

**BLACKBURN
CATHEDRAL**

The Cathedral Eucharist on Christmas Eve

Wednesday 24th December, 2025

11.30pm

Welcome to this evening's service

The President is
Canon James Lawrence
Missioner

The Deacon and Preacher is
Canon Andrew Horsfall
Interim Dean

The Subdeacon is
Dominic Eatwell

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

Directed by
Helen Davies

The setting for the service is
Little Organ Mass by Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

*Before the service, the congregation is
welcomed by Canon Andrew Horsfall*

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.

The President says

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 choir sings

The Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax
hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.

Domine Fili unigenite,
Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,
Filius Patris,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus,
Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu,
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

*Glory to God in the highest
and peace on earth
to those of good will.*

*We praise you, we bless you,
we worship you, we glorify you.
We give thanks to you
for your great glory.
O Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father Almighty.*

*O Lord the only-begotten Son,
Jesus Christ.
O Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father,
you that take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
You that take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
You who are seated at the right hand of
the Father, have mercy upon us.*

*For you alone are holy,
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 – 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 Simon Mott

(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

Though the road was long, the time drew near,
Heaven's king would soon appear.
Yet no bed prepared, no waiting crown.
Just a stable near the edge of town.
Here the child was born so far from home
To those humble travellers all alone
So they whispered low their soft amen
On that lonely night in Bethlehem.
Come behold the shepherds oft unseen
Chosen first to look, though rough, unclean.
'Tis the Christ! Now peace on earth begins.
He will save his people from their sins.
See our Mighty God has done great things!
Here the angel hosts his glories sing,
And repeat the sounding joy again
On that holy night in Bethlehem.
You are worthy, Jesus, Lord of all
Stooping down to grace that cattle stall.
You did not recoil to meet us there,
All our weakness, shame and grief to bear.
So bring down the mighty from their seat,
Gently lift the humble to their feet,
That we all would at your manger bend
To behold that sight in Bethlehem.

Erik Dewar (b.1990) and Dan Forrest (b.1978)

New Testament Reading

Read by Camilla Hadcock

(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

Carol

NOEL



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.

E. H. Sears (1810-1876)

The Gospel

(Luke 2.1-14)

The deacon says

Alleluia. Alleluia. The Word became Flesh and dwelt among us.
And we beheld its glory.

Alleluia.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

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

Canon Andrew Horsfall

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 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.

All may exchange a sign of peace. During the offertory hymn a collection is taken, 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 taxpayer, please use the blue gift aid form provided. If you would prefer to give online, please visit blackburncathedral.co.uk/donate

Preparation of the Table

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



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.*

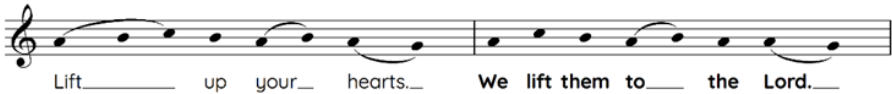
Hail, the heaven-born Prince of peace!
Hail, the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise those of the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald-angels sing
glory to the new-born 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 ... Ojczcie nasz, któryś jest w niebie...
Otče náš, jenž jsi na nebesích ... الذي في السموات...
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 side aisle and return to your place by the side 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 hosts 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

*Ave Maria, ave Maria
Hear the soft lullaby the angel hosts sing!
Ave Maria, ave Maria
Maiden and Mother of Jesus our King.*

What though yourb 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 bore us a Saviour by grace from above.

*Ave Maria, ave Maria
Hear the soft lullaby the angel hosts sing!
Ave Maria, ave Maria
Maiden and Mother of Jesus our King.*

John Rutter (b.1945)

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

Postlude on “Adeste Fidelis”

Eric Thiman (1900 – 1975)

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We wish you a
Happy and Blessed Christmas