

Blessing and Dismissal

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you and those you love, this night and forever.

All: Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: In the name of Christ. Amen.

Organ Voluntary



*Please respond to the words in **bold** type. Please stand as the organ plays the introduction to the first carol.*

- O come all ye faithful -

During this carol, a white candle is brought forward and placed at the centre of the Advent Wreath.

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
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.*

We gather together on this Christmas Eve as we recall the hope we have in Christ. On this most holy night, we light again the candles of hope, peace, love and joy.

The four outer candles are lit as the reader says each paragraph:

The first candle reminds us of hope - because God keeps his promises to us.

The second candle reminds us that we should work for peace - because Jesus is the 'Prince of Peace' and he calls his children to work for peace in his name.

The third candle reminds us to show love - because Jesus gave everything for us and led us to know the forgiveness of God.

The fourth candle reminds us to be joyful - because the Holy Spirit fills our hearts and minds with the presence of God.

Now we light our last candle to remember the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As the prophets promised so long ago, you have come to us once again; and with the shepherds, we are filled with wonder and amazement.

The central candle is lit.

Lord, you come as a tiny, fragile baby; yet we know that you are God and you are with us. May the flame of this candle remind us that you are the light of the world and that if we follow you, we will never walk in darkness, but will have the true light of life.

All: Amen.

As the organ plays, the infant Jesus is placed in the crib. Then all sing together the final verse of the opening carol.

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 him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.*

All: Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood 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.

Please stand.

- Hark! The herald angels sing -

Hark! The herald-angels sing
"Glory to the newborn 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 heaven adored
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with man to dwell
Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! The herald-angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King"

Hail the Heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen 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"

As communion is distributed, the organ will play. At the end of communion, all remain seated to sing.

- Silent Night -

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,
heavenly 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.

- Away in a manger -

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head,
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
Close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
And fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

I bring you good news of great joy: a Saviour has been born to you.

All: Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.

We say together:

All: 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.

Confession and Absolution

As we sit or kneel with the shepherds before the new born Christ-child, we open our hearts in penitence and faith.

Lord of grace and truth, we confess our unworthiness to stand in your presence as your children. We have sinned:

All: forgive and heal us.

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.

Pause for a moment's silence.

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

All: Amen.

The Gloria

Glory to God! Our hearts to you we raise!
Joy and peace on earth, in highest heaven praise!
Songs of adoration, Lord, to you we bring,
praising your great goodness, Father, heav'nly King.
Glory to God! Our hearts to you we raise!
Joy and peace on earth, in highest heaven praise!

Son of the Father, bearing this world's sin,
Lamb of God, have mercy, grant us peace within.
You, O Christ, are holy, you alone are Lord,
with the Holy Spirit evermore adored.
Glory to God! Our hearts to you we raise!
Joy and peace on earth, in highest heaven praise!

The Collect for Christmas Eve

Almighty God, you make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

All: Amen.

Please be seated.

First Reading - Isaiah 52: 7 – 10

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.

Second Reading - Hebrews 1: 1 – 4

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.

In Christ you shared our life that we might live in him and he in us.

All: He opened his arms of love upon the cross and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin.

On the night he was betrayed, at supper with his friends he took bread, and 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.

All: Father, we do this in remembrance of him: his body is the bread of life.

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 for the forgiveness of sins; do this in remembrance of me.

All: Father, we do this in remembrance of him: his blood is shed for all.

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory, send your Holy Spirit that this bread and wine may be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

All: As we eat and drink these holy gifts make us one in Christ, our risen Lord.

With your whole Church throughout the world we offer you this sacrifice of praise and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Amen.

Please sit or kneel.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

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.

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

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

Distribution of Communion

All are invited to receive communion - this is an open table. If you receive communion in your own church, you are welcome to do so here.

If you do not wish to receive communion, you are welcome to come and receive a blessing instead - please bring this order of service with you if you come to the altar.

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.

Thanksgiving

As the grain once scattered in the fields and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside are now re united on this table in bread and wine, so, Lord, may your whole Church soon be gathered together from the corners of the earth into your kingdom.

All: Amen.

Please remain standing.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you.

All: and also with you.

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.

It is right to praise you, Father, Lord of all creation; in your love you made us for yourself. When we turned away you did not reject us, but came to meet us in your Son.

All: You embraced us as your children and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.

He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

At the end, the reader says:

This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Please stand.

- Once in royal David's city -

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.

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 cares when we are sad,
And he shares when we are glad.

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

Please remain standing.

The Gospel Reading - John 1: 1-14

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

All: 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.

At the end of the reading:

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

The Sermon

Please stand.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

All We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love. We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high. We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Please sit or kneel.

Praying Together

The following response is used during the prayers.

On this most holy night

All: hear our prayer.

At the end of the prayers, the reader says:

Merciful Father,

All: Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Please stand.

The Peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

We share a handshake of peace with those around us.

- O little town of Bethlehem -

During this carol, the collection is taken, and the bread and wine are brought forward to the altar.

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.

O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace upon the earth;
For Christ is born of Mary;
and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.