

*St Mary's*



*Midnight Mass*  
*24<sup>th</sup> December 2023*



*North Melbourne*

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## **CHRISTMAS TO EPIPHANY**

### **Welcome to St Mary's North Melbourne for this celebration of the birth of Our Lord.**

Christmas is the most joyous time of the Christian year, as we celebrate God coming to live amongst us in the form of Jesus Christ.

The date that Jesus was born is not known. However, St Luke's Gospel tells us that Jesus was born while Quirinius was Governor of Syria.

Christmas came to be celebrated by the Church on 25 December, the same day the pagan Romans celebrated the Winter Solstice, which symbolised the re-birth of the Sun. Since the fourth century, the Church has kept 25 December as the day to celebrate the birth of the Son of Righteousness – Jesus Christ.

Prior to the adoption of 25 December as the celebration of Christmas, Christians celebrated the birth of Jesus on 6 January – the day on which Epiphany is now observed. The word Epiphany means 'revelation' – for Christians in the Western Tradition, this is the day on which the Wise Men came to visit the infant Jesus. For many Christians in the Orthodox traditions, Christmas is celebrated on 7 January – the day after Epiphany.

The services of Christmas and Epiphany are enjoyed for the cheerful singing of well-loved Christmas hymns, known as carols.

We hope that, through inspirational worship and beautiful music, you may be brought closer to God, and that you may have a happy and joyous Christmas with your hearts full of love and peace.

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## CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT SUNG EUCHARIST

*Please join us in singing the hymns and saying those parts of the service printed in **bold** type.*

*Please also join us in singing the musical sections of the Eucharistic rite: those parts where the musical notation is included in this Order of Service.*

*'Eucharist' means 'thanksgiving', and in our singing together through this service we hope you may be brought closer to the real presence of God.*

*Please note that incense is used during the Midnight Eucharist as a symbol of prayer and blessing.*

### **Celebrant and Preacher**

Rev'd Canon Jan Joustra

### **Organist**

Beverley Phillips, Director of Music

### **Choristers**

Members of St Mary's Choir

***Please ensure that your mobile phone is switched off.***

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## INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of the birth of Jesus calls us to question and reassess our values. We pray for the courage to do so. May our Christmas be filled with love: given and received unconditionally. May our lives reflect the unconditional love of our God, who has entered our lives with the birth of Jesus.

Christmas is not simply a time for rejoicing because of the birth of Jesus. It is a time for recalling that God has been made known to us in Jesus; and it is a time for recognising that we can find the lasting happiness we seek by trying to live and love as Jesus did.

*A bell rings as a signal for all to stand as the service begins*

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

TIS 304

**O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him, born the King of Angels:**

### *Refrain*

*O come let us adore him  
O come let us adore him  
O come let us adore him  
Christ the Lord.*

**God of God, Light of Light,  
Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Very God, Begotten, not created:  
*O come ....***

*Words: JF Wade (1711-1786)  
arranged by Sir David Willcocks CBE MC (1919-2015)*

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## THE BLESSING OF THE CRIB

Dear friends, as we meet to celebrate the birth of Christ, let us pray that God will bless this crib, that all who worship his Son, born of the Virgin Mary, may come to share his life in glory.

God our Father, on this night your Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary for us and for our salvation; bless this crib which we have prepared to celebrate that holy birth;  
may all who see it be strengthened in faith, and receive the fullness of life he came to bring; who is alive and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,  
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;  
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps:  
*O come ....***

**Child, for us sinners, poor and in the manger,  
Fain we embrace thee, with love and awe;  
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?  
*O come ....***

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;  
Glory to God in the highest:  
*O come ...***

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:  
*O come...***

*Words: JF Wade (1711-1786)  
arranged by Sir David Willcocks CBE MC (1919-2015)*

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## THE GREETING

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

**Amen.**

Peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF PREPARATION

**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.**

## INVITATION TO 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.

*Silence is kept*

Lord of grace and truth, we confess our unworthiness  
to stand in your presence as your children.

We have sinned:

**Forgive and heal us.**

The Virgin Mary accepted your call to be the mother of Jesus.

Forgive our disobedience to your will.

We have sinned:

**Forgive and heal us.**

Your Son, our Saviour, was born in poverty in a manger.

Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

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We have sinned:  
**Forgive and heal us.**

The shepherds left their flocks to go to Bethlehem.  
Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision.

We have sinned:  
**Forgive and heal us.**

The Wise Men followed the star to find Jesus the King.  
Forgive our reluctance to seek you.

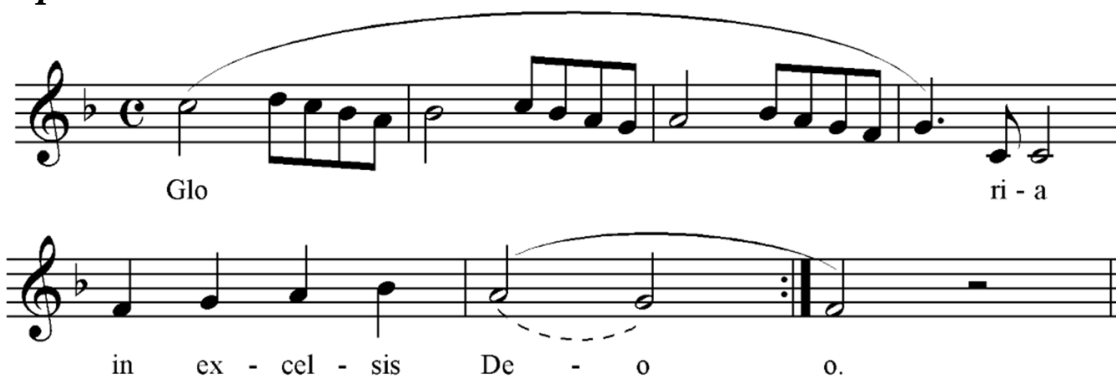
We have sinned:  
**Forgive and heal us.**

### THE ABSOLUTION

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.**

### GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

*Response:*



Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.  
**Response**

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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.

**Response**

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.

**Response**

THE COLLECT

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.

THE FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

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



Counsellor, 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 onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

*Isaiah 9.2-7*

For the word of the Lord:  
**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM 96**

**TIS 54**

C. Willcock



**Response:**

O sing a new song to the Lord, sing to the Lord all the earth.  
O sing to the Lord, bless the Lord's name. **Response**

Proclaim God's mercy day by day. Tell the Lord's glory among the nations, and wonders among the peoples. **Response**

Let heaven and earth rejoice and be glad, the sea and its creatures thunder praise, the land and its fruit show forth their joy. **Response**

Let trees and forests shout for joy at the presence of God, for the Lord is come, at the presence of God who rules the earth. **Response**

*tr. from The Psalms, A New Translation (1989)  
Psalm verses by permission A. P. Watt, London*

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## THE SECOND READING

A reading from the letter to Titus.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

*Titus 2.11-14*

For the word of the Lord:

**Thanks be to God.**

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

TIS 316

- 1. O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see you lie!  
Above your deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by:  
yet, in your dark streets shining  
the everlasting light,  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in you tonight.**
- 2. For Christ is born of Mary;  
and, gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep the angels keep  
their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together  
proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King  
and peace to all on earth.**

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**3. How silently, how silently  
the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming;  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still  
the dear Christ enters in.**

**4. O holy child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin and enter in,  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
their great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Immanuel.**

Phillips Brooks 1835–93 *alt.*  
Adaptation and arrangement from the *English Hymnal* by permission Oxford University Press  
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*Please turn to face the Gospel as it is proclaimed.*

#### GOSPEL READING

*Choir* Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.  
*All* **Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

*Choir* Good News and great joy to all the world:  
today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.  
*All* **Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

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A reading from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

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!’

*Luke 2.1-14*

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

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## THE SERMON

## THE CREED

Let us declare our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We proclaim the Church's faith in Jesus Christ.

**We believe and declare that our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Son of God, is both divine and human.**

God, of the being of the Father,  
the only Son from before time began;  
human from the being of his mother, born in the world;  
**fully God and fully human;  
human in both mind and body.**

As God he is equal to the Father,  
as human he is less than the Father.

**Although he is both divine and human  
he is not two beings but one Christ.**

One, not by turning God into flesh,  
but by taking humanity into God;  
**truly one, not by mixing humanity with Godhead,  
but by being one person.**

For as mind and body form one human being  
so the one Christ is both divine and human.

**The Word became flesh and lived among us;  
we have seen his glory,  
the glory of the only Son from the Father,  
full of grace and truth.**

*from the Athanasian Creed*

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## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given. Wonderful Counsellor, give your wisdom to the leaders of the nations. We pray for those who seek to bring peace and justice to your people. We pray that you will turn the hearts of all those who make for war.

Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Mighty God, make the whole world know that the government is on your shoulders. We pray for our political leaders and we pray for wise government.

Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Everlasting Father, establish your reign of justice and righteousness for ever. We pray for all who suffer in this world because of war, civil strife, persecution and poverty. We pray for all agencies of healing, praying especially for the work of the United Nations and all its agencies.

Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Prince of Peace, bring in the endless kingdom of your peace. We particularly pray for the peoples of the Holy Land, Palestinians and Israelis, Christians, Jews and Muslims that they may be a sign of reconciliation to the world and live together in your peace.

Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Holy God, bring us all to your heavenly city, to the joyful gathering of thousands of angels, to the assembly of your first born, to the spirits of good people made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant and to the sprinkled blood that promises peace.

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers:

**Grant that what we have asked in faith, we may by your grace receive, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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## 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.

## OF THE FATHER'S LOVE

TIS 290

1. **Of the Father's love begotten  
ere the worlds began to be,  
he is Alpha and Omega,  
he the source, the ending he,  
of the things that are, that have been,  
and that future years shall see  
evermore and evermore.**
2. **O that birth for ever blessèd  
when the virgin, full of grace,  
by the Spirit's power conceiving  
bore the saviour of our race,  
and the babe, the world's redeemer,  
first revealed his sacred face,  
evermore and evermore.**
3. **This is he whom seers and sages  
sang of old with one accord,  
whom the voices of the prophets  
promised in their faithful word;  
now he shines, the long-expected:  
let creation praise its Lord  
evermore and evermore.**

- 
- 4. In the heights of heaven adore him,  
angel hosts his praises sing,  
all dominions bow before him  
and extol our God and king;  
let no tongue on earth be silent,  
every voice together sing  
evermore and evermore.**

#### THE PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

Blessèd are you, Lord God of all creation:  
through your goodness we have this bread to offer,  
which earth has given and human hands have made.  
It will become for us the bread of life.  
**Blessèd be God for ever.**

Blessèd are you, Lord God of all creation:  
through your goodness we have this wine to offer,  
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.  
It will become for us the cup of salvation.  
**Blessèd be God for ever.**



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## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

**Sursum Corda**

*Celebrant*                      *People*

The Lord be with you.      And al - so with you.

*Celebrant*                      *People*

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

*Celebrant*                      *People*

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

All glory and honour, thanks and praise be given to you at all times and in all places, Lord, holy Father, true and living God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. For he is your eternal Word through whom you have created all things from the beginning and formed us in your own image.

In your great love you gave him to be made man for us and to share our common life.

In obedience to your will your Son our Saviour offered himself as a perfect sacrifice, and died upon the cross for our redemption. Through him you have freed us from the slavery of sin and reconciled us to yourself, our God and Father.

He is our great high priest whom you raised from death and exalted to your right hand on high where he ever lives to intercede for us.

Through him you have sent upon us your holy and life-giving Spirit and made us a royal priesthood called to serve you for ever.

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

**Sanctus** *f*

Ho - ly, — ho - ly, ho - ly — Lord,

God of — power and might. Hea - ven and earth are

full of your glo - ry. Ho - san-na in the high - est. —

*mf* Bless - ed is he who comes in the name, comes in the

*easing . . . f a tempo*

name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high -

est, Ho - san-na in the high - est. —

Merciful God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit, we who eat and drink them may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;  
and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples,  
saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.'

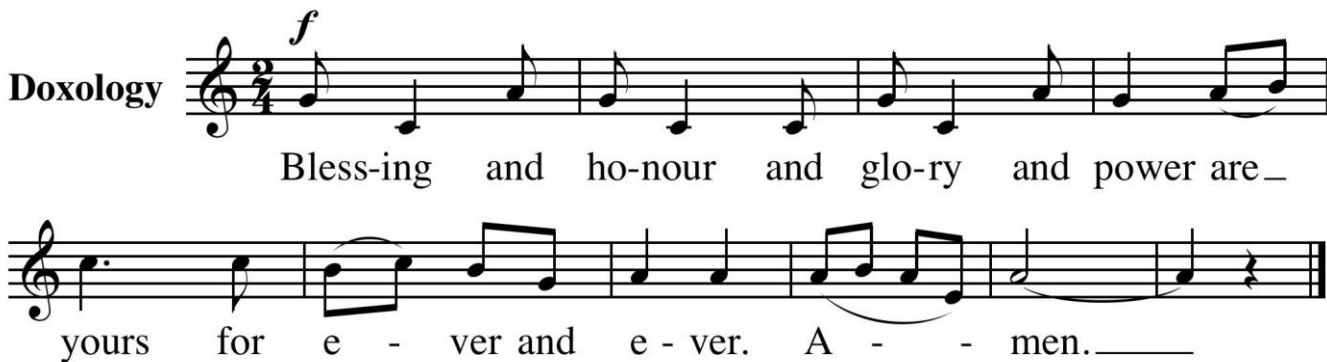
After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks  
he gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Drink from this, all of you.  
This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the  
forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

1. Choir; 2. ALL



Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded:  
proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross,  
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,  
and looking for his coming again,  
we celebrate, with this bread and this cup,  
his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.  
Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son,  
and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, and in whom,  
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
we worship you, Father, in songs of never-ending praise:



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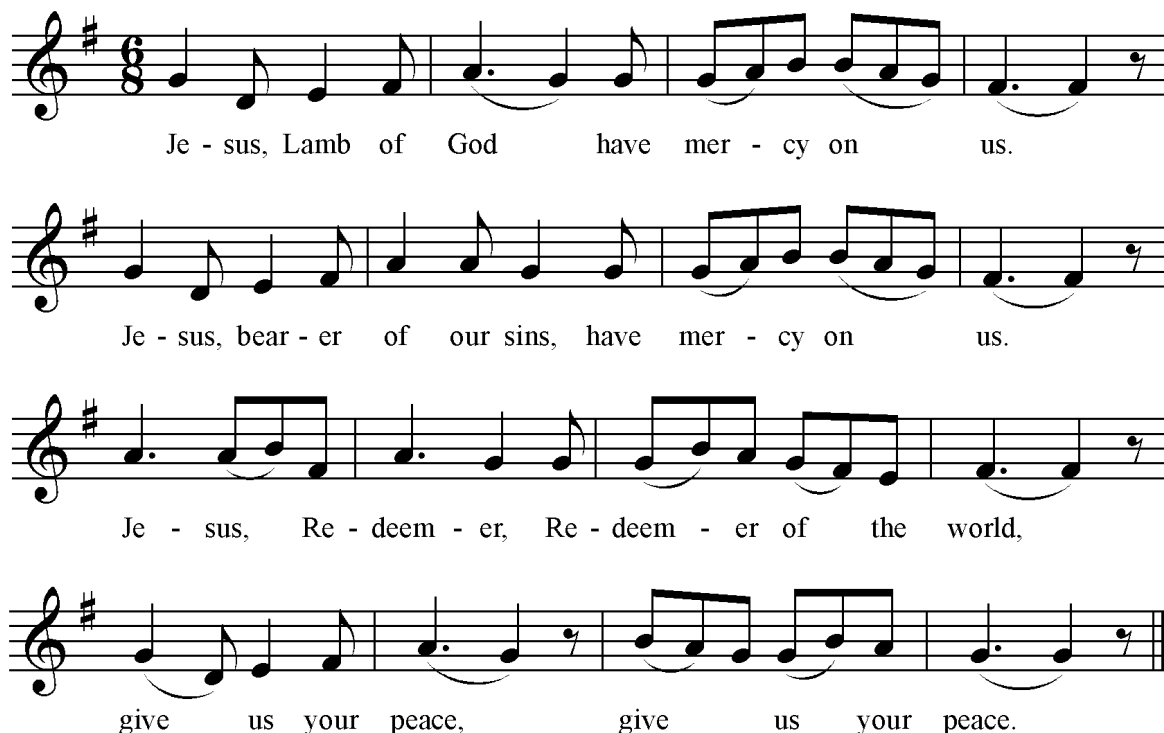
As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**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.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

### BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.  
We who are many, are one body:  
**for we all share in the one bread.**

### AGNUS DEI



Je - sus, Lamb of God have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, bear - er of our sins, have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, Re - deem - er, Re - deem - er of the world,

give us your peace, give us your peace.

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## GIVING OF COMMUNION

God's holy gifts for God's holy people.

**Jesus Christ is holy,  
Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.**

*God invites everyone to gather around his table. All are welcome to come forward and receive this Holy Sacrament, or a blessing.*

## ANTHEM

“Rejoice, rejoice, Jerusalem” Michael Praetorius  
Solo Recorder: Andrea Sherko

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God our Father, in this night you have made known to us again the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him until the day dawns and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts. To him be glory both now and for ever.

**We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples. Amen.**

Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattle shed  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven  
who is God and Lord of all,  
and his shelter was a stable,  
and his cradle was a stall;  
with the poor, and mean, and lowly  
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all his wondrous childhood,  
day by day like us he grew;  
he was little, weak, and helpless,  
tears and smiles like us he knew;  
and he feeleth for our sadness,  
and he shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him,  
through his own redeeming love,  
for that child so dear and gentle  
is our Lord in heaven above;  
and he leads his children on  
to the place where he is gone.

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## 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.

**Amen**

## THE DISMISSAL

We go into the world to walk in God's light,  
to rejoice in God's love and to reflect God's glory.

**Amen! We go in the name of Christ!**

## POSTLUDE

### Acknowledgements:

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CHRISTMAS  
TIME