



Christmas & Epiphany

Benefice Service of Holy Communion



Newbury, St George & St John

Welcome to St John the Evangelist

Welcome to St John's Church and to today's celebration of Holy Communion during Christmas and Epiphany season. This service is for everyone, and we hope that if you are new or visiting you will feel included and welcomed.

Children are always welcome at St John's and no one is too young to come to church. During all services there is a toddlers' area with books and soft toys, and if you need to 'find space' the parish room is open.

All are warmly invited to come for coffee after the 10.00am service.

It might also be helpful to know that ...

- A hearing loop is in operation for hearing aid users.
- Gluten-free communion wafers are available.
Speak to one of the welcome team.
- Toilets are near the baptistry and in the parish room

Christmas and Epiphany

The joyful celebrations that began on Christmas Day continue through the successive Sundays of Christmas season and Epiphany, and the festal cycle ends with the Feast of the Presentation of Christ at the Temple (Candlemas) where the child is recognised by faithful Simeon and Anna, as 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' and 'the glory of God's people Israel'. But the redemption he will bring must be won through suffering; the Incarnation is directed to the Passion; and Simeon's final words move our attention away from the celebration of Christmas and towards the mysteries of Easter.

Adapted from *Times & Seasons*,
The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England

Holy Communion (Common Worship)

The Gathering

Please stand at the entry of the ministers and choir. A minister welcomes us informally before the start of the service.

Silence is kept.

Hymn

The presiding priest greets the people:

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

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

The Prayer of Preparation is used.

**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.**

Prayer of Penitence

The grace of God has dawned upon the world
through our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own.
Let us confess our sins.

A short silence follows offering space for reflection.

**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.**

The presiding priest says:

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,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gloria in Excelsis

We join in the angels' 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.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

At the end:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

A Hymn or Psalm may be sung

Gospel Reading

All stand.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations
and believed in throughout the world.

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

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

The Creed

We stand to affirm our faith using the words of The Apostles Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

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

Lord of glory,
Hear our prayer.

And at the end:

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

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

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

Our Saviour Christ is the Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and of peace
there shall be no end.

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

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Hymn

Preparation of the Table

The altar table is prepared and bread and wine are placed upon it.

Taking of the Bread and Wine

The presiding priest takes the bread and wine and praises God in these or similar words:

Gracious God,
accept the offering of your Church,
the hearts of your people
joined in praise and thanksgiving,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Amen.

Alternative Form

Lord, accept your people's gifts,
not gold, frankincense or myrrh,
but hearts and voices raised in praise
of Jesus Christ, our light and our salvation.

Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer [Eucharistic Prayer B]

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.

Father, we give you thanks and praise
through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, your living Word,
through whom you have created all things;
who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our Saviour.

By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh;
as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin,
he lived on earth and went about among us;
he opened wide his arms for us on the cross;
he put an end to death by dying for us;
and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life;
so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.

And now we give you thanks
because, in the incarnation of the Word,
a new light has dawned upon the world,
that all nations may be brought out of darkness
to see the radiance of your glory.

Or for the Presentation of Christ at the Temple:

And now we give you thanks
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who shares your eternal splendour
and was presented in the Temple.
He was revealed by the Spirit as the glory of Israel,
that all peoples might find him,
the light of the world.
Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and *singing*:

**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.**

Please sit or kneel.

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 he gave up himself for us all
he 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.

Bells may be rung.

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.

Bells may be rung.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Or

Christ is the bread of life:

**When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.**

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,
Saint George 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 service continues with the Lord's Prayer on the next page.

The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us, 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.**

Breaking of the 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.**

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us, with confidence we pray as our Saviour 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.**

Or

We break the bread of life,
and that life is the light of the
world.
**God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.**

The presiding priest breaks the consecrated bread.

We sing or 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:

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

The presiding priest and people receive communion.

Prayer after Communion

Silence is kept. The presiding priest says a Post Communion prayer.

**Father of all, we give you thanks and praise
that, when we were still far off,
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us
so we and all your children shall be free
and the whole earth live to praise your name,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Dismissal

Notices

Hymn

Notices may be given.

The Blessing

The presiding priest uses a suitable blessing:

Christ the Son of God,
perfect in you the image of his glory
and gladden your hearts
with the good news of his kingdom;
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.

A Closing Liturgy for Candlemas

Recessional Hymn

As the altar party departs our candles are lit and we turn to face the font at the back of the Church.

Candlemas 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.**

Final Responsoy

Father, here we bring to an end our celebration of the Saviour's birth.
Help us, in whom he has been born, to live his life that has no end.

Here we have offered the Church's sacrifice of praise.

**Help us, who have received the bread of life,
to be thankful for your gift.**

Here we have rejoiced with faithful Simeon and Anna.

**Help us, who have found the Lord in his temple,
to trust in your eternal promises.**

Here we have greeted the light of the world.

**Help us, who extinguish these candles,
never to forsake the light of Christ within us.**

(candles are extinguished)

Here we stand near the place of baptism.

**Help us, who are marked with the cross,
to share the Lord's death and resurrection.**

Here we turn from Christ's birth to his passion.

Help us, for whom Lent is near, to enter deeply into the Easter mystery.

Here we bless one another in your name.

**Help us, who now go in peace,
to shine with your light in the world.**

Thanks be to God. Amen.



Icon of the Mother of God of Mount Athos, "Sweet Kissing"

Benefice of St George and St John 2021

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