



St. Luke's Church
Maidenhead

Holy Communion on Christmas Day



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. The task of the Christmas liturgy is to recall us, amid all the joyful customs and celebrations of Christmas, to the 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 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 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 2nd February.



The Gathering

We stand and sing a hymn as the choir and ministers enter.

Hymn

Do I not fill heaven and earth?
says the Lord.

All **Now the Word is made flesh
and laid in a narrow manger.**

All From eternity to eternity you are God,
**and now we see you
as a new-born child.**

The Greeting

The president greets the people

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

All **and also with you.**

Prayer of 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.**

Prayers of Penitence

The president invites the people to Confession, saying

Christ the Light of the World has come to dispel the darkness
of our hearts.

In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

We remain standing

Silence is kept.

God our Father,
you sent your Son full of grace and truth:
forgive our failure to receive him.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy**

Jesus our Saviour,
you were born in poverty and laid in a manger:
forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.
Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Spirit of Love,
your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:
forgive the hardness of our hearts.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

The president says

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.

All **Amen.**

We sing the Gloria

Gloria in Excelsis

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 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

The president introduces a period of silent prayer, saying

Let us pray in the peace of this Christmas celebration that our
joy in the birth of Christ will last for ever.

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

We sit for the readings

Readings

At the end of each:
This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn

We stand to sing the hymn

Gospel Reading

We remain standing and turn towards the reading of the Gospel.

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to N
All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

At the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

We sit down for the sermon

Prayers of intercession

We kneel or sit for the prayers.

¶ *The Liturgy of the Sacrament*

The Peace

We stand

The president says

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.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

**Preparation of the Altar
Taking of the Bread and Wine**

Hymn

All sing the hymn, during which the gifts of the people are gathered and presented, and the altar is prepared and bread and wine are placed upon it.

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

All **Amen.**

We remain standing

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord is here.

All **His Spirit is with us.**

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:

*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.*

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will,
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
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.

Great is the mystery of faith:
All **Christ has died:**
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world;
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming in glory,
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
we bring before you this bread and this cup
and we thank you for counting us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people
and gather into one in your kingdom
all who share this one bread and one cup,
so that we, in the company of all the saints,
may praise and glorify you for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord;

by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,
let us pray as our Saviour has taught us

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

The president breaks the consecrated 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.**

Giving of Communion

The president says the invitation 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.**

The president and people receive communion.

*You will be invited up to the altar rails to receive bread and wine, or,
if you would prefer, a blessing. We may sing a carol.*

These words of distribution are used

The body of Christ, broken for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

and you reply: **Amen**

Prayer after Communion

We sit or kneel and keep silence

The Post Communion prayer is said by the President:

All **Amen.**

We all say

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.**

¶ *The Dismissal*

We stand, as the president gives the Christmas blessing

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with peace and goodwill
and make you partakers of the divine nature;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Hymn

*We remain standing to sing the hymn.
During this the choir and ministers leave,
we turn and face the back of the church, as we are sent out:*

All Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.
Glory, thanks and praise to God.

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