

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Saint Peter's Brighton Beach



Detail from window at Saint Peter's

Vicar:
Rev'd Jonathan Chamberlain

Parish Organist:
Andrew Kerr

SUNDAY 31st December 2023
10AM
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

OPENING 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.

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 says the sentence of the day

My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the
presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory
to your people Israel.

Luke 2.30-32

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 failure to worship you.
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:

Saving God,

whose Son Jesus was presented in the temple

and was acclaimed the glory of Israel

and the light of the nations:

grant that in him we may be presented to you

and in the world we may reflect his glory

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.

61.10-62.3

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;
my whole being shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.
For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn
and her salvation like a burning torch.
The nations shall see your vindication
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.
You shall be a beautiful crown in the hand of the Lord
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

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

PSALM 148

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens:
praise him in the heights!

Praise him, all his angels:

praise him, all his host!

Praise him, sun and moon:

praise him, all you shining stars!

Praise him, you highest heavens:

and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the Lord:

for he commanded and they were created.

He established them forever and ever:

he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Praise the Lord from the earth:

you sea monsters and all deeps;

Fire and hail, snow and frost:

stormy wind fulfilling his command!

Mountains and all hills:

fruit trees and all cedars!

Wild animals and all cattle:

creeping things and flying birds!

Kings of the earth and all peoples:

princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young men and women alike:

old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the Lord:

for his name alone is exalted.

His glory is above earth and heaven:

he has raised up a horn for his people.

Therefore, he is the praise of all his servants:

for the people of Israel who are close to him.

Praise the Lord!

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter to the Galatians.

4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has

sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir through God.

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!

In the past God spoke to our forbears through the prophets;
now he speaks to us through his Son.

Alleluia!

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Saint Luke.

2.22-40

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,

according to your word,

for my eyes have seen your salvation,

which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

a light for revelation to the gentiles

and for glory to your people Israel."

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is

destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul, too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.

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

Sermon

THE CREED

The priest introduces the Nicene Creed

Let us together affirm the faith of the church.

please stand

**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 OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE VIRGIN MARY
AND BECAME TRULY HUMAN.**
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.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

[kneel or sit]

The priest introduces the prayers of the faithful
Let us pray for the world and for the Church.

Prayers and thanksgivings are offered
After each prayer
...in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

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

God of Mission,
Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give,

Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
Joy to our worship
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Announcements

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 season
and a blessed and peaceful New Year in 2024.
We look forward to worshipping with you at Saint Peter's in 2024.*