

**Tuesday 6 December 2022**

# St Nicholas



Nicholas was a fourth-century bishop of Myra in Asia Minor (southern Turkey), but very little is known about the historical figure behind the legends.

His reputation as a worker of wonders was enhanced by a ninth-century hagiography, and is now better known through these stories than otherwise. Many concern his love and care for children, how he fed the hungry, healed the sick and cared for the oppressed. He saved three girls from a life of prostitution by providing them with dowries and so developed the tradition of bearing gifts to children on his feast day—a practice appropriated by later Christmas celebrations.

The manner of Nicholas' death is not known but is not thought to have been martyrdom.

**Sermon** © the Revd Robin Wilding.

**Liturgy** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

**Prayers of intercession** © This is Church (adapted).

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

All the hymns are hosted on YouTube. Please click on the links to hear them.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1** [Be still for the presence](#) (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.

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**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 St Nicholas**

Almighty Father, lover of souls,  
who chose your servant Nicholas  
to be a bishop in the Church,  
that he might give freely out of the treasures of your grace:  
make us mindful of the needs of others  
and, as we have received, so teach us also to give;  
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 spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called 'oaks of righteousness', the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. *Isaiah 61:1-3*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from the First Letter of St Timothy

There is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. *1 Timothy 6:6-11*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 Everyone needs compassion**      ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

People were bringing little children to Jesus in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them. *Mark 10:13-16*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Poor old Nicholas—I'm sure he would be appalled at what he has become – this caricature of a figure bringing presents—and often to those who have too much anyway. And the sickening commercialisation of the time—used to sell things. Instead he was a man who gave quietly to the poor and destitute, to the struggling and the needy—the story I have heard of him is simply the arrival of parcels at the door of a house with no preliminaries and no expectations simply the meeting of a need.

In other Christian traditions this feast is the one where gifts are given in memory of this man and his transformative actions. Where did his motivation come from?

Are you a Transformers fan? The toys or the rather silly but amusing films? It really caught the imagination of many kids—the robots that could change and look like a car, a lorry, a plane, a helicopter. Radical change, hidden in plain sight, ready to transform into action.

Firstly, we are recipients of a *transformative saviour*—Our God is one who does not despise our littleness and our neediness instead he steps into it that he might change it. The God who takes on flesh, who does not despise suffering, who knows what rejection looks and feels like, who is stripped of all pretence and all pride in his suffering on the cross. And in his death and resurrection opens the way for our change.

Then we are part of a *transformed people* who have been called and rescued and filled with Holy Spirit that we might become overcomers, might become changed people, might be used and useful to our God. A small band of people from the far borders of empire that turned the Empire upside down. And throughout the centuries the church has acted to be a transforming people—so much of what the state now provides we as the people of God brought into existence—schools, hospitals, social care, caring for the foreigner and the stranger. And where the gospel has had impact changing cultures for the better while respecting their strengths. We've got it wrong sometimes—but actually the good far, far outweighs the bad (when did a good news story last get in the papers!).

So finally, what of us? We are *called to be transformers*, people who live the life of the Spirit now, who see the need and act, who are willing to get involved in changing things, who can introduce others to the one who makes a difference, who can turn lives upside down, right way out. The One who loves us so much that he was willing to act on our behalf.

## The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
the source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

### **Prayers of intercession**

We pray for your church as it gathers around the world, whether in tiny groups or in great gatherings, all to praise you and to hear your holy word. Give us a sense of expectation as we come and inspiration as we go.

Help us to put our differences behind us and to unite behind the great commission of Jesus to make disciples of all nations and all people. We pray for your blessing on all those who seek to do your will and guide us through our spiritual and worldly journeys.

Lord in your mercy

**All Hear our prayer**

Drive despair from our politics, revive our dreams of justice and truth, and restore our passion for what is good and right. Establish your just and gentle rule in places of injustice and those parts of the world where there is conflict and where peace is forgotten. We ask you to govern the hearts and minds of those who lead the nations and those in authority, that they may act justly, with honesty and integrity.

Lord in your mercy

**All Hear our prayer.**

In our daily lives, help us to remember continually the supremacy of love. May love motivate our care for our neighbourhoods wherever we live; may love heal the social ills, which can drag us into despair; may love inspire our citizenship to rise beyond mediocrity; and may we always remember that we are members one of another and that we can never live to ourselves alone.

Lord in your mercy

**All Hear our prayer**

We pray for the homeless, refugees—those expelled and forgotten everywhere—as they seek to make a difference for the people they serve. May they know that

your guiding hand is with them in their daily work and tireless endeavours. Help us to use our gifts and talents for the greater good of all: challenge us to drive away complacency and apathy; inspire us to pray for those for whom today will seem long and hard, for those ill in hospital or at home, those struggling with despair or depression, those seeking work, and for those for whom this day will be their last. Comfort and heal those who suffer: give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord in your mercy

**All Hear our prayer**

Jesus Christ is the light of the world a light which no darkness can quench. We remember before God those who have already gone before us and we light a candle to symbolise the light of Christ which eternally shines and brings hope. You turn our darkness into light in your light shall we see light.

Lord in your mercy

**All Hear our prayer**

As we leave this place today Advent Lord come even nearer. Come to restore our faith, come to fortify our social conscience, come to widen our eyes of wonder, so that when the Saviour comes he may steal into our hearts and find them ready.

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 How deep the Father's love for us**

[\(please click here\)](#)

**The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below**



## The Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;  
and the blessing of God the Almighty,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be with you now and remain with you always.

**All    Amen.**

**HYMN 4    Lord I come to you**      (please 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.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
And now we give thanks, most gracious God,  
surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses  
and glorified in the assembly of your saints.  
The glorious company of apostles praise you.  
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.  
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.  
We, your holy Church, acclaim you.  
In communion with angels and archangels,  
and with all who served you on earth and worship you now in heaven,  
we raise our voice to proclaim your glory,  
for ever praising you and saying:

**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 St Nicholas and 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, shepherd of your people,  
whose servant Nicholas revealed the loving service of Christ  
in his ministry as a pastor of your people:  
by this eucharist in which we share  
awaken within us the love of Christ  
and keep us faithful to our Christian calling;  
through him who laid down his life for us,  
but is alive and reigns with you,  
now and for ever.

**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.