



**BLACKBURN
CATHEDRAL**

The Cathedral
Eucharist
on
Christmas Eve

Tuesday 24 December, 2024

11.30pm

Welcome
to this evening's
service

The President
The Very Revd Peter Howell-Jones
The Dean

The Preacher is
Canon Jenny Gaffin
Precentor

The Deacon is
Canon James Lawrence
Missioner

The Subdeacon is
Dominic Eatwell

The service is sung by the
The Cathedral Youth Choir and Guests

Directed by
John Robinson and Helen Davies

The setting for the service is
Missa Sancti Joannis de Deo by Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

*Before the service, the congregation is
welcomed by Canon James Lawrence*

The Gathering

Please stand as the ministers enter.

Processional

DIVINUM MYSTERIUM



Of the Father's heart begotten
ere the world from chaos rose,
he is Alpha: from that fountain,
all that is and hath been flows;
he is Omega, of all things
yet to come the mystic close,
evermore and evermore.

By his word was all created;
he commanded and 'twas done;
earth and sky and boundless ocean,
universe of three in one,
all that sees the moon's soft radiance,
all that breathes beneath the sun,
evermore and evermore.

O how blest that wondrous birthday,
when the maid the curse retrieved,
brought to humankind salvation,
by the Holy Ghost conceived,
and the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
in her loving arms received,
evermore and evermore.

Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;
angels and archangels, sing!
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
let your joyous anthems ring,
every tongue his name confessing,
countless voices answering,
evermore and evermore.

*Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348-c.410) trans. Robert Furley Davis (1866-1937)
Melody from Piae Cantiones (1582) arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015).*

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.

The President places the image of the infant Jesus in the crib.

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.

Christ the light of the world
has come to dispel the darkness of hearts.
In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

After a short silence, the deacon says

Lord of grace and truth, we confess our unworthiness
to stand in your presence as your children.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

The Virgin Mary accepted your call to be the mother of Jesus.
Forgive our disobedience to your will.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

Your Son our Saviour was born in poverty in a manger.
Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

The shepherds left their flocks to go to Bethlehem.
Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

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.

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 – please remain standing

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.**

Please sit

The Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading

Read by Ceri Davies

(Isaiah 9.2-7)

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness –on them light has shined. You have
multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with
joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their
burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have
broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all
the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has
been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is
named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the
throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and
with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord
of hosts will do this.

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

The choir sings

Now the holly bears a berry
as white as the milk;
and Mary bore Jesus
who was wrapped up in silk:

*And Mary bore Jesus Christ
our Saviour for to be,
and the first tree in the green wood
it was the holly.*

Now the holly bears a berry
as green as the grass;
and Mary bore Jesus
who died on the cross;

Now the holly bears a berry
as black as the coal;
and Mary bore Jesus
who died for us all;

Now the holly bears a berry
as blood it is red;
then trust we our Saviour
who rose from the dead;

Sans Day Carol

trad. arr. John Rutter (b. 1945)

New Testament Reading

Read by Simon Mott

(Titus 2.11-14)

A reading from the letter of Paul to Titus.

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

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

Please stand to sing



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, good will to all
from heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

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

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 warring humankind hears not
the love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise of mortal strife,
and hear the angels sing.

Edmund Hamilton Sears (1810-1876)

The Gospel

(Luke 2.1-14)

The deacon says

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

There is a period of silence after the sermon for reflection

Please stand with the president

The Creed

Let us affirm 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.**

Please sit

The Prayers of Intercession

Led by Mihaela Mladin

Father, on 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.

On 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.

On 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.

On 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.

On 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.

On 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.

On 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.

On 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.

On 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, on 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.**

Please stand with the president

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.'

Luke 2.14

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

The deacon says

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Please do not move from your seat when offering a greeting



Please give what you prayerfully can. You may prefer to use the collection point or card reader on the way out. If you are a UK tax payer please use and sign the blue gift aid form provided on your chair. Alternatively, The Parish Giving Scheme is the easy way to give regularly to support the ongoing ministry of Blackburn Cathedral and you can find out more and sign up by using the QR code provided here.

Blackburn Cathedral's Parish Giving Scheme Code is: 030603001

Preparation of the Table

Please remain standing to sing the carol during which there will be a collection

Carol

MENDELSSOHN 26



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.*

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 us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
*Hark! the herald-angels sing
glory to the new-born King.*

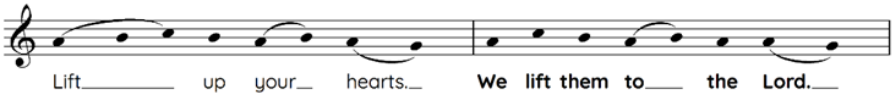
Hail, the heaven-born Prince of peace!
Hail, the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise those of the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald-angels sing
glory to the new-born King.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788) George Whitfield (1714-1770), Martin Madan (1726-1790) and others. Music by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47) v. 3 arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Taking of the Bread and Wine

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

Eucharistic Prayer



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 the glory of your name
and sing our joyful hymn of praise

The choir sings

Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine
Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name
of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ;
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood;

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.

Therefore, heavenly Father,
we remember now his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross;
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
and as we look for the coming of his kingdom,
we make with this bread and this cup
the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

The deacon says

Great is the mystery of faith.
**Christ has died: Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.**

Accept through him, our great high priest,
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise;
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts
in the presence of your divine majesty,
renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love
and unite us in the body of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
by whom and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty,
in songs of everlasting praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

As we join our prayers with those of the Church Universal, so we say, each in our own language, the prayer our Saviour taught us,

**Notre père, qui es aux cieux ... Missierna, li inti fis-smewwiet...
Vater unser im Himmel ... Padre nosso, que estais nos céus...
Padre nostro che sei nei cieli ... Ojczy nasz, któryś jest w niebie...
Otče náš, jenž jsi na nebesích ... ،الذي في السمّآوات...
Têve Mūsū, kuris esi danguje! ... Ein Tad, yr hwn wyt yn y nefoedd...
Tatal nostru care esti in ceruri ...**

**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, saying:

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 qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God you take away the sins of
the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God you take away the sins of
the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God you take away the sins of
the world, grant us peace.

The Giving of Communion

The president says

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

Lord, give us this bread always.

Communion is available in both kinds, and the minister distributing bread will say

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

After receiving the bread, if you wish to receive wine please move to the station near the central aisle, and return to your place by the central aisle of the Nave.

The minister distributing wine will say

The blood of Christ. **Amen.**

If you do not wish to receive communion wine, please walk past that second distribution point, and return to your place by the central aisle of the Nave.

While you are waiting to go for communion you may wish to sit down.

During communion

The choir sings

Clear in the darkness a light shines in Bethlehem:
angels are singing their sound fills the air.
wise men have journeyed to greet their Messiah;
but only a mother and baby lie there

‘Ave Maria, Ave Maria’;
hear the soft lullaby The angel host sing.
‘Ave Maria, Ave Maria’,
maiden and mother of Jesus our King’

Where are his courtiers and who are his people?
Why does he bear neither sceptre nor crown?
Shepherds his courtiers, the poor for his people,
with peace as his sceptre and love for his crown.

What though your treasures are not gold or incense
Lay them before him with hearts full of love.
Praise to the Christ child, and praise to his mother
who born us a Saviour by grace from above.

Words and music John Rutter (b. 1945)

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing
"Alleluia" to our King,
Christ, the Saviour is born,
Christ, the Saviour is born.

Words: Joseph Mohr (1792-1848)

Music: Franz Gruber arr. Dan Forrest (b.1978)

Prayer after Communion

Silence is kept.

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.

Please stand to sing

Final Carol

ADESTE FIDELES 30



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!*

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

*O come, let us adore him...
Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens of heaven above:
"Glory to God in the highest:"
O come, let us adore him....*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesu, to thee be glory given:
word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him....

*Adeste, fideles (Latin, 18th century) tr
Frederick Oakeley (1802-80)
and others.*

Melody arr. by David Willcocks (1919-2015)

The Dismissal

The president pronounces God's blessing

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ child
be yours this Christmas;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

The deacon says

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.
Glory, thanks and praise to God.

The Organ Voluntary

Carillon de Westminster

Jean-Marie Plum (1899 - 1944)

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We wish you a
Happy and blessed Christmas