

24<sup>th</sup> December 2023

## Christmas Eve Holy Communion

Rev. Mark Pybus will be leading and presiding, and Rev Rob Powell will be preaching.

### WELCOME & INTRODUCTION



#### 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 to men on earth;  
For Christ is born of Mary,  
And gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love.

How silently, how silently  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His heaven.  
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 Immanuel.

Philips Brooks Public Domain



### PRAYER OF PREPARATION

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 Christ our Lord. Amen.



### CONFESSION

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.

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

**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:

**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 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.**

**Amen.**

## **ABSOLUTION**

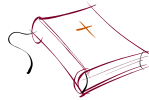
May the God of all healing  
and forgiveness,  
draw us to himself  
and cleanse us from all our sins  
that we may behold the glory of his Son,  
the Word made flesh,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

## **TIME IN THE WORD**

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**



## **SERMON**

## **PRAYERS**

## **THE PEACE**



### **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.

Franz Xaver Gruber, Joseph Mohr, and John Freeman Young

## **THE COMMUNION 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.**

You are worthy of our thanks and praise,  
Lord God of truth,  
for by the breath of your mouth  
you have spoken your word,  
and all things have come into being.

You fashioned us in your image  
and placed us in the garden of your  
delight. Though we chose the path of  
rebellion you would not abandon your  
own. Again and again you drew us into  
your covenant of grace.

You gave your people the law and taught  
us by your prophets to look for your reign  
of justice, mercy and peace.

As we watch for the signs of your kingdom  
on earth, we echo the song of the angels  
in heaven, evermore 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.**

Lord God, you are the most holy one,  
enthroned in splendour and light,  
yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ  
you reveal the power of your love  
made perfect in our human weakness.

**Amen. Lord, we believe.**

Embracing our humanity, Jesus showed us  
the way of salvation;  
loving us to the end,  
he gave himself to death for us;  
dying for his own,  
he set us free from the bonds of sin, that  
we might rise and reign with him in glory.

**Amen. Lord, we believe.**

On the night he gave up himself for us all  
he took bread and gave you thanks;  
he broke it gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

**Amen. Lord, we believe.**

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.

**Amen. Lord, we believe.**

Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb, we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption, Father, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; form us into the likeness of Christ and make us a perfect offering in your sight.

**Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.**

Look with favour on your people and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts. Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free and fill your Church with power from on high.

**Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.**

Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with all your saints at the table in your kingdom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER



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.**

## WORDS OF INVITATION

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

Every time we eat this bread  
and drink this cup,  
**we proclaim the Lord's death  
until he comes.**

## 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.**

## NOTICES



### CHRISTIANS, AWAKE! SALUTE THE HAPPY MORN

On which the saviour of the world was  
born;

Rise to adore the mystery of love  
Which hosts of angels chanted from  
above!

With them the joyful tidings first begun  
Of God incarnate and the virgin's Son.

First, to the watchful shepherds it was told,  
Who heard the herald angel's voice:

'Behold,

I bring good news of your Messiah's birth  
To you and all the nations here on earth!  
This day has God fulfilled his promised  
word;

This day is born a saviour, Christ the Lord!'

To Bethlehem these eager shepherds ran  
To see the wonder of our God made man;  
They found, with Joseph and the holy  
maid,

Jesus, the saviour, in a manger laid.  
Amazed, with joy this story they proclaim,  
The first apostles of his infant fame.

Let us, like those good shepherds, now  
employ  
Our grateful voices to declare the joy:  
Trace we the babe, who has redeemed  
our loss,

From this poor manger to his bitter cross;  
Treading his steps, assisted by his grace,  
By faith again we see the Saviour's face.

Glory to God! The skies are singing still,  
Peace on the earth to people of goodwill!  
Christ, who was born on this most happy  
day,

Round all the earth his glory shall display.  
Saved by his love, unceasing we shall sing  
Eternal praise to heaven's almighty King.

Jubilate Hymns version of 'Christians, awake, salute the happy morn', John  
Byrom (1692 NS - 1763)

© Jubilate Hymns Ltd

## THE BLESSING