

St Andrew's Church, Bedford



MIDNIGHT MASS

Welcome!

The celebration of Christ's incarnation at Christmas is one of the two main festivals of the Christian year, along with Easter. We rejoice in the wonderful mystery of God dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, as Emmanuel:

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. We remember the powerful truth that this baby, born of Mary, is the Word made flesh for our salvation. For this reason, unlike the secular Christmas, which is all over by 27th December, we continue to celebrate the birth of God incarnate until Candlemas on 2nd February.

How to follow the various parts of the service:

You can use this booklet to follow the service. The following symbols will help you to stand, sit or kneel at the times which are usual in this church; if you find it more comfortable to sit throughout, please do so.



The numbers of today's hymns can be found on the hymn boards
or on the pew sheet.



Please stand as the lights are dimmed and the ministers process the Christ-child to the crib, led by the Pascal Candle.

The Greeting

The Lord be with you
All **and also with you.**

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.

All **Amen.**



Lighting the Christmas Candle

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, King of peace: to you be praise and glory for ever.

The new light of your incarnate Word gives gladness in our sorrow, and a presence in our isolation.

Fill our lives with your light, until they overflow with gladness and praise. Blessed be God for ever.



Opening Hymn

Confession

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts.

Let us turn to the light 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.

All **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.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Spirit of Love,
your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:
forgive the hardness of our hearts.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**



Absolution

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive us our sins
and make us holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**



Gloria

All ***Glory to God, glory to God
Glory to God in the highest.***

**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.**



Collect

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.

All **Amen.**



Readings

At the end of each, the reader says

This is the Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**



Gradual Hymn



Gospel Reading

Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

All **Alleluia.**

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

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

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you O Christ.**

All **Alleluia.**



Sermon



Creed

All **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.



Intercessions

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

All **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

All **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

All **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

All **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

All **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

All **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

All **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

All **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

All **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.

All **Amen.**



The Peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All **and also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.



Offertory Hymn

Prayer over the Gifts

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

All **Amen**



Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord is here.

All **His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All **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 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:

All **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.



All

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 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.

All

Amen.



The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All

**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.



Breaking of the Bread

We break the bread of life,
and that life is the light of the world.

All **God is here among us,
light in the midst of us.
Bring us to light and life.**

**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.**



Invitation to Communion

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

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



Hymn

Anthem



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.

All Amen



All **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.



Blessing

The joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Mary and Joseph,
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.

All **Amen.**



Hymn

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
All **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

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