



St Stephen with St John  
Westminster  
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# Celebration of the Eucharist

*Christmas Day*

*10am*



St Stephen's Westminster



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‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’  
says the Lord.  
**Now the Word is made flesh  
and laid in a narrow manger.**

From eternity to eternity you are God,  
**and now we see you  
as a newborn child.**

**Entrance Hymn:**

NEH 32

1. O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee to-night.

2. O morning stars, together  
proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King,  
and peace to men on earth;  
for Christ is born of Mary;  
and, gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wondering love.

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. Where children pure and happy  
pray to the blessèd Child,  
where misery cries out to thee,  
Son of the mother mild;  
where charity stands watching  
and faith holds wide the door,  
the dark night wakes, the glory breaks,  
and Christmas comes once more.

5. 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  
the great glad tidings tell:  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel.

**The Greeting**

*The president greets the people*

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

## 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 day 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.**

## Prayers 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.

*Silence is kept*

## The Confession

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.**

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

## Lighting of the final candle on the Advent Wreath

At last we light the candle  
kept new for Christmas day.  
This shines bright for Jesus,  
new-born, and here to stay.

**Christ is among us.  
The candles in the ring remind us  
that our Saviour will light up everything.**

## Gloria in Excelsis

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 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.**

## The Collect

Let us pray in the peace of this Christmas celebration  
that our joy in the birth of Christ will last for ever.

*Silence is kept*

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. **Amen.**

## Readings

*At the end the reader says*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Gradual Hymn:

**Funny kind of night, funny kind of day,  
tax collectors, child inspectors, all in disarray;  
funny kind of day, funny kind of night,  
royal kings and lesser things align with dark and light**

*To God in the highest, be glory which  
never ends, and on earth be peace and  
goodwill to all God's friends.*

**Funny kind of day, funny kind of night,  
babies cry, traditions die, and fear itself takes fright;  
country folk enquire what is right or wrong  
while above, in tongues of love, the sense is veiled in song:**

**Funny kind of night, funny kind of day,  
first begotten, half-forgotten treasure lies in hay;  
wise men on the move wonder what to bring,  
while innkeepers and light sleepers hear poor shepherds sing:**

## Gospel Reading

Today Christ is born: **Alleluia!**

Today the Saviour has come: **Alleluia!**

Today the angels sing on earth: **Alleluia! Glory to God in the highest.**

*When the Gospel is announced the reader says*

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

### The Creed

We believe in God the Father,  
God Almighty, by whose plan  
earth and heaven sprang to being,  
all created things began.  
We believe in Christ the Saviour,  
Son of God in human frame,  
virgin-born, the child of Mary  
upon whom the Spirit came.

Christ, who on the cross forsaken,  
like a lamb to slaughter led,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
he descended to the dead.  
We believe in Jesus risen,  
heaven's king to rule and reign,  
to the Father's side ascended  
till as judge he comes again.

We believe in God the Spirit;  
in one church, below, above;  
saints of God in one communion,  
one in holiness and love.  
So by faith, our sins forgiven,  
Christ our Saviour, Lord and Friend,  
we shall rise with him in glory  
to the life that knows no end.

### Prayers of Intercession

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Father, on this holy day your Son our Saviour  
was born in human flesh.  
Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

On this holy day there was no room for your Son in the inn.  
Protect with your love those who have no home  
and all who live in poverty.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

On this holy day Mary, in the pain of labour,  
brought your Son to birth.  
Hold in your hand all who are in pain or distress.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

On this holy day your Christ came as a light shining in the darkness.  
Bring comfort to all who suffer in the sadness of our world.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

On this holy day the angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.'  
Strengthen those who work for peace and justice in all the world.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

On this holy day strangers found the Holy Family,  
and saw the baby lying in the manger.  
Bless our homes and all whom we love.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

On this holy day heaven is come down to earth,  
and earth is raised to heaven.  
Hold in your hand all those who have passed through death  
in the hope of your coming kingdom.  
Holy God,  
**hear our prayer.**

Father, on this holy day angels and shepherds  
worshipped at the manger throne.  
Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary,  
Joseph and the saints through him  
who is your Word made flesh,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## ***The Liturgy of the Sacrament***

### **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.

*All may exchange a sign of peace*

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
 all seated on the ground,  
 the angel of the Lord came down,  
 and glory shone around.

‘Fear not,’ said he (for mighty dread  
 had seized their troubled mind);  
 ‘Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
 to you and all mankind.

‘To you in David’s town this day  
 is born of David’s line  
 a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
 and this shall be the sign:

‘The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
 to human view displayed,  
 all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,  
 and in a manger laid.’

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith  
 appeared a shining throng  
 of angels praising God, who thus  
 addressed their joyful song:

‘All glory be to God on high,  
 and on the earth be peace;  
 good-will henceforth from heaven to men  
 begin and never cease.’

### The Eucharistic Prayer

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

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

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

*The president praises God for his mighty acts and all respond*

**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.**

*The president recalls the Last Supper*

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died:**

**Christ is risen:**

**Christ will come again.**

*The prayer ends and all respond boldly* **Amen**

## **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 this day 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 forever. Amen.**

## **Breaking of the Bread**

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.**

## **Agnus Dei**

**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

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven.

**Lord, give us this bread always.**

*The president and people receive communion*

*All baptised and communicant members of any Christian church are welcome to receive Communion. If you do not wish to receive Communion, you are invited to come forward for a blessing, carrying this Order of Service.*

*Words of distribution are used and the communicant replies **Amen.***

## Communion Hymn:

NEH 28

1. In the bleak mid-winter  
frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron,  
water like a stone:  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
snow on snow.  
In the bleak mid-winter,  
long ago.

2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him  
nor earth sustain;  
heaven and earth shall flee away  
when he comes to reign:  
In the bleak mid-winter  
a stable-place sufficed  
the Lord God Almighty,  
Jesus Christ.

3. Enough for him, whom cherubim  
worship night and day,  
a breastful of milk  
and a mangerful of hay;  
Enough for him, whom angels  
fall down before,  
the ox and ass and camel  
which adore.

4. Angels and archangels  
may have gathered there,  
cherubim and seraphim  
thronged the air,  
but only his mother  
in her maiden bliss,  
worshipped the Beloved  
with a kiss.

5. What can I give him,  
poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb,  
if I were a wise man  
I would do my part,  
yet what I can I give him,  
give my heart.

## Post Communion Prayer

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.**

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*

Final Hymn:

NEH 30

1. 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:

*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

2. God of God,  
Light of Light,  
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Very God,  
begotten, not created:

6. Sing, choirs of Angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
Glory to God  
in the Highest:

7. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
born this happy morning,  
Jesu, to thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father,  
now in flesh appearing.

**The Blessing**

*The president uses this or another Christmas Blessing*

May the Father,  
who has loved the eternal Son  
from before the foundation of the world,  
shed that love upon you his children.

**Amen.**

May Christ,  
who by his incarnation gathered into one  
things earthly and heavenly,  
fill you with joy and peace.

**Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit,  
by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer,  
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

**Amen.**

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**

*A minister dismisses the people*

Go in peace.

Proclaim the Word made flesh.

**Glory, thanks and praise to God.**

### **Organ Voluntary**

*The Vicar and community  
of St Stephen's wish you  
a joyous Christmas  
and a very happy New Year!*