

Midnight Mass

Eucharist of the Nativity of Christ



St Swithun's, Hither Green

Christmas Eve, 11.30pm

Welcome to everyone joining us for our celebration tonight.

The Gathering

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.

Please listen to the carol:

*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.*

*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.*

The Greeting

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

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

Mother Juliet says some words of welcome

Prayers of Penitence

The Advent Wreath candles are lit.

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.

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 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 be cleansed from all your sins,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Gloria

*Please listen to the music as we celebrate the joy that
God is with us and redeems us.*

The Collect

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

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 your Son our Lord,
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

Bible Reading *Isaiah 9: 2-7*

A reading from the book of Isaiah

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.

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel Reading *Luke 2: 1-14*

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The Lord be with you

and also with you

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

Glory to you O Lord

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.

Sermon Richard Evans

Affirmation of faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.**

**Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.**

**He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.**

**Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

Intercessions

In peace let us pray to the Father.

In this holy night your Son our Saviour was born in human flesh.
Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

In this holy night there was no room for your Son in the inn.
Protect with your love those who have no home
and all who live in poverty.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

In this holy night Mary, in the pain of labour,
brought your Son to birth.

Hold in your hand all who are in pain or distress.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

In this holy night your Christ came
as a light shining in the darkness.
Bring comfort to all who suffer in the sadness of our world.
Holy God
hear our prayer.

In this holy night the angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.'
Strengthen those who work for peace and justice in all the world.
Holy God
hear our prayer.

In this holy night shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy.
Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redemption.
Holy God
hear our prayer.

In this holy night strangers found the Holy Family,
and saw the baby lying in the manger.
Bless our homes and all whom we love.
Holy God
hear our prayer.

In this holy night heaven is come down to earth, and earth is raised
to heaven. Hold in your hand all those who have passed through
death in the hope of your coming kingdom.
Holy God
hear our prayer.

In this holy night Christians the world over celebrate Christ's birth.
Open our hearts that he may be born in us today.
Holy God
hear our prayer.

Father, in this holy night angels and shepherds worshipped
at the manger throne.
Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with
Mary, Joseph and the saints
through him who is your Word made flesh,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Please stand for 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.

And also with you.

Let us wave to one another the sign of peace.

Preparation of the Table

Please listen to the carol:

*While shepherds watched their flocks by night
all seated on the ground
the angel of the Lord came down
and glory shone around*

*'Fear not,' said he, (for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind)
'glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and humankind'.*

*The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed
and meanly wrapped in swathing bands
And in a manger laid*

*'All glory be to God on high
and on the earth be peace;
goodwill henceforth from heav'n to all
begin and never cease*

Prayer over the gifts

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

Amen

The Eucharistic Prayer

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.

It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy,
at all times and in all places to give you thanks and praise,
holy Father, heavenly King, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

And now we give you thanks because in coming to dwell among
us as human, he revealed the radiance of your glory
and brought us out of darkness into your own marvellous light.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and saying:

**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.

Jesus Christ is Lord:

**Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.
You are the Saviour of the world.**

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.**

The Lord's Prayer

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.**

Agnus Dei

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

Giving of Communion

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

Lord, give us this bread always.

Communion will be brought to you in one kind. Please stay seated in your place whilst we come to you safely – alternatively a prayer can be said at a physical distance with you as we move around the church.

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.

To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.

Please listen to the 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!

*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...*

Dismissal and Blessing

The Blessing

Please stand for 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 with you and those whom you love, this night and always.

Amen.

The Dismissal

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

Glory, thanks and praise to God.

***WE WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY
AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS***