

MIDNIGHT IN BETHLEHEM COMMUNION CHRISTMAS EVE

St Mary's Downe

9.30pm



Opening Worship

Welcome all wonders in one sight! Eternity shut in a span.
Summer in winter, day in night,
heaven in earth and God in man.
Great little one, whose all-embracing birth,
brings earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth.

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

Advent candle lighting

We light our 4 Advent Candles to remind us of:

1. The patriarchs – *people like Abraham and David*
2. The prophets – *people like Isaiah who foretold Jesus' birth*
3. John the Baptist – *who called people back to God*
4. Mary – *who faithfully became the mother of Jesus*

Jesus Christ is the Light of the World
A light no darkness can quench

We light our 5th candle at the end of the service to celebrate Jesus' birth.

Carol 1 O little town of Bethlehem

Confession

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.

God our father, you sent your son, full of grace and truth.
Forgive our failure to receive him.

Lord have mercy: **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: **Christ have mercy.**

Spirit of love, your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call.
Forgive the hardness of our hearts.
Lord have mercy: **Lord have mercy.**

May God who loved the world so much that he sent his son to be
our saviour forgive you your sins and make you holy to serve him
in the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The collect for Christmas Day

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.**

New Testament Reading Hebrews 1:1-12

At the end: This is the word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God**

Carol 13 Silent Night

Gospel Reading John 1:1-14

At the beginning: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John: **Glory to you O Lord**

At the end: This is the Gospel of the Lord:

Praise to you O Christ

Sermon Rev John Musson

Creed

**We believe in God the father,
from whom every family in heaven and 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

Please turn around as Baby Jesus is placed into the crib

People of God, shout and sing!

Tell the good news of peace on earth.

Lord, bring us today into Christ's peace.

All God's people say: **Amen**

Angels dance and the bright star shines.

All creation bows to the Lord of all.

Lord, bring us today into Christ's peace.

All God's people say: **Amen**

One with us, yet born to save,
He will show us the way to God.
Lord, bring us today into Christ's peace.
All God's people say: **Amen**

Prayers of intercession

Holy God: **hear our prayer.**

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,
let us draw our prayers together
and pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom
the power and the glory forever and ever. 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: **and also with you.**
Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Carol 14 It came upon a midnight clear

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord is here. **His Spirit is with us.**

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.

It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy,
at all times and in all places to give you thanks and praise,
holy Father, heavenly King, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

And now we give you thanks because,
in the incarnation of the Word,
a new light has dawned upon the world;
you have become one with us
that we might become one with you in your glorious kingdom.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood;

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.

Therefore, heavenly Father, we remember his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross;
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
we look for the coming of your kingdom,
and with this bread and this cup
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Accept through him, our great high priest,
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts
in the presence of your divine majesty,
renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love
and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you,
Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

Draw near with faith, receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was broken for you, and his blood which was shed for you. Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you, and feed on him in your hearts with thanksgiving.

You are welcome to come forward to receive bread and wine. If you prefer, you can receive a prayer of blessing instead – if so, please keep your hands by your side and we will pray God's blessing on you.

***Prayer after Communion
and the lighting of the Christmas Candle***

God our Father,
whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem:
may the light of faith illumine our hearts and shine in our words
and deeds; through him who is Christ the Lord. **Amen**

Blessing and 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 of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be with you this night and for evermore. **Amen.**

Carol 12 O Come, all ye faithful

We pray you will have a happy and blessed Christmas!

Thank you for joining us this evening. Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem were cancelled this year - here is the Nativity scene set up by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bethlehem this Christmas. Please continue to pray for Palestinian Christians there.



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