



CHRIST CHURCH, DARTMOUTH

An inclusive church welcoming everyone

THE ORDER FOR EVENING PRAYER

The Book of Common Prayer

December 24, 2021

By the fourth century, Christians had adapted the Roman festival at the winter solstice as a day to celebrate the incarnation of God in Jesus. Christ is the Sun, bringing light and life to the world.

Sentence

I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day a Saviour, Christ the Lord. Luke 2: 10-11

Introit: Once in Royal David's City CP 123

Officiant: Christ has brought us out of darkness:

People: **to live in his marvellous light.**

Brothers and sisters in Christ, welcome to Christ Church this evening. We have come together in the presence of God to rejoice in the gift of Jesus to us as the light of the world, to hear and receive the story and message of the coming of Christ, and to offer to God our thanksgiving in prayer and song.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

Reader 1: We light the Christ Candle to symbolize God's promise fulfilled.

Reader 2: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to all on whom his favour rests.

All: **Blessed be the name of the Lord.**

Prayer said together: **Living God, on this holy night we gather—to stand with shepherds, amazed at your glory; to sing with angels, rejoicing in your work; to wait with Joseph, trusting in your promise; to sit with Mary, cradling your love. May the good news of this night inspire us to tell the world of our great joy: for to us is born a Saviour, the Messiah, the Lord. Glory and praise to you forever! Amen.**

(All candles are lit.)

Gathering Hymn: O Come All Ye Faithful CP 118

DEARLY beloved, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy.

And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.

Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace.

A general Confession to be said of the whole Congregation with the Minister, all kneeling.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

*The Absolution, or Remission of sins, to be pronounced by the Priest alone, standing:
the people still kneeling.*

ALMIGHTY God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness, and live, hath given power and commandment to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins.

He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.

Wherefore we beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy; so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*The people shall answer here, and at the end of all other prayers:
Amen.*

Here the Lord's Prayer may be said; the people repeating it with the Minister.

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 them that 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.

Minister. O Lord, open thou our lips;

People. And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Minister. O God, make speed to save us;

People. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Here, all standing up, the Minister shall say:

GLORY be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

People. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Minister. Praise ye the Lord;
People. **The Lord's Name be praised.**

The Proclamation of the Word

The Old Testament: 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 Counselor, 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 onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

MAGNIFICAT. ST. LUKE 1:46

MY soul doth magnify the Lord, / and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded / the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth / all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me; / and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him / throughout all generations.
He hath showed strength with his arm; / he hath scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat, / and hath exalted the humble and
meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things; / and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy / hath holpen his servant Israel;
As he promised to our forefathers, / Abraham and his seed for ever.

GLORY be to the Father, and to the Son, / and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, / world without end. Amen.

Psalm 96 *Cantate Domino* *read responsively by the verse*

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.

**Sing to the Lord and bless the divine name; proclaim the good news of our salvation
from day to day.**

Declare the glory of the Lord among the nations and the wonders of God among all
peoples.

For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, more to be feared than all gods.

As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; but it is you, O Lord, who made
the heavens.

Oh, the majesty and magnificence of your presence! Oh, the power and the splendour of your sanctuary!

Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; ascribe to the Lord honour and power.

Ascribe to the Lord the honour due the divine name; bring offerings and come into the courts of the Lord.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth tremble before God. **Tell it out among the nations: “The Lord reigns! The Lord who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity.”**

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein. **Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord who is coming, who is coming to judge the earth.**

The Lord will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with truth. Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.

Second Reading: Titus 3:4-7

The reading proclaims, not baby Jesus, but the triune God: God in Christ has given us the Holy Spirit. The fruits of Christmas come to us in baptism. Christ is God born among us.

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Gradual Hymn: Angels We Have Heard on High

The Gospel: Luke 2: 8-20 *All stand as able for the Gospel as able.*

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 Savior, 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 favors!”

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.

Then shall be said or sung the Confession of the Faith, called the Apostles' Creed.

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen.

And after the Creed these prayers following, all devoutly kneeling, the Minister first pronouncing:

The Lord be with you;
People. And with thy spirit.
Minister. Let us pray.
Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon 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 them that trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

(In joy and humility let us pray to the creator of the universe, saying, **“Hear our prayer.”**)

Leader: Let us pray to Jesus our Saviour. Christ, born in a stable, give courage to all who are homeless. Jesus, Saviour,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Leader: Christ, for whom the angels sang, give the song of the kingdom to all who weep. Jesus, Saviour,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Leader: Christ, worshipped by the shepherds, give peace on earth to all who are oppressed. Jesus, Saviour,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Leader: Christ, before whom the wise people knelt, give humility and wisdom to all who govern. Jesus, Saviour,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: Christ, whose radiance filled a lowly manger, give the glory of your resurrection to all who rest in you. Jesus, Saviour,

People: hear our prayer.

All: Jesus, Saviour, child of Mary, you know us and love us, you share our lives and hear our prayer. Glory to you for ever. Amen

Then the Priest standing up shall say:

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;

People. And grant us thy salvation.

Priest. O Lord, save the Queen;

People. And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Priest. Endue thy Ministers with righteousness;

People. And make thy chosen people joyful.

Priest. O Lord, save thy people;

People. And bless thine inheritance.

Priest. Give peace in our time, O Lord;

People. And evermore mightily defend us.

Priest. O God, make clean our hearts within us;

People. And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Christmas Collect (said together) God of promise, from ancient times you have sustained your people. With Mary and Joseph, teach us to treasure in our hearts the birth of Jesus, and with shepherds and angels, lead us to praise the holy Child of Bethlehem in whose name we pray. Amen. *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers 2002 alt.*

The Second Collect, for Peace.

O GOD, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that our hearts may

be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

The Third Collect, for Aid against all Perils.

LIGHTEN our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer of Saint Chrysostom.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests: Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

Sermon: The Rev. Dr. Kyle Wagner “And Love Came Down”

2 Corinthians 13:14.

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Sharing of Christ’s Light: Silent Night CP 119

As we sing the tapers are lit. Please pass the light along

Closing Prayer (said together, please stand as you are able) **God of all, tonight you have united earth and heaven in sending your Son to take our human nature. May we who have tasted heavenly things share in the life of his eternal kingdom. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Blessing

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of those that followed the star, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you all, forever more. *Amen.*

Hymn of Sending Forth: Hark! The Herald CP 138

Dismissal

Postlude: