can make the world a better
(or worse!) place.*

Proclaim the Word made flesh
Glory, thanks and praise to God. Amen

Carol:

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, ...

See how the shepherds, Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps:
O come, ...

Lo! Star-led chieftains, Magi Christ adoring,
Offer him incense, gold and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child bring our hearts' oblations:
O come, ...

Child, for us sinners, Poor and in the manger,
Fain, we embrace thee, with awe and love;
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
O come, ...

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above,
"Glory to God, in the highest":
O come, ...

Yea, Lord we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory given:
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come,...

Organ Voluntary

'Christmas Bells'

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
 And wild and sweet
 The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
 Had rolled along
 The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
 A voice, a chime,
 A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
 And with the sound
 The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
 And made forlorn
 The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
 "For hate is strong,
 And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
 The Wrong shall fail,
 The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men."

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

As the Anglican parish for Kidlington and
Hampton Poyle we are here
for every local resident.

We do not ask if people come to church or not, but
we are here to help, listen, and support people in
many ways.

We work with children and young people,
older people, families and single people,
those of us who are lonely, bereaved,
or struggling with mental illness.

We are here for families seeking baptism, marriage or a
funeral, regardless of church attendance.

All three churches in our team are open every day
And we hope that you will find God's peace in them
as you come to pray, light a candle,
or just sit a while and rest.

We are here all year round and every day.
If you would like to talk with one of the team, or would like
someone to visit you at home, please just ask; we are
here for the local community and
we do have time.....

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***We wish you all
a Blessed
and Peace-full Christmas.***