



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 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.

Cecil Frances 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.

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.'

⁸Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,

together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see

the return of the Lord to Zion.

⁹Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;

for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰The 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, ²but 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. ³He 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, ⁴having 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. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him.

¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And 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

♪ **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 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!

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.

Charles Wesley, (1707-1788) and others

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.

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,
heav'nly hosts sing, "Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior 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!

*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:

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
glory to God in the highest:

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
born this happy morning,
Jesu, to Thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:

*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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