

The Parish Church of St Faith, Great Crosby

# *The Eucharist of* **Christmas Night**



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 is much more than simply the celebration of Jesus' birth, and neither of the great Christmas readings (Hebrews I and John I) is taken from the infancy narratives. The task of the liturgy tonight and throughout this season is to recall us, amid all the joyful customs and celebrations of Christmas, to this central truth of the Word who is made flesh for our salvation.

## *The Gathering*

### *Hymn*

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.

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

### *The 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 Blessed 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 forever.

**Amen.**

*There may be words of welcome, followed by a period of silent  
reflection.*

## *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.

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.

**Christ, have mercy.**

## *Absolution*

*The president pronounces God's love and forgiveness:*

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

*The Gloria*

*All sing or say:*

**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 forever.

*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 our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*The Liturgy of the Word*

*The Old Testament Reading*

*At the end of the Reading:*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Remain seated for:*

*The Psalm*

*Remain seated for:*

*The Epistle*

*At the end of the Reading:*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The Gospel*

Alleluia.

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

**Alleluia.**

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

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

*All Sit.*

*Sermon*

*The Creed*

Let us declare our faith in God.

**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.**

*The Prayers*

*All kneel or sit. Prayers of intercession and thanksgiving are offered.*

*The following response may be used:*

Leader: Holy God,

**Response: Hear our Prayer**

*At the end:*

Father, **in this holy night, angels and shepherds worshipped at the manger throne.**

**Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary, Joseph, St Faith and all 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 to 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.

### *Offertory hymn*

### *Preparation of the Table*

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

**Amen.**

### *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 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,  
and on this night 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 that 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.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;  
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
and according to your holy will, these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;  
who, in the same night that he was betrayed,  
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.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died;**

**Christ is risen;**

**Christ will come again.**

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, St Faith,  
the shepherds, the angels 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 Lord's Prayer*

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

*The 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 amongst 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 your peace.**

OR

**Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us;**

**Jesus, Bearer of our Sins, have mercy on us;**

**Jesus, Redeemer of the World, grant us peace.**

*Invitation to Communion*

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

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

*At the distribution of communion, the minister says to each communicant:*

The Body of Christ

The Blood of Christ

*and each responds: **Amen.***

## *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 forever. Amen.**

## *The Dismissal*

### *Hymn*

### *Blessing:*

May the who has loved the eternal Son 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.**

## *Dismissal*

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

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

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