

St. Christopher's Church, Hinchley Wood

Sunday 19th December 2021 - Advent 4

A warm welcome to St Christopher's Church this morning. This is a hybrid Sunday Service as we join together with some of us in the church and others online in their homes.

Today is the 4th Sunday in Advent. On this Sunday we remember particularly Jesus' mother, Mary, and her response to God, and we pray that we too may respond to God with grace, obedience, and anticipation this Christmas.

Please join in with the words in **bold** print.

GATHERING

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

ADVENT CANDLE

We light the 4th candle on the Advent wreath:

People of God be glad!
Your God delights in you,
giving you joy for sadness
and turning the dark to light.
Be strong in hope therefore,
for your God comes to save.
You are God's children.

Lord, make us one in the love of Christ today and for ever. Amen

HYMN (634)

**The Angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.
'All hail', said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favoured lady.'** **Gloria**

**'For known a blessed mother thou shalt be.
All generations laud and honour thee.
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favoured lady.'** **Gloria**

**Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
'To me be as it pleases God' she said.
'My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name.'
Most highly favoured lady.'** **Gloria**

**Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn;
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
'Most highly favoured lady!'** **Gloria**

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CONFESSION

When the Lord comes,
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations
into the peace of your kingdom:

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

You come in word and sacrament
to strengthen us in holiness:

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

You will come in glory
with salvation for your people:

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy

ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us all to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,
so we wait for his coming in glory;
bring us through the birth pangs of this present age
to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

READING (Micah Chapter 5:2-5a)

A reading from the Prophet Micah

"Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in Judah, but out of you I will bring a ruler for Israel, whose family line goes back to ancient times." So the Lord will abandon his people to their enemies until the woman who is to give birth has her son. Then those Israelites who are in exile will be reunited with their own people. When he comes, he will rule his people with the strength that comes from the Lord and with the majesty of the Lord God himself. His people will live in safety because people all over the earth will acknowledge his greatness, and he will bring peace.

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

HYMN (740)

**When our God came to earth,
not for him noble birth;
he affirmed human worth
from a humble manger,
just another and stranger.**

***Let the poor rejoice!
Let the mute give voice!
Love is shown, God is known,
Christ is born of Mary.***

**Not for kings was the word
which the poor shepherds heard:
hope renewed, grace conferred,
and the hillside ringing
with the angels singing.**

Let the poor rejoice ...

**Bethlehem, humble town
where the babe wears the crown,
turns the world upside down:
God so unexpected,
homeless and rejected.**

Let the poor rejoice ...

**Let us sing Mary's song,
bringing hope, righting wrong,
heard with fear by the strong,
poor and humble raising,
God of justice praising.**

Let the poor rejoice ...

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GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Alleluia.

GOSPEL (Luke 1:39-55)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke
Glory to you, O Lord.

Soon afterward Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby moved within her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said in a loud voice, "You are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the child you will bear! Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord's mother comes to visit me? For as soon as I heard your greeting, the baby within me jumped with gladness. How happy you are to believe that the Lord's message to you will come true!"

Mary said, "My heart praises the Lord; my soul is glad because of God my Saviour, for he has remembered me, his lowly servant! From now on all people will call me happy, because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me. His name is holy; from one generation to another he shows mercy to those who honour him. He has stretched out his mighty arm and scattered the proud with all their plans. He has brought down mighty kings from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has kept the promise he made to our ancestors and has come to the help of his servant Israel. He has remembered to show mercy to Abraham and to all his descendants forever!"

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, O Christ

TALK

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us declare our faith
in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine, he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.**

Taking the form of a slave, he was born in human likeness.

**He humbled himself and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.**

Therefore God has raised him on high,

and given him the name above every name:

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

**and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

Amen

INTERCESSIONS

Between the prayers we say

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

At the end of the prayers we say

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

THE PEACE

God will speak peace to his people,
to those who turn to him in their hearts.

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

We offer a socially distanced sign of peace to one another

HYMN (508)

**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 tonight.**

**O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to all the earth.
For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.**

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

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!

Tune © OUP

PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

Look upon us in mercy not in judgement;
draw us from hatred to love;
make the frailty of our praise
a dwelling place for your glory.
Amen.

Look upon us in mercy not in judgement, draw us from hatred to love,
make the frailty of our praise a dwelling place for your glory.

Amen.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord is here
God's 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.

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,

through Jesus Christ your Son.
He is the one foretold by all the prophets,
whom the Virgin Mother bore with love beyond all telling.
John the Baptist was his herald
and made him known when at last he came.
In his love Christ fills us with joy
as we prepare to celebrate his birth,
so that when he comes again he may find us watching in prayer,
our hearts filled with wonder and praise.

And so, with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your glory,
and join in their unending 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.**

Lord God, you are the most holy one,
enthroned in splendour and light,
yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ
you reveal the power of your love
made perfect in our human weakness.

Embracing our humanity,
Jesus showed us the way of salvation;
loving us to the end,
he gave himself to death for us;
dying for his own,
he set us free from the bonds of sin,
that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

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.

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.

Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross,
we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb,
we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high
and we long for his coming in glory.

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption,
Father, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation
be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;
form us into the likeness of Christ
and make us a perfect offering in your sight.

Look with favour on your people
and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts.
Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free
and fill your Church with power from on high.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth
to feast with the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Christopher and all your saints
at the table in your kingdom,
where the new creation is brought to perfection
in 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 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**

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

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.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.

If you wish to receive holy communion please stand if you are able

The body of Christ

Amen

Holy Communion is distributed to those in the Church in silence

Prayer of Spiritual Communion (For those joining virtually)

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

COMMUNION HYMN (946)

Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas Deus ibi est.

(Where charity and love are, God is there.)

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POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary

to be the mother of the promised saviour:

fill us your servants with your grace,

that in all things we may embrace your holy will

and with her rejoice in your salvation;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Father in heaven,

Amen

NOTICES

HYMN (631)

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord;
unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name;
make known His might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy name, the Lord, the mighty one.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might;
powers and dominions lay their glory by;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word;
firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and forevermore.**

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BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you and those you love always.
Amen.

As we await our coming Saviour,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.