

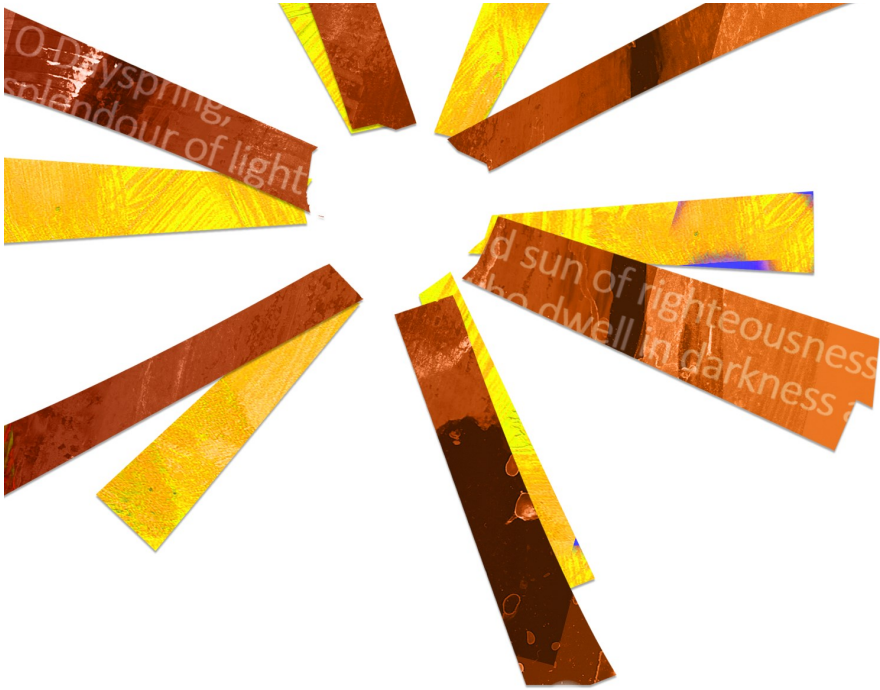


# Midnight Mass

Benefice Service of Holy Communion



Newbury, St George & St John



## About Christmas Eve

The celebration of Christ's incarnation at Christmas is one of the two poles of the Christian year. The wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, as Emmanuel, foretold by the prophets and born of Mary, provides the material of the feast:

*Hark, hark, the wise eternal word,  
like a weak infant cries!  
In form of servant is the Lord,  
and God in cradle lies.*

*(Thomas Pestel)*

Christmas Eve and Midnight Mass is a magical service bathed in the warming light of hope.

We are glad that you can join us this evening.

# Benefice Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve

## The Gathering

The presiding priest greets the people:

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

*Words of Welcome and Introduction*

## Blessing of the Crib

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. **Amen.**

## Prayer of Penitence

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.

*A short silence follows offering space for reflection.*

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.**

*The presiding priest says:*

May the God of all healing and forgiveness  
draw you to himself and cleanse you from all your sins,  
that you may behold the glory of his Son,  
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Gloria in Excelsis**

*We join in the angel's hymn of praise.*

Glory 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 on 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.

## **The Collect**

Let us pray

*The Collect is preceded by a short period of silent prayer.*

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 Liturgy of the Word**

### **First Reading**

*At the end:*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel Reading**

Alleluia, alleluia.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,  
and we have seen his glory.

**Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you,  
**and also with you.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *N*  
**Glory to you, O Lord**

*At the end:*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **Sermon or Presentation**

*A short period of silence for reflection may follow the sermon.*

## **The Creed**

*Together we affirm our faith;*

**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**

*Please sit or kneel as we pray*

*One of the responses below may be used at the end of  
each prayer.*

Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

*or*

Maranatha,  
**Come, Lord Jesus.**

*And at the end:*

Merciful Father,  
accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The lighting of the **Advent Wreath** candle takes place here [p.16]

## The Liturgy of the Sacrament

### The Peace

*Please stand as the presiding priest introduces the Peace with these or other suitable words:*

This holy night the angels sang,  
'Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to all in whom he delights.'

*Luke 2.14*

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

### Preparation of the Table

#### Taking of the Bread and Wine

*The altar is prepared and bread and wine are placed upon it.  
The presiding priest takes the bread and wine and praises God in these or similar words:*

Word made flesh, life of the world,  
in your incarnation you embraced our poverty:  
by your Spirit may we share in your riches.  
**Amen.**

*Alternative Form*



As the grain once scattered in the fields  
and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside  
are now reunited on this table in bread and wine,  
so, Lord, may your whole Church soon be gathered together  
from the corners of the earth  
into your kingdom.

**Amen.**

## **The Eucharistic Prayer**

[Eucharistic Prayer E]

*The presiding priest says:*

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.**

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:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died, he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.  
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

*Bells may be rung at this point.*

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
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.

*Bells may be rung at this point.*

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice  
made once for all upon the cross.  
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Praise to you Lord Jesus:  
**Dying you destroyed our death,  
rising you restored our life;  
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

*or*

Great is the mystery of faith:  
**Christ has died:  
Christ is risen:  
Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.  
Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
Saint George, Saint John and all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*The service continues with The Lord's Prayer, overleaf*

## The Lord's Prayer

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.  
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.**

Let us 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  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## Breaking of the Bread

*The presiding priest breaks the consecrated bread.*

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

*We say the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) as the bread is broken.*

**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.**

### **Giving of Communion**

*The presiding priest says this invitation to communion:*

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven.  
**Lord, give us this bread always.**

*The presiding priest says this invitation to communion:*

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

*The presiding priest and people receive communion.*

### **Prayer after Communion**

*Silence is kept.*

*The presiding priest says a Post Communion prayer*

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.  
**Amen.**

*Ending with;*

**Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out  
in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work  
to your praise and glory.  
Amen.**

## **The Dismissal**

*Notices are given.*

*The presiding priest uses this or another suitable blessing:*

## **The Blessing**

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,  
fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will.  
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**

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

## The Advent Wreath Liturgy



As we have waited through Advent, with longing for the coming of God, it is a time when we can reflect on what we desire for the world and ourselves; and how we might anticipate and prepare for that coming.

The Advent Wreath has three purple candles, reflecting the liturgical colour for Advent, with a pink candle for the Third Sunday (Gaudete—a name taken from the traditional antiphon of the Mass, ‘Rejoice in the Lord always’), when rose-pink vestments are traditionally worn. The first candle is lit on Advent Sunday and then one on each Sunday, with the white candle on Christmas Day.

There are several traditions about the meaning or theme of each candle. The scheme that accords best with the Common Worship Principal Service Lectionary is:

<b>Advent 1</b>	<b>The Patriarchs &amp; Matriarchs</b>
<b>Advent 2</b>	<b>The Prophets</b>
<b>Advent 3 (Gaudete Sunday)</b>	<b>John the Baptist</b>
<b>Advent 4</b>	<b>Mary, the God-bearer</b>
<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>The Christ</b>

*Each of the four Sundays reminds us of those who prepared for the coming of Christ;*

**The Patriarchs** (avot, אבות) **and Matriarchs** (imahot, אמהות)

Refer to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah and David - the ancestor in whose city Jesus was born.

**The Prophets** saw hope coming even in times of calamity. They help us reflect on the way the birth of the Messiah was 'foretold'.

**John the Baptist**, who, in the wilderness, proclaimed the coming of the Saviour.

**Mary**, who said 'yes' to God and so bore him in her womb, suffering the joys and pangs of motherhood.

*The prayers below reflect these four themes. One will be said each week as we light the Advent candles.*

*On Christmas Eve, as Christ is born, we say;*



## **Christmas Day**

God our Father,  
today the Saviour is born  
and those who live in darkness are seeing a great light.  
Help us, who greet the birth of Christ with joy,  
to live in the light of your Son  
and to share the good news of your love.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
the light who has come into the world.

**Lord Jesus, Light of light,  
you have come among us.  
Help us who live by your light  
to shine as lights in your world.  
Glory to God in the highest.  
Amen.**







# Advent & Christmas

Cover art. Orthodox Icon of the Nativity  
Advent Wreath section. John Hayward, *Annunciation*.  
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