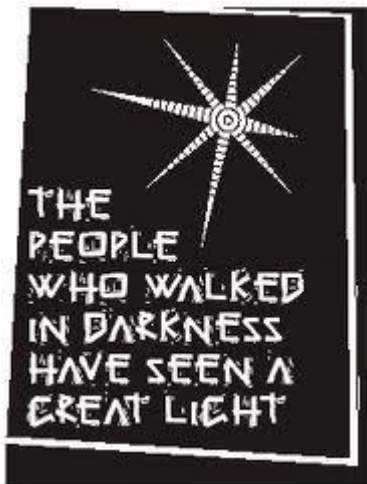


Call to Worship



Words of Welcome

Hymn No. 168 (Bergers)

Lord, you were rich beyond all splendour,
yet, for love's sake, became so poor;
leaving your home in glad surrender,
sapphire-paved courts for stable floor:

Lord, you were rich beyond all splendour,
yet, for love's sake, became so poor.

You are our God beyond all praising,
yet, for love's sake, became a man;
stooping so low, but sinners raising
heav'nwards, by your eternal plan:
You are our God beyond all praising,
yet, for love's sake, became a man.

Lord, you are love beyond all telling,
Saviour and King, we worship you;
Emmanuel, within us dwelling,
Make us and keep us pure and true:
Lord, you are love beyond all telling,
Saviour and King, we worship you.

Responses for 4th Sunday in Advent

An ancient promise is coming true:
God's love lasts for ever.

A secret mystery is being revealed:
God's love lasts for ever.

A little child will soon be born:
God's love lasts for ever.

Prayer of Approach

The Collect of the 4th Sunday in Advent

God our redeemer,
who prepared the blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of your Son:
grant that, as she looked for his
coming as our saviour,
so we may be ready to greet him
when he comes again as our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you and
the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The First Reading - from Matthew 1. 18 - 25

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ^a 19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to

public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,' which means, 'God is with us.' ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus. ^b

Infant Holy (Hymn 163) - Musical Reflection

The Second Reading - from Matthew 2: 7 - 23

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ^a ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.'

⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ^b ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ^c

¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' ¹⁴Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ^d ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ^e ^f ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what had been spoken

through the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'
¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.'
²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.'



Hymn No. 121 (Conditor alme)

Creator of the starry height,
 thy people's everlasting light,
 Jesu, redeemer of us all,
 hear thou thy servants when they call.

Thou, grieving at the helpless cry
 of all creation doomed to die,

didst come to save our fallen race
 by healing gifts of heav'nly grace.

When earth was near its evening hour,
 thou didst, in love's redeeming pow'r,
 like bridegroom from his chamber,
 come
 forth from a virgin-mother's womb.

At thy great name, exalted now,
 all knees in lowly homage bow;
 all things in heav'n and earth adore,
 and own thee King for evermore.

To thee, O Holy One, we pray,
 our judge in that tremendous day,
 ward off, while yet we dwell below,
 the weapons of our crafty foe.

To God the Father, God the Son
 and God the Spirit, Three in One,
 praise, honour, might and glory be
 from age to age eternally.

The Third Reading - from John 1: 1 - 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.
⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a

witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 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.

Hymn No. 139 (Gabriel's Message)

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;

'All hail', said he, 'thou lowly maiden
Mary,
most highly favoured lady'.

Gloria!

'For known a blessed mother thou
shalt be,
all generations laud and honour thee,
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers
foretold;

most highly favoured lady.

Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her
head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God', she said,
'my soul shall laud and magnify his holy
name':

most highly favoured lady.

Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the
world will ever say

'Most highly favoured lady'.

Gloria!



Reflection

A Liturgy of Remembering

(using the Candles on the Advent Wreath)

This first candle we light to
remember those whom we have loved
and lost. We pause to remember
their name, their face, their voice,
the memory that binds them to us in
this season.

[Silence]

***May God's eternal love surround
them.***

This second candle we light to redeem
the pain of loss; the loss of

relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health. We pause to gather up the pain of the past and offer it to God, asking that, from God's hands, we may receive the gift of peace.

[Silence]

***Refresh, restore, renew us O God,
and lead us into your future.***

This third candle we light to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause to remember these past weeks, months, or maybe even years; the deep emotions we have felt, the pain we have suffered, the disbelief we have endured, and all who have stood with us. We give thanks for all the support we have known.

[Silence]

***Let us remember that dawn defeats
darkness.***

Our fourth candle is lit to remember our faith and the gift of hope which the Christmas story offers to us. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

[Silence]

***Let us remember the one who shows
the way, who brings the truth, and
who bears the light.***



Greensleaves (Hymn No. 202) - Musical Reflection

Prayers of the People

In the spirit of this season let us now confidently ask God for all the things we need;

For ourselves as we participate in whatever way we can this Christmas. God hear our prayer....

and in your mercy answer.

For our families and friends that they may continue to help and support us.

God hear our prayer....

and in your mercy answer.

For the person we have loved that has died. For all the losses that we know, that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise.

God hear our prayer....

and in your mercy answer.

For all our family and friends that
they may know love and peace and
happiness in you.

God hear our prayer....

and in your mercy answer.

For the peace proclaimed by the
Christmas angels, to come
throughout the whole world.

God hear our prayer....

and in your mercy answer.

God of great compassion and love,
listen to the prayers of these your
people. Grant to all, especially the
bereaved and troubled ones this
Christmas, the blessing we ask in the
name of Christ who taught us to pray
together saying:

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 for ever and ever.*

Amen.

Hymn No. 170 (Gartan 1)

Love came down at Christmas,
love all lovely, Love divine;

love was born at Christmas,
star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,

love incarnate, Love divine;

worship we our Jesus:

but wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,

love be yours and love be mine,

love to God and all men,

love for plea, and gift and sign.

Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you;
may the wind be always at your back;
may the sun shine warm upon your
face

and the rain fall soft upon your fields;

and until we meet again,

may God hold you in the palm of his
hand.

And the Blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy
Spirit,

be with you, and those whom you love,

this Christmas-time and for

evermore. *Amen.*

The Dismissal

God of promise, God of wisdom,
we will walk with you.

God of justice, God of integrity,

we will walk with you.

God of mystery, God of glory,

we will walk with you.



Forthcoming Services

DUE TO THE RESTRICTIONS AND GUIDELINES WITH REGARD TO WORSHIP IN CHURCHES DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, THOSE ATTENDING SERVICE OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD MUST BOOK IN BY EMAILING, TEXTING OR PHONING THE RECTOR.

Wednesday 23rd December 2020

10.30 Holy Communion – St Thomas’ Church

Thursday 24th December 2020 - Christmas Eve

21.30 The First Holy Communion of Christmas – St Thomas’ Church

This service is fully booked

23.30 Holy Communion - St Philip and St James’ Church (live-streamed)



Friday 25th December 2020 – Christmas Day

8.30 Holy Communion - St Thomas’ Church

10.30 Family Holy Communion – St Philip and St James’ Church (live-streamed)
This service is fully booked

Sunday 27th December 2020

8.30 Holy Communion - St Thomas’ Church

10.30 United Service of the Word - St Philip and St James’ Church (live-streamed)

*Unto Us
a Child is Born*

