

WELCOME

We welcome you to this beautiful church in the heart of the city for this Christmas service. This year is very different and it is good to have people with us in the building and also for many who will be watching us on line at home.

COLLECTION

The Cathedral costs in excess of £5,500 a day to keep open, and we urgently need your support with the loss of our regular income during Covid19.

We are not able to hold a collection in the usual way at the moment, but your donation is more important than ever as we struggle at this difficult time.

We invite you to generously give to ensure our future in 3 ways:

Our suggested way is for you to donate now

via

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/ChesterCathedral>

At the entrance door to the service

By tapping the **contactless** donation boxes on your way in or out of the service; this is set at £5

or

simply placing your collection into the box

On the Screen (for online viewers)

Clicking the **donate now** box on the screen.

We really do need your help to make sure that services like this one can continue and that we can keep the doors open for everyone, so please donate generously.

With blessings and thanks

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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THE GATHERING

THE BLESSING OF THE CRIB

God our Father, bless the Holy Family,
as we celebrate with them the birth of the Christ child.
Being born as one of us, and laying humbly in a manger,
you reveal your gift of love for the world.

Let Christ's light shine in our hearts and strengthen our faith,
until we reach our home in heaven. **Amen.**

HYMN

- 1 O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee to-night.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.

GREETING

The President says

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

For unto us a child is born
unto us a Son is given.
His name will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.
Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth.

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

The Deacon introduces the Confession

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts.
Let us turn to the light and confess our sins.

After a short silence the Deacon says

Lord Jesus, you are mighty God and Prince of Peace:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are Son of God and Son of Mary:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are Word made flesh
and splendour of the Father:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

ABSOLUTION

The President says

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw you to himself and cleanse you from all your sins,
that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All stand

GLORIA

The choir sings

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te, gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine Deus, rex coelestis, Deus pater omnipotens, Domine fili unigenite Jesu Christe. Domine Deus, agnus Dei, filius patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe. Cum sancto spiritu, in Gloria Dei patris. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his 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 upon 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.

COLLECT

The President says

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness of your one true light:
bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth,
to see the radiance of your heavenly glory;
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. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

THE OLD TESTAMENT

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

9. 2-7

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 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL HYMN

- 1 On Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring;
on Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring;
news of great joy, news of great mirth,
news of our merciful King's birth.
- 2 Then why should folk on earth be so sad,
since our Redeemer made us glad,
then why should we on earth be so sad,
since our Redeemer made us glad,
when from our sin he set us free,
all for to gain our liberty?

3 All out of darkness we have light,
which made the angels sing this night:
all out of darkness we have light,
which made the angels sing this night:
'Glory to God, and peace to all,
now and for evermore. Amen.'

Traditional Hymn

SUSSEX CAROL
Anonymous

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us and we have seen his glory!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

HOLY GOSPEL

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

I. 1-14

Glory to you, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us declare our faith in God.

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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray to our incarnate Lord, who has brought us out of darkness and into his own marvellous light.

Christ born for us, Son of God given for us:
help us to know you, to worship and to serve you through this pandemic.
Be a star to guide us through these dark days
and find the light and hope of Jesus amongst us this Christmas.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Wonderful counsellor, you order all things with your wisdom:
help humanity to reveal the mystery of your love
by the service it shows in hospitals, care homes
and places of welcome and shelter through the festive season.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Mighty God, the government is on your shoulders:
guide the leaders of the nations at this challenging time;
bless Elizabeth our Queen
and bring in your kingdom of justice and righteousness
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Everlasting Father, you call us to live together in love and peace:
bless our families and be with those who will be alone this Christmas.
As Mary and Joseph were away from their home,
be with those who are separated from their loved ones
because of the pandemic
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Prince of peace, you were born in poverty and know our pain;
touch all who suffer with your healing power.
Be with those who are ill or isolated;
give comfort to the bereaved and those who feel sad,
and bring the world the gift of your wholeness and peace.
Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, full of the Spirit,
give us hope that life will be restored in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

PEACE

The President says

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

cf Isaiah 9.6

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

Word made flesh, life of the world, in your incarnation
you embraced our poverty: by your spirit may we share in your riches.
Amen.

EUCCHARISTIC 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 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:

The choir sings

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Osanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine. Osanna in excelsis.

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.

The President continues

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:

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 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. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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.
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 BREAD

The President says

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

GIVING OF COMMUNION

God's holy gifts for God's holy people.
**Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

AGNUS DEI

The choir sings

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

*Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.*

COMMUNION CAROLS

COMMUNION HYMN

1 Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:

*Come and worship, worship Christ the King.
Come and worship, worship Christ the new-born King.*

2 Shepherds in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing,
yonder shines the infant Light:

3 Though an infant now we view him,
He shall fill his Father's throne,
gather all the nations to him;
every knee shall then bow down:

James Montgomery (1771-1854)

IRIS
Anonymous French Tune

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

The President says

Let us pray.

God our Father,
in this night you have made known to us again
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:
Confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him until the day dawns
and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts.
To him be glory both now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE DISMISSAL

BLESSING

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 of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The Deacon says

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

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 the 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 a Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see:
hail, the incarnate Deity,
pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

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.

Charles Wesley (1707-88)

George Whitefield (1714-70) Martin Madan (1726-90)

MENDELSSOHN

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-47)

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

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