



## **Order of Service**

*St. Matthew's Church, Wych Lane, Bridgemyary PO13 0JN  
in partnership with Bridgemyary Community Sports College*

**[www.StMatthewsBridgemyary.org.uk](http://www.StMatthewsBridgemyary.org.uk)**



working towards being an Inclusive Church

## Introduction to the Season

The celebration of Christ's incarnation at Christmas is one of the two poles of the Christian year. The wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, as Emmanuel, foretold by the prophets and born of Mary, provides the material of the feast:

Hark, hark, the wise eternal word,  
like a weak infant cries!  
In form of servant is the Lord,  
and God in cradle lies.     *(Thomas Pestel)*

Christmas is much more than simply the celebration of Jesus' birth, and neither of the great Christmas morning readings (Hebrews 1 and John 1) is taken from the infancy narratives. The task of the Christmas liturgy is to recall us, amid all the joyful customs and celebrations of Christmas, to this central truth of the Word made flesh for our salvation. It is, of course, Christ's nativity that has provided the occasion for this festival of the incarnation, since the end of the third century. The Christmas crib and the nativity play can both be said to descend from the tableau of Christ's birth that Francis of Assisi arranged when he celebrated Christmas at Greccio in 1223. Christmas carols are a medieval tradition, which has been notably developed from the end of the nineteenth century. The Festival of Lessons and Carols is itself an influential English creation of the late nineteenth century, made widespread by the choir of King's College, Cambridge, in the first half of the twentieth. The Christmas season is often celebrated for twelve days, ending with the Epiphany. Contemporary use has sought to express an alternative tradition, in which Christmas lasts for a full forty days, ending with the Feast of the Presentation on 2 February. The days around 25 December are a principal holiday in the secular calendar of Britain, and commercial pressures have led to much of Christmas celebration being displaced into Advent. It has become a still greater challenge to celebrate as they deserve the saints of the Christmas season: Stephen, who first paid with his life for following the incarnate Lord; John, who was believed to have lived to great old age in profound meditation on the Word made flesh; and the Holy Innocents, who draw our attention to the plight of children in a world where the implications of the birth of the Christ-child are not yet manifest. Resources for these days may be found in *Common Worship: Festivals*. New Year's Day is an important moment in the civil rather than the Christian calendar, but it provides the original occasion for the searching Covenant Renewal service of the Methodist tradition.

# The Liturgy for Christmas

*When the bell rings please stand*

*A hymn may be announced or music may be played as the procession enter*

Priest     In the name of the + Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
All         **Amen.**

All         The Lord be with you.  
**and also with you.**

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 Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

*One of these introductions is used:*

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph:  
'You shall call his name Jesus,  
for he will save his people from their  
sins.' Therefore let us seek the  
forgiveness of God through Jesus the  
Saviour of the world.

*cf Matthew 1.21*



*(particularly during the night)*

Christ the light of the world has come  
to dispel the darkness of our hearts.  
Let us turn to the light and confess our sins.

*(particularly in the morning)*

The sun of righteousness has dawned  
with healing in his wings.  
Let us come to the light of Christ,  
confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

*cf Malachi 4.2*

*silence is kept for reflection and personal confession*

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.**

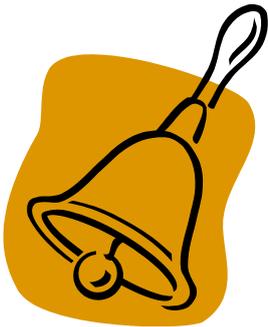
Your Son our Saviour was born in poverty in a manger.  
Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.  
We have sinned:  
**forgive and heal us.**

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.**

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

All         **AMEN**



from the **Mass of Light**

by David Haas

Glory to God in the highest, sing glory to God  
Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth  
**Glory to God in the highest, sing glory to God**  
**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  
**Glory to God in the highest sing glory to God**  
**Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth**  
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  
**Glory to God in the highest, sing glory to God**  
**Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth**

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
the most high Jesus Christ  
With the Holy Spirit in the Glory of God the Father  
**Glory to God in the highest, sing glory to God**  
**Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth**  
**Glory to God in the highest sing glory to God**  
**Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth**

## The Collect

Priest Let us pray

*The priest says/sings the collect for the day*

**All AMEN**

*Sit for the first readings*

*Each reading ends with the words*

Reader This is the word of the Lord.  
All **Thanks be to God.**

*A hymn or song may be announced*

Minister Alleluia, alleluia.  
The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,  
and we have seen his glory. *cf John 1.14*  
**Alleluia.**



## The Gospel

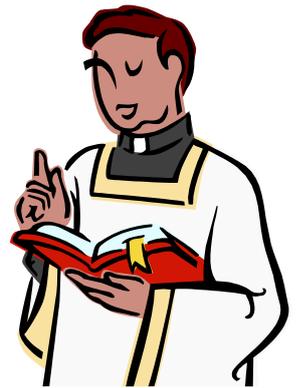
Minister The Lord be with you  
All **And also with you.**

Minister Hear the + Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *N.*  
All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*We listen attentively to the Gospel reading*

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

Sit



## Sermon



# **The Nicene Creed**

*On Sundays and Principal Holy Days an authorized translation of the Nicene Creed is used*

**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 *sit, kneel or stand before God*

*This form or another form may be used*

Minister Let us pray to our incarnate Lord, who has brought us out of darkness and into his own marvellous light.

Christ born for us,  
Son of God given for us:  
help us to know you,  
to worship and to serve  
you ...

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

Wonderful counsellor,  
you order all things with your wisdom:  
help the Church to reveal the mystery of your love  
and fill her with the Spirit of truth ...

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

Mighty God,  
the government is on your shoulders:  
guide the leaders of the nations  
and bring in your kingdom of justice and righteousness ...

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

Everlasting father,  
you call us to live together in unity:  
protect by your mercy all your children,  
bless our families and renew our communities ...

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**



Prince of peace,  
you bring reconciliation through the cross:  
by your healing power give to all who suffer...  
your gift of wholeness and peace.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
Son of the Father,  
full of the Spirit,  
**hear our prayer,**  
**receive our praises,**  
**fill our lives. Amen.**

*Stand*



## The Peace

Priest      Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,  
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.      *Isaiah 9.6*

*All*            The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

Minister    Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

*All may exchange a sign of peace,*

## Preparation of the Table

*During the preparation we sing the hymn*

Priest Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power,  
the glory, the splendour, and the majesty;  
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.

All **All things come from you,  
and of your own do we give you.**

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

Priest The Lord be with you  
All **and also with you**

All Lift up your hearts  
**We lift them to the Lord**

All 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/at this holy season*]

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:

**All say Holy holy holy Lord  
God of power and might  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory  
Hosanna in the highest**

**All say Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord  
Hosannas in the highest**



**Priest** Lord, you are holy indeed,  
the source of all holiness;  
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
and according to your holy will,  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us the + body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

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.

Minister Great is the mystery of faith:

**All say Christ has died:  
Christ is risen:  
Christ will come again.**

Priest And so, Father,  
calling to mind his death on  
the cross,  
his perfect sacrifice made  
once for the sins  
of the whole world;  
rejoicing in his mighty  
resurrection and glorious ascension,  
and looking for his coming in glory,  
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.  
As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,  
we bring before you this bread and this cup  
and we thank you for counting us worthy  
to stand in your presence and serve you.



Send the Holy Spirit on your people  
and gather into one in your kingdom  
all who share this one bread and  
one cup, so that we, in the company  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
St Matthew and all the saints,  
may praise and glorify you for ever,  
through 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.

**All AMEN**

*Sit or kneel for a moment of silent adoration*



## The Lord's Prayer

Priest As our Saviour taught us so we pray

**All 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

Priest 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.**

*As the bread is broken the we sing "Lamb of God".*

Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world have mercy on us  
Saving God you take away the sin of the world have mercy on us  
Bread of life you take away the sin of the world have mercy on us  
Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world Grant us your peace

Priest Jesus is the Lamb of God  
who takes away the sin of the world.  
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

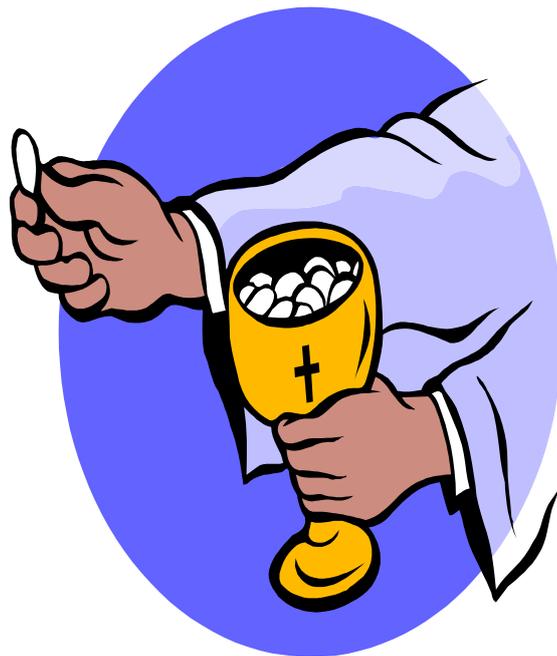
**All Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,  
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

*Communion Antiphon is said*

*If you normally receive Holy Communion in your Church you are welcome to do so here at St Matthew's.*

*Please come to the communion rail. Please hold your hands out clearly in front of you.*

*If you do not want to receive Holy Communion please come forward and keep your head bowed to receive a blessing.*



*Music is used as an aid to prayer during communion and the clearing of the altar*

*silence is held*

## **Prayer after Communion**

*Priest Let us pray*

*the post communion prayer is said*

**All 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.**

*Hymn & any notices are given out*

## The Blessing and Dismissal

Priest     The Lord be with you  
**All**       **and also with you**

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with peace and goodwill and make you partakers of the divine nature; and the blessing ...

*or*        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 ...

*or*        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 ...

**All**        Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.  
**Glory, thanks and praise to God.**

## The Advent Wreath

The Advent Wreath has four red or blue candles in a ring around a white or gold candle. Alternatively, there may be three purple candles, reflecting the liturgical colour for Advent, with a pink candle for the Third Sunday, when rose-pink vestments are traditionally worn. The first candle is lit on Advent Sunday; additional ones are lit, one on each Sunday, and the white or gold one on Christmas Day. The new candle each week may appropriately be lit during the Prayers of Penitence.

In this case the material entitled 'Prayers of Penitence at the Advent Wreath' is used. Alternatively, the candles may be lit after the Gospel Reading, before the Peace, or after Communion, where the prayer(s) used at the lighting becomes a natural Post-Communion prayer. All five candles may appropriately be alight during services through the Christmas season.

There are several traditions about the meaning or theme of each candle. The scheme that accords best with the Common Worship Principal Service Lectionary is:

Advent 1 The Patriarchs  
Advent 2 The Prophets  
Advent 3 John the Baptist  
Advent 4 The Virgin Mary  
Christmas Day The Christ

Each of the four Sundays then reminds us of those who prepared for the coming of Christ. 'The Patriarchs' can naturally focus on Abraham, our father in faith, and David, the ancestor in whose city Jesus was born. 'The Prophets' gives an opportunity to reflect on the way the birth of the Messiah was 'foretold'. John, who proclaimed the Saviour, and Mary, who bore him in her womb, complete the picture.

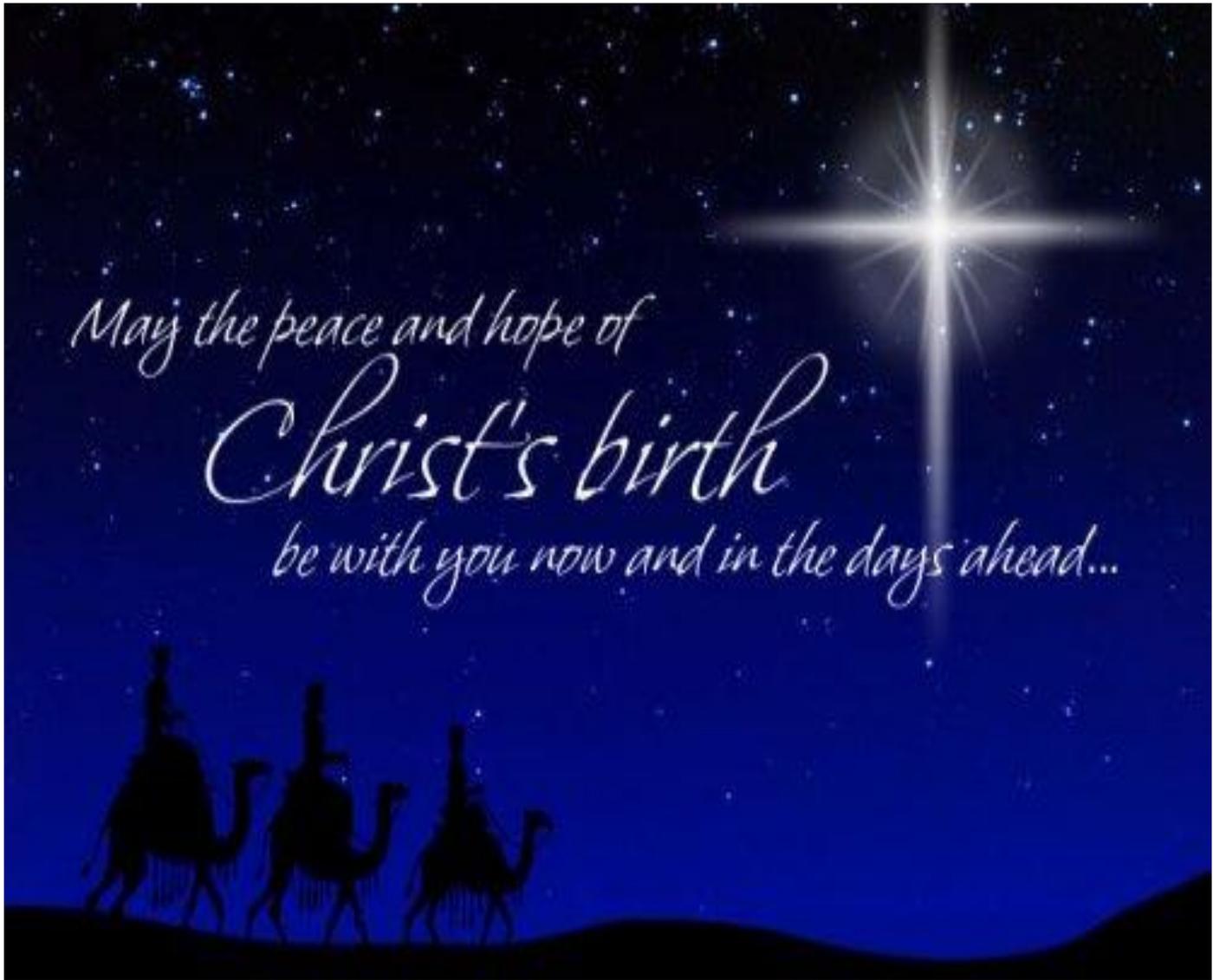
### CHRISTMAS DAY

1. Blessed are you Sovereign Lord, King of Peace:  
to you be praise and glory for ever!  
The new light of your incarnate word,  
gives gladness in our sorrow,  
and a presence in our isolation.  
Fill our lives with your light,  
until they overflow with gladness and praise.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

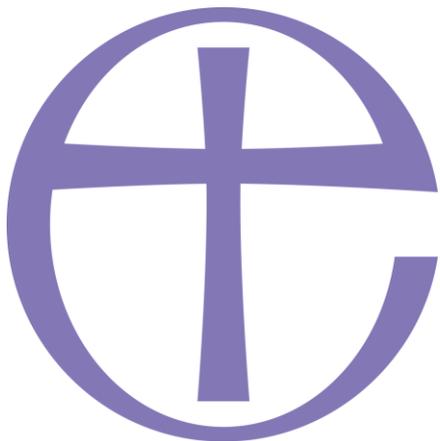
2. God our Father,  
today the Saviour is born  
and those who live in darkness are seeing a great light.  
Help us, who greet the birth of Christ with joy,  
to live in the light of your Son,  
and to share the good news of your love.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
the Light who has come into the world.

3. **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!**





May the peace and hope of  
*Christ's birth*  
be with you now and in the days ahead...



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

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