St Stephen with St John Westminster

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Midnight Mass
Celebrating the Birth of Christ, the Light of the World

Christmas Eve

11pm

St Stephen's Westminster

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Welcome all wonders in one sight!
Eternity shut in a span.
Summer in winter, day in night,
heaven in earth and God in man.

Great little one whose all-embracing birth
brings earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth.

Entrance Hymn: NEH 34

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him: but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high,
where like stars his children crowned,
all in white shall wait around.

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.

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

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.

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

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

Reading

At the end the reader says

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

Gradual Hymn: HON 251

1. Infant holy, Infant lowly,
for His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing,
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing,
noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.

2. Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story,
tidings of a Gospel true.
thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the Babe was born for you.

Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

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

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

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.

You may now extinguish your candles

The Sermon

The Creed

Let us affirm together our common faith in Jesus Christ.

**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

In peace let us pray to the Lord.
Father, in this holy night your Son our Saviour was born in human flesh.
Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.
Holy God
hear our prayer.

In this holy night 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.

In this holy night 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.

In this holy night 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.

In this holy night 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.

In this holy night shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy.
Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redemption.
Holy God
hear our prayer.

In this holy night 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.

In this holy night 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.

In this holy night Christians the world over celebrate Christ's birth.
Open our hearts that he may be born in us today.
Holy God
hear our prayer.

Father, in this holy night 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

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

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

Preparation of the Table

Taking of the Bread and Wine

Offertory Hymn: NEH 29

1. It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth,
to touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

2. Still through the cloven skies they come,
with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heavenly music floats
o all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing;
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessèd angels sing.

3. Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel-strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and man, at war with man, hears not
the love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing!

4. For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet bards foretold,
when, with the ever-circling years,
comes round the age of gold;
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

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, 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 president breaks the consecrated 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

Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us your peace.

OR

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

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

Music during the distribution of Communion:

The following carol may be sung

Communion Hymn: NEH 35

1. Silent night! Holy night!
Heaven is near, earth is bright,
angels songs are heard above
as the Child of peace and love
sleeps in Mary's arms,
sleeps in Mary's arms.

2. Silent night! Holy night!
Skies are clear, stars are bright,
now the shepherds wend their way,
homage to this Child to pay:
he is Christ the Lord,
he is Christ the Lord.

3. Silent night! Holy night!
Christ is here, all is light,
shadows of the past are gone
with the advent of the Son,
born to save us all,
born to save us all.

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. 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.

Final Hymn: NEH 26

1. Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled:

Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With the angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem:

Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb!
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel:

3. Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth:

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. **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.

The 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

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!

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