Christ Church Cathedral

Oxford

25 December 2020

I I am Oxford Time
A very Happy Christmas and a warm welcome to Christ Church!

Welcome to this special service of Eucharist on Christmas Morning, as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Whether you are in the cathedral or at home, we are so glad to be worshipping with you. We pray that, in our worship, we may not only remember Jesus the Child of Bethlehem, but meet him in the words of Scripture and the breaking of the bread.

Please join in the prayers and responses marked in bold. Those in the cathedral may not join in with the singing, but if you are at home you may sing as joyfully as you wish! Feel free to sit, stand or kneel, as you find most comfortable.

Our president this morning is the Sub Dean, the Reverend Canon Richard Peers; our preacher is the Bishop of Oxford, the Right Revd Dr Steven Croft.

A very happy Christmas from everyone at Christ Church Cathedral. May God come to meet you in this act of worship and bless you, your families and all those you love today, this Christmastide and always.

Organ Music before the Service
played by Benjamin Sheen, Sub Organist

Prelude and Fugue in C, BWV 545
J S Bach (1685–1750)
The Holy Boy
John Ireland (1879–1962)

Setting of the Eucharist
Missa octo vocum
Hans Leo Hassler (1564–1612)
The Sub Dean will welcome the people just before the service begins.

Please stand when the Clergy enter. The Deacon carries the Book of the Gospels in procession and places it on the High Altar.

President
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All
Amen.

The Greeting

President
The Lord be with you

All
and also with you.

The President welcomes the People and introduces the service. We remain standing and pray together:

Prayers of Penitence

Deacon
Hear the words of the angel to Joseph: ‘You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’

Therefore let us seek the forgiveness of God through Jesus the Saviour of the world.

Please sit or kneel. A time of silent reflection is kept.

All
Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.
Absolution

President  May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive us our sins
and make us holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All     Amen.

Please stand. The choir sings Gloria: the song of the angels at the birth of Jesus.

Gloria in Excelsis

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax
hominibus bonæ voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriæ tuam,
Domine Deus, Rex cœlestis,
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.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus;
tu solus Dominus;
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

Gloria 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.
President Let us pray.

Silence is kept.

President Almighty God,
you have given us your only-begotten Son
to take our nature upon him
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:
grant that we, who have been born again
and made your children by adoption and grace,
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;
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.

All Amen.

Please sit.
First Reading
Isaiah 62:6–end (NRSV)

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have posted sentinels;
all day and all night they shall never be silent.
You who remind the Lord, take no rest,
and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem
and makes it renowned throughout the earth.
The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm:
I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies,
and foreigners shall not drink the wine for which you have laboured;
but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the Lord,
and those who gather it shall drink it in my holy courts.
Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way for the people;
build up, build up the highway, clear it of stones,
    lift up an ensign over the peoples.
The Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth:
Say to daughter Zion, ‘See, your salvation comes;
his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.’
They shall be called, ‘The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord’;
and you shall be called, ‘Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken’.

Reader  This is the word of the Lord.
All      Thanks be to God.

Second Reading
Titus 3:4–7  (NRSV)

A reading from the Letter to Titus.

But when the goodness and loving-kindness of God our Saviour 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 Saviour,
so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to
the hope of eternal life.

Reader  This is the word of the Lord.
All      Thanks be to God.
The choir stands to sing a carol. Please remain seated and listen to the music.

While the choir sings, the Deacon brings the Book of the Gospels in procession to the Crossing, to be read from among the people.

Carol

Ding Dong! merrily on high
In heav’n the bells are ringing
Ding, dong! verily the sky
Is riven with angel singing
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis.

E’en so here below, below
Let steeple bells be swungen
And i-o, i-o, i-o
By priest and people sungen
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis.

Pray ye dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers
May ye beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers.
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis.

Words: George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848–1934)

At the end of the carol, please stand for the reading of the Gospel.
Gospel Reading

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

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

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 Saviour, 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 favours!’

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.

Deacon  This is the Gospel of the Lord.
All  Praise to you, O Christ.
Please be seated for the sermon. Afterwards, there will be a short silence for reflection. Please stand when the Ministers stand and face East to join with the Nicene Creed.

The Creed

President      Let us declare our faith in God

All

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

The intercessions are led by the Revd Canon Graham Ward.

Minister Let us pray.

All sit or kneel.

After each bidding, this response is used:

Minister Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

The prayers conclude with:

Minister Merciful Father,

All accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Please stand.

The Peace

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

President The peace of the Lord be always with you

All and also with you.

Deacon Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Please do not move closer to those around you. However, please offer one another a sign of peace with a warm smile, nod or bow, and with the words ‘peace be with you,’ ‘the peace of the Lord,’ or similar.
Please sit as the altar is prepared, and stand if you are able for the prayer at the Preparation of the Table and the Eucharistic Prayer. The President will prepare the altar himself. The elements will remain covered throughout the Eucharistic Prayer.

**Offertory Carol**

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.

Then why should men 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?

When sin departs before his grace,
Then life and health come in its place;
Angels and men with joy may sing,
All for to see the new-born King.

All out of darkness we have light,
Which made the angels sing this night:
Glory to God and peace to men,
Now and for evermore. Amen.

**Words:** English traditional carol  
**Music:** English traditional,  

*The President takes the bread and wine.*

*President*  
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.
The Eucharistic Prayer

President        The Lord be with you
All               and also with you.

President        Lift up your hearts.
All               We lift them to the Lord.

President        Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All               It is right to give thanks and praise.

President        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*, the song of the angels in heaven:

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus  
*Holy, holy, holy*

Dominus Deus Sabaoth:  
*Lord God of hosts:*

pleni sunt cœli et terra gloria tua.  
*heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

Hosanna in excelsis.  
*Hosanna in the highest.*

Benedictus qui venit  
*Blessed is he who comes*

in nomine Domini.  
*in the name of the Lord.*

Hosanna in excelsis.  
*Hosanna in the highest.*

*President*  
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 the Blessed Virgin Mary, Joseph, Frideswide, Birinus, and 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

President
As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:
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.

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

Giving of Communion

President
Draw near with faith.
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you
and in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.
The congregation in the cathedral receives Communion. Wherever we are, Jesus promises to come to meet us: if we are unable to receive the bread and wine of Communion, Jesus will come to meet us in our hearts.

So we rest in the presence of Christ in us and all around us; trusting that wherever we are, however we are, whoever we are with, Jesus comes to us as he has promised. Jesus invites us to receive him in our hearts by faith; to unite our prayers and our wills with his; and to rest in his perfect and eternal love. Without physically eating and drinking, we yet receive his body and his blood by grace.

The choir sings Agnus Dei and you may wish to make this your prayer too: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us and grant us peace. Lamb of God, Prince of Peace, bring peace in all our pain. Lamb of God, child of Bethlehem, God with us: remain with us today and always.

**Agnus Dei**

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 sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.
President  Let us pray.

Please sit or kneel. Silence is kept.

All  

**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.
Please stand for the blessing.

President  Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
All  who has made heaven and earth.

President  Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
All  now and for ever. Amen.

President  May the joy of the angels,  
the wonder of the shepherds,  
the love of Mary and Joseph,  
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 upon you and remain with you always.

All  Amen.

Deacon  Go in the peace of Christ.
All  Thanks be to God.

Please follow the vergers’ directions as you leave the cathedral via Tom Quad and Tom Gate.

Organ Music after the Service

played by Felix Kirkby, Junior Organ Scholar

In dulci jubilo, BWV 729  J S Bach (1685–1750)
Merry Christmas!

May the light and peace of Christ remain with you, however your Christmas looks this year.

Whether you are a regular member of our congregations or not, we are always delighted to see you and would love to hear from you and pray for you. Please do keep in touch with us: to know what services are happening in person or online, to ask us to pray for you, or to become part of the community.

Email us on cathedral@chch.ox.ac.uk or get in touch via our website or social media.

www.chch.ox.ac.uk/cathedral — @ChChCathedralOx
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Cover picture: ‘The Virgin and Child with the Infant Saint John (JBS 76) Marco Bello (active early 16th C) (attributed to) © Christ Church Picture Gallery reproduced by permission of the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford.

Picture p. 17 The Oxford Madonna, sculpture by Peter Eugene Ball in the Lady Chapel of Christ Church Cathedral.