



## Eucharist of Christmas Night, Midnightmas

*We welcome you to St Matthew's Church  
this holy night and pray you are blessed as  
we worship the Lord together.*

If you are with us for the first time  
please fill in one of our Welcome Cards.  
Thank you.

***Please join in the words in bold  
print.***

***Don't forget to silence your  
mobile!***

### ¶ The Gathering

#### ♪ 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 through all his wondrous childhood  
he would honour and obey,  
love and watch the gentle mother  
in whose tender arms he lay:  
Christian children all should be  
kind, 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 feels for all our sadness,  
and he shares in all 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;  
there his children gather round  
bright like stars, with glory crowned.

*C F Alexander (1818-1895)*

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

**Now the Word is made flesh  
and laid in a narrow manger.**  
From eternity to eternity you are God,  
**and now we see you as a new  
born child.**

### The Greeting

*The president greets the people*

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.**

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle**

Lord Jesus, Light of light, you have come among us. Help us who live by your light  
to shine as lights in your world.  
Glory to God in the highest.

**Amen.**

## **Prayers of Penitence**

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 ministers move from the crib to the place where the Liturgy of the Word is celebrated.*

*We sing:*

## **Gloria in Excelsis**

**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.**

**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.**

**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.  
Amen.**

## **The Collect**

*The president introduces a period of silent  
prayer with the words...*

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, 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**

### **Readings**

*Old Testament: 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.'

<sup>8</sup>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.  
<sup>9</sup>Break forth together into singing,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the Lord has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
<sup>10</sup>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.

*New Testament: Hebrews 1: 1-4*

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors  
in many and various ways by the  
prophets, <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>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, <sup>4</sup>having become  
as much superior to angels as the name  
he has inherited is more excellent than  
theirs.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **♪ Carol ♪**

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.

But 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; –  
Oh, rest beside the weary road  
And hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on  
By prophet bards foretold,  
When, with the ever-circling years  
Shall come 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.

*Richard Storrs Willis (1850)*

## **Gospel Reading**

The Lord be with you  
**And also with you**

Today Christ is born: **alleluia.**  
Today the Saviour has come: **alleluia.**  
Today the angels sing on earth:  
**alleluia. Glory to God in the  
highest.**

*When the Gospel is announced the reader  
says:*

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

*John 1: 1-14*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. <sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

*At the end*

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

## **The Sermon**

## **The Nicene Creed**

**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**

In peace let us pray to the Lord.  
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 [...and] 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 [...and] 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 [...and 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 [...and] 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**

*Please stand*

### **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 offer one another a sign of peace.

*All may exchange a sign of peace.*

## **Preparation of the Table**

### **Taking of the Bread and Wine**

#### ♪ **Offertory Carol** ♪

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 angelic host proclaim  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"

Hark! The herald angels sing  
"Glory to the new-born 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"  
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 angelic host proclaim  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
"Glory to the new-born king"  
"Glory to the new-born king"

*Charles Wesley, (1707-1788) and others*

*The gifts of the people may be gathered and presented. The table is prepared and bread and wine are placed upon it.*

## **Prayer of Preparation**

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 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.**

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.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died:**

**Christ is risen:**

**Christ will come again.**

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**

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us, as our Saviour taught us, so we pray...

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who  
sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for 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.**

*During Communion we sing;*

## **Anthem**

### **♪ Carol ♪**

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 dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

*Franz Xaver Gruber (1787-1863); words by Joseph  
Mohr (1792-1848)  
trans. John Freeman Young (1820-1885)*



## 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.**

**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.**

## ¶ Dismissal

### ♪ Hymn ♪

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 heaven above!  
Glory to God All glory 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 Him  
O come, let us adore Him  
O come, let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord!

*Latin, 18th century, trans. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880) and others*

## A Christmas 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 & those you love, now & always. **Amen.**

## The Dismissal

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

**Glory, thanks and praise to God.**

*The ministers and people depart.*

***A very happy and Holy  
Christmas from all of us at St  
Matthews***



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