

Saturday 25 December 2021

Christmas Day



Sermon © Revd Jane Hyde.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.
- The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.
- To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page, <http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 In the bleak midwinter (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**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.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph:

‘You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ Let us therefore seek the forgiveness of God through Jesus the Saviour of the world.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,

**Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.**

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for Christmas Day

Almighty God,
you have given us your only-begotten Son
to take our nature upon him
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:
grant that we, who have been born again
and made your children by adoption and grace,
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;
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.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with

justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. *Isaiah 9:2-7*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to Titus

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds. *Titus 2:11-14*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 The Calypso Carol

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

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 Saviour, 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 favours!' 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. *Luke 2:1-20*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

The well-loved and familiar story of that first Christmas sees a cast of very ordinary people experiencing quite extra-ordinary events. As we saw last week, in the children's Nativity play, God sent angelic messengers to an unremarkable young girl living in a rural backwater village in Galilee, and a dream to her intended husband. The result was that Mary conceived a very special baby ... God's only child ... and Joseph was persuaded that their subsequent marriage was part of His plan for humanity ...

... and then there was silence!

Mary and Joseph then just got on with doing what a peasant couple expecting a baby did until, with bad timing ... with Mary just about to give birth ... the Emperor's census forced them to undertake a 90-mile trip to Bethlehem. It is tempting to wonder whether something was amiss ... whether God might have provided better and safer arrangements for the birth of His child.

But no ... silence!

At Christmas, we rush too easily from the simple account of Jesus's birth ... simply reported, lacking in divine glamour ... to the next appearance of the heavenly host. Mary and Joseph did not see those angels; they were left holding a new-born baby in a mucky stable they were sharing with household animals. God had been disturbingly active in their lives a while ago but, in the mess and pain of birth away from home, God apparently was keeping quiet!

God *did* send angels that night ... but not to Mary and Joseph. Instead, on a

hillside, God disturbed the night-watch of a group of shepherds who were not particularly looking out for a message from God. Their responsibilities in the fields, 24 hours a day, usually prevented their participation in Jewish worship and tended to make them religious outcasts. It was to this unlikely assembly, minding the sheep (and minding their own business) that God's angelic messengers appeared one dark, seemingly unremarkable night.

Luke reports that they were understandably terrified, but nonetheless they were sufficiently convinced by the message that they abandoned their flock (risking their livelihood) and made a hurried trip to Bethlehem, where they found a baby, and (perhaps not expecting to be believed) told his parents their bizarre story.

This band of scruffy, breathless shepherds *were* believed ... for they were no less messengers from God. Their arrival was unexpected and probably a little alarming but they also brought comfort to the holy couple since it was assurance that God had not abandoned them at all. Mary and Joseph could, in turn, reassure the shepherds that their weird story of a sky full of singing angels was no hallucination ... that they were, indeed, the very first to hear that God really had sent humankind a Saviour and they could see him for themselves.

This episode was the only miraculous part of the actual birth of Jesus: otherwise, Mary and Joseph were on their own dealing with a birth, in unusual circumstances, away from the familiarity of their own home. Through the miraculous happenings on that Bethlehem hillside they did discover however ... as we can today ... that God's silence is not God's absence. Luke records that Mary treasured the words of the shepherds, and pondered them in her heart. Years later, she must have drawn strength from them, as she faced the seeming silence of God at Calvary.

What was the effect on the shepherds? Today's readings tell of the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appearing; of the Lord proclaiming to the ends of the Earth that salvation comes; that God's holy people are sought out, not forsaken. This is what the shepherds experienced that stunning night, and they returned, glorifying and praising God.

We never know how God's messengers might come to us, or what unlikely things those messengers ... however they appear ... may cause us to do. We know that Mary treasured the shepherds' words in her heart, and maybe we can try to hear anew, this Christmas morning, the amazing, life-changing message of the angels '*... to you is born this day ... a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.*'

The Christmas Collect prays for us to be daily renewed by the Holy Spirit. Let us be open to expect the unexpected as joy breaks out: the goodness and loving kindness of God has appeared. Amen.

The Creed

This version of the Creed is sung to the tune of 'God rest ye merry gentlemen'.
Please click [here](#) for the tune.

**We sing the faith of Holy Church,
The fam'ly of the Lord
Made one by God in Jesus Christ,
By earth and heaven adored:
The Father who has all things made
And on us blessings poured:**

O Lord, we love you and believe, and believe!

O Lord, we love you and believe!

**The angel to the Virgin came
Announcing the Lord's birth
As Jesus Christ, pure Mary's son,
To save the fallen earth.
He lived, and on the cross he died—
Love spent beyond all worth: Refrain**

**On the third day he rose again
As by the Scriptures told;
Then into heaven glorified:
Th'eternal shepherd's fold.
And he shall come at end of time
To start the age of gold: Refrain**

**The Spirit's life fills all the world
With healing gifts and power.
We are the Church, the first saints' heirs,
Where fellowship must flower.
Forgiven sins—Christ's risen life
That frees us from death's hour: Refrain**

Prayers of intercession

Let us pray to Jesus our Saviour.
Christ, born in a stable,
give courage to all who are homeless.
Jesus, Saviour,
All hear our prayer.

Christ, for whom the angels sang,
give the song of the kingdom to all who weep.

Jesus, Saviour,

All hear our prayer.

Christ, worshipped by the shepherds,
give peace on earth to all who are oppressed.

Jesus, Saviour,

All hear our prayer.

Christ, before whom the wise men knelt,
give humility and wisdom to all who govern.

Jesus, Saviour,

All hear our prayer.

Christ, whose radiance filled a lowly manger,
give the glory of your resurrection to all who rest in you.

Jesus, Saviour,

All hear our prayer.

Jesus, Saviour, child of Mary,
you know us and love us,
you share our lives
and hear our prayer.

Glory to you for ever.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The 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,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Away in a manger

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

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.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 [The Angel Gabriel from Heaven came](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All In the name of Christ.
 Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All 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 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 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.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
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.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

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

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

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

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.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
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 peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

God of truth,
whose Wisdom set her table
and invited us to eat the bread and drink the wine
of the kingdom:
help us to lay aside all foolishness
and to live and walk in the way of insight,
that we may come with your servant Bernard
to the eternal feast of heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All 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.