

The Church of England
in Central Windsor

Christmas Praise

A Celebration for Christmas Morning

A Service of the Word with Holy Communion



A warm welcome to
the Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Windsor
for our service today

Please don't feel embarrassed if babies and small children
cry or make a noise.

INTRODUCTION AND GREETING

I bring you good news of great joy:
a Saviour has been born to you Alleluia!

All **To us a child is born, a son is given. Alleluia!**

Hear the words of St Luke:

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.

He is Christ the Lord. Alleluia!

All **We worship and adore him. Alleluia!**

OPENING CAROL

**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;**

Refrain:

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

**God from God,
Light from Light,
lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
very God,
begotten not created:**

Refrain:

**See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear
we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps;**

Refrain:

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God,
glory in the highest;
Refrain:

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing;

Refrain: Latin 18th Century tr Frederick Oakley (1802-1880)
and others

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

As we kneel with the shepherds before the newborn Christ-child,
we open our hearts in penitence and faith:

You, Lord, were born for our salvation.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

You came as Saviour to bring wholeness and peace.
Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

You came to bring light into the darkness of our lives.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

May Almighty God, who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,
bring *us* his pardon and peace, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

THE COLLECT FOR CHRISTMAS DAY is said

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder
at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.

All **Amen**

A READING FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT is given

A reading from the book of 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.
For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, 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 onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9.2, 6-7

At the end the reader says: Thanks be to God

A CAROL is sung

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to men
from heaven's all-gracious King"
the world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel-sounds
the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and man, at war with man, hears not
the love song which they bring; –
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on
by prophet-bards foretold,
when, with the ever circling years
shall come the age of gold;
when peace shall over all the earth,
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world give back the song,
which now the angels sing.

Edmund H. Sears (1810-1876)

A READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT is given

A reading from the gospel of Luke

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 2.8-20

At the end, the reader says: Thanks be to God

A CAROL is sung

**See Him lying on a bed of straw
A draughty stable with an open door
Mary cradling the babe she bore
The Prince of Glory is His name**

*Oh now carry me to Bethlehem
To see the Lord of love again
Just as poor as was the stable then
The Prince of Glory when He came*

**Star of silver, sweep across the skies
Show where Jesus in the manger lies
Shepherds swiftly from your stupor rise
To see the Saviour of the world**

Oh now carry me to Bethlehem:

**Angels sing again the song you sang
sing the glory of God's gracious plan
Sing that Bethl'em's little baby can
Be salvation to the soul**

Oh now carry me to Bethlehem:

**Mine are riches from Your poverty
From Your innocence eternity
Mine forgiveness by Your death for me
Child of sorrow for my joy**

ADDRESS

A CAROL is sung

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus: I ask thee to stay
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.**

Anonymous

AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH is said:

Let us declare our faith in God.

All **We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

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

All **The Word became flesh and lived among us;
we have seen his glory,
the glory of the only Son from the Father,
full of grace and truth.**

A THANKSGIVING is said

All Blessed are you, Son of Mary; born a child, you share our humanity:
Heaven and earth shout their praise.

Blessed are you, Son of David; born to rule, you receive gifts from the wise:
All **Heaven and earth shout their praise.**

Blessed are you, Son of Man; born our Saviour, you are the light of the world:
All **Heaven and earth shout their praise.**

With all the voices of heaven we celebrate the coming of our God:
All **Hosanna in the highest.**

Glory to God in the highest
All **and peace to his people on earth.**

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
All **Hosanna in the highest.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

We bring before God our needs and the needs of his world.

To us a child is born, to us a son is given.

Wonderful Counsellor, give your wisdom to the rulers of the nations.
All Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Mighty God, make the whole world know that the government is on your shoulders.
All Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Everlasting Father, establish your reign of justice and righteousness for ever.
All Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Prince of peace, bring in the endless kingdom of your peace.
Lord, in your mercy

All **hear our prayer.**

Almighty Lord,
**Hear our prayer,
and fulfil your purposes in us,
as you accomplished your will
in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

All

THE LORD'S PRAYER is said

United as members of the Lord's family,
we pray with one heart and voice:

**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.**

A CHRISTMAS BLESSING IS GIVEN

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the love of Joseph and Mary
and the peace of the Christ child
be ours this Christmas.
And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon us and remain with us always.

All **Amen.**

A CAROL is sung

Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
*Hark! the herald angels sing,
“glory to the new-born King!”*

Christ, by highest Heaven adored;
Christ the everlasting Lord;
late in time, behold him come,
offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail the incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.
*Hark! the herald angels sing,
“glory to the new-born King!”*

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 new-born King!”*

Charles Wesley (1707-1788) and others

If you do not wish to stay for the Celebration of Holy Communion, feel free to leave the church quietly. Thank you for joining us this Christmas morning.

The service continues with a celebration of Holy Communion.

A CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

The table is prepared, and bread and wine are placed upon it. When this has been done, please stand as the priest says the Prayer of Preparation and then remain standing for the Eucharistic Prayer

Blessed be God,
by whose grace creation is renewed,
by whose love heaven is opened,
by whose mercy we offer our sacrifice of praise.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

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,
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 the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Joseph,
St John the Baptist 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.**

BREAKING OF 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.**

GIVING OF COMMUNION

The president invites the people to communion.

God's holy gifts
for God's holy people.

All **Jesus Christ is holy,
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

*When the bread and wine are received each communicant replies **Amen.***

If you are confirmed or a communicant member of the Church of England or any other Christian church, you are welcome to receive communion with us this morning. Otherwise, you are warmly invited to come forward to receive a blessing. Please bring the service booklet with you so we know you wish to receive a blessing.

Gluten free wafers are available on request.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A short silence is kept and this prayer is said

Son of Mary, Son of God,
we have joined the worship of the angels;
may we never lose that heavenly vision.
Like the shepherds,
we have rejoiced at the news of your birth;
help us to proclaim that message in word and deed,
to your praise and glory.

All **Amen.**

BLESSING

Christ the Son of God
perfect in you the image of his glory
and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with you and remain with you
this Christmas-tide and always.

All **Amen**

WORDS OF DISMISSAL

The Word was made flesh and lived among us:
and we have seen his glory.

All Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

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

An organ voluntary is played as the clergy, ministers and people depart

If you are visiting today or attending for the first time, we hope that you have felt “at home” here, that you will be refreshed by today’s service of worship and that you will return in the future.
We shall be delighted if you decide to make our church community your spiritual home.