

# CHRISTMAS

*Saint Peter's Brighton Beach*

## *The Feast of the Incarnation*



Detail from window at Saint Peter's

Vicar:

Rev'd Jonathan Chamberlain

Assistant Priest:

Rev'd Chester Lord

Parish Organist:

Andrew Kerr

**Christmas Day**  
**Monday 25 December 2023**  
**9AM**  
**SUNG EUCHARIST WITH CAROLS**

# Christmas

## 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, 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.

From *A Common Worship*, Church of England

***Please switch off all mobile phones***

***Please say the responses printed in bold***

***This is a COVID Safe service***

- Please hand sanitise upon entry using the hand sanitiser provided
- Holy communion will be distributed in one kind only i.e. the bread dipped in the wine

**GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME**

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

*please stand*

1. 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.*

2. 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.*

3. See how the shepherds,  
Summoned to his cradle,  
Leaving their flocks draw nigh with lowly fear;  
We too will thither,  
Bend our gentle footsteps.

*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

4. Child, for us sinners  
Poor and in the manger,  
Fain we embrace thee, with awe and love;  
Who would not love thee,  
Loving us do dearly?

*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

5. Sing, choirs of angels,

Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
'Glory to God  
In the highest.'  
*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

6. 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.*

*The priest greets all in the name of the Incarnate Lord*

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

**And also with you.**

*The priest introduces the Kyrie eleison*

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.**

## **ABSOLUTION**

*The priest pronounces the Absolution*

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.

**Amen.**

## **THE GLORIA**

The Gloria is sung:

Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to God's 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 OF THE DAY

*The priest introduces the Collect*

We pray that the love of God will be a light to the world:

***Silence is kept***

Let us pray together:

God Most High,  
whose eternal Word chose a dwelling place among us,  
that we might live in your presence:

grant us a spirit of wisdom  
to know how rich is the glory you have given us,  
and how great is the hope to which we are called in the Word made flesh;  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.      **Amen.**



## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

*please sit*

### FIRST READING

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

62.6-12

Upon your walls, O Jerusalem,  
I have posted sentinels;  
all day and all night  
they shall never be silent.  
You who remind the Lord,  
take no rest,  
and give him no rest  
until he establishes Jerusalem  
and makes it renowned throughout the earth.  
The Lord has sworn by his right hand  
and by his mighty arm:  
I will not again give your grain  
to be food for your enemies,  
and foreigners shall not drink the wine  
for which you have labored;  
but those who garner it shall eat it  
and praise the Lord,  
and those who gather it shall drink it  
in my holy courts.  
Go through, go through the gates,  
prepare the way for the people;  
build up, build up the highway,  
clear it of stones,  
lift up an ensign over the peoples.  
The Lord has proclaimed  
to the end of the earth:  
Say to daughter Zion,  
“See, your salvation comes;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.”

They shall be called, "The Holy People,  
The Redeemed of the Lord";  
and you shall be called, "Sought Out,  
A City Not Forsaken."

For the word of the Lord,  
**thanks be to God.**

## PSALM 97

The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice:

**let the many coastlands be glad!**

Clouds and thick darkness are all around him:

**righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.**

Fire goes before him:

**and consumes his adversaries on every side.**

His lightnings light up the world:

**the earth sees and trembles.**

The mountains melt like wax before the Lord:

**before the Lord of all the earth.**

The heavens proclaim his righteousness:

**and all the peoples behold his glory.**

All worshipers of images are put to shame,

those who make their boast in worthless idols:

**all gods bow down before him.**

Zion hears and is glad,

and the towns of Judah rejoice:

**because of your judgments, O God.**

For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth:

**you are exalted far above all gods.**

The Lord loves those who hate evil;

he guards the lives of his faithful:

**he rescues them from the hand of the wicked.**

Light dawns for the righteous:

**and joy for the upright in heart.**

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous:

**and give thanks to his holy name!**

## SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of Paul to Titus.

*3.4-8a*

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is sure.

For the word of the Lord,

**thanks be to God.**

## GRADUAL HYMN

*please stand*

1. O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see you lie;  
above your deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by.  
Yet in your dark streets shining  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in you tonight.

2. For Christ is born of Mary,  
and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars together,  
proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the king,  
and peace to all on earth!

3. 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.

4. 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 Emmanuel!

#### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION & READING**

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

A holy day has dawned upon us.  
Come, you nations and adore the Lord.  
Today a great light has come upon the earth.

**Alleluia!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Saint Luke.

2.8-20

**Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

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 Savior, 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 favors!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and

found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

For the Gospel of the Lord,  
**praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Sermon*

### **THE GREETING OF PEACE**

*please stand*

*The priest introduces the greeting of peace*

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

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

*All are invited to turn to those around them and exchange a sign of peace to those around them.*

### **THE OFFERTORY**

*During the hymn the bread and wine are brought to the altar and  
a collection is taken up.*

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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,  
When, like stars, his children, crowned,  
All in white shall wait around.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-95)

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 GREAT THANKSGIVING**

*The priest begins 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 our thanks and praise.**

...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.**

...Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

... in songs of never-ending praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power  
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

*The priest says*

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.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

## **THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND COMMUNION**

*The priest breaks the bread*

We break the bread of life,



and that life is the light of the world.

**All God here among us,  
light in the midst of us,  
bring us to light and life.**

The Agnus Dei is sung:

*please kneel or sit or stand*

***Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.***

***Jesus, Bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.***

***Jesus, Redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.***

*The priest says*

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

**All Lord, give us this bread always.**

*All who are baptised, of all Christian denominations, are welcome to receive Holy Communion here at Saint Peter's. This includes children from the age of 6 at the discretion of their parents. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. If you would prefer to receive a blessing, please indicate this to the priest, by the crossing of the arms on the chest. Communion is the bread dipped in the wine.*

## **THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

*The priest says*

*please stand*

Let us pray.

God of heaven, dwelling among us,

we thank you for feeding us with this holy food.

By your grace keep us ever faithful to your Word made flesh,

that, as his body in the world,  
we may bring your presence to all people;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

## **Announcement**

The Parish Council invites you to make a Christmas gift to the parish to help meet the cost of repairs and maintenance in 2024 by taking away a letter with you today from a churchwarden located in the front porch as you leave. The Parish council thanks you for your generosity.

## **DISMISSAL HYMN**

1. 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".

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord.  
Late in time behold him come,  
Offspring of the virgin's womb:  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;

Hail the incarnate Deity,  
Pleased, as man with man to dwell  
Jesus, our Immanuel.  
Hark the herald angels sing  
"Glory to the new-born king".

3. 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 newborn king".

*The priest pronounces the Blessing*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

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 always. **Amen**

*The priest says*

Go in the peace of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

*We wish you  
a most joyous and holy Christmas  
and a blessed and peaceful New Year in 2024.  
We invite you to worship at Saint Peter's in 2024.*