

The Gathering – first video

Welcome - [OLIVER]

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Welcome to St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow.

For the shepherds, seeing the Christmas miracle was believing. They had a first-hand encounter with the acts of God. Today, even in the midst of this pandemic, we can see something, too. Those sheltering in their homes alone this Christmas, those who have changed their travel plans—however inconvenient—and those who bear even more restrictions to their lives in favour of their neighbour give witness to that act of care and sacrifice long ago. God is love. Seeing is believing.

Collect for Purity - [FRANNY]

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Confession

[KELVIN] God is love and we are God's children.
There is no room for fear in love.
We love because God loved us first.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

[Silence]

God our Father, we confess to you and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ that we have sinned in thought, word and deed, and in what we have failed to do. We are truly sorry. Forgive us our sins, and deliver us from the power of evil, for the sake of your Son who died for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[OLIVER] God, who is both power and love, forgive you and free you from your sins, heal and strengthen you by the Holy Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gloria - [MAGNUS]

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 - [OLIVER]

We praise you, gracious God, for the glad tidings of peace, the good news of salvation: your Word became flesh, and we have

seen his glory. Let the radiance of that glory enlighten the lives of those who celebrate his birth. Reveal to all the world the light no darkness can extinguish, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in the splendour of eternal light, God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Ministry of the Word – second video

GOSPEL: Luke 2.8-20 – [AUDREY]

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

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 Savior, 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 favors!” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.
Praise to Christ our Lord.

Sermon [KELVIN]

She just stood there when I opened the door. She was socially distanced and wearing a mask and she said, "Name?"

Now I'd not been expected a delivery so this was unexpected.

"Holdsworth" I said.

"No." She looked at the package and shook her head and sighed. It had obviously been a long day.

"Other Name?"

"Kelvin" I said.

"No" she said, "I don't know where this belongs" and she turned to go away.

"Well. who are you looking for?" I asked, thinking it might be for one of the other flats in the tenement.

"I'm looking for Mr Veryrev" she said. "Where is Mr Veryrev?"

"Ah," I said, rather sheepishly thinking about the pantomime title that the church bestows upon those who run cathedrals, "I think that would be me".

"Ah! Great!" she said, "I'm looking for you"

Today we celebrate the feast in a way that we've never done before. The church building is closed. But we are here and Christmas isn't cancelled. God is come into this world. A baby in a manger.

Prophets foretold him but no-one expected him to come the way he did. And none of us really expected to be celebrating Christmas in the way we are doing this year.

And the thing is, when the prophets spoke of him they used plenty of fancy titles.

Wonderful. Counsellor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Basically the prophets told people to look out because Mr Very Rev was coming. Someone who was eminent, glorious, very reverend.

But it wasn't to turn out quite like that.

For no-one expected a baby. And no-one expected that it would be this baby either.

At the moment of his birth he had no titles and scarcely had a name. He wasn't grand. He came in a cow byre not a palace and though his mother would one day be called Queen of heaven, the truth is, she was a young mother whom most people wouldn't have looked at twice.

When we celebrate Christmas we are celebrating the idea that God has come into the world. That God is interested in the world. That God's saving grace is all around us. And that somehow, in an unlikely stable, an unlikely saviour was born, who was to change the world and who is still changing us and changing the world through us even now.

I have lost track of my own sorrows and losses this year. And to be honest, many people have lost far more than I have lost.

When I talk about God coming into the world at Christmas, I often talk about God coming to wipe every tear from every eye.

This year there are so many tears in so many eyes that it can seem difficult to focus on much other than our sorrows.

But the answer to sorrow isn't simply to keep repeating our sorrows. The answer to sorrow is love and it is the endless, vastness of love that preachers all over the world are trying to communicate to the sorrowful all over the world right now.

The nativity story is like so many of the Bible stories. It makes most sense if we read it in the context in which we find ourselves.

There were shepherds watching over the flocks by night.

And shepherds have watched over members of this flock by night this year in intensive care units.

Indeed, this congregation has within it those who have been cared for and those who have done the caring.

And there were magi from the East who observed the signs of the times and came in pilgrimage to Bethlehem to offer their rare gifts to the Christ Child.

And there are those whose wisdom has been the gift we needed this year. One of the thank offerings that I have as I pray at the moment is that I don't know how to put into words my gratitude for those who are bringing their scientific wisdom and knowledge to bear on our situation and who are following the path towards a vaccine which seems like a bright star on the horizon to which we are all drawn.

And there were Mary and Joseph – vulnerable new parents in a borrowed room.

For Christmas began with people finding themselves where they were not expecting to be, on their own instead of in the company of family or friends.

And all up and down this land this day there are people who are sharing the experience of the holy family of being somewhere strange and odd at Christmas.

And there were angels who said to everyone they encountered in the Christmas story, "Do not be afraid".

And there have been so many angels this year who have said time and time and time again to those who needed to hear it – Do not be afraid. Or who have communicated the same things in acts of kindness because words were too difficult to find.

The child in the manger wasn't grand, pompous or high and mighty.

Not Mr Very Reverend. Just a baby.

But a baby who reminds us every Christmas, no, every year, every month, every week, every day, that God's ways are the ways of love, joy and peace.

Sometimes we have known about love by the way our hearts have ached by not being able to be with those whom we want to be with.

That's one of the ways I've known love this year.

And that's sometimes the way people have described why God sent this child into the world in the first place – an action based on the heartache of not being there, not being right there in the presence of those whom God already loved.

My amazon delivery driver was desperate to find me to pass over the present that someone had unexpectedly ordered.

And God is in this world looking for each of us.

And you don't get that love by being very holy.

You don't get that love by being very good.

And you certainly don't get that love by being very reverend.

You get that love anyway.

God came to a stable to tell us exactly that...

"Ah great," God says at Christmas, looking beyond all our masks.

"I'm looking for you."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Intercessions [PAT]

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Eternal God, your Son our Saviour was born in human flesh.
Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.

Holy God hear our prayer.

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.

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.

Your Christ came as a light shining in the world.
Bring comfort to all who suffer in the sadness of our world.

Holy God hear our prayer.

The angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.'
Strengthen those who work for peace and justice

Holy God hear our prayer.

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.

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.

Heaven is come down to earth, and earth is raised to heaven.
Hold in your hand Gerald Mungavin and all those who have
passed through death

in the hope of your coming kingdom.

Holy God hear our prayer.

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, 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.

Communion – third video

Offertory - [OLIVER]

This Christmastime, if you would like to make a financial contribution to St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow, visit www.thecathedral.org.uk and click DONATE TO ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL. There's information there about setting up recurring

gifts and other ways of providing support. In this season of giving, thank you for all you do.

Let us present our offerings to the Lord.

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour, and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.

All things come from you, and of your own we give you.

Eucharistic Prayer - [OLIVER]

Offertory - [OLIVER]

Let us present our offerings to the Lord.

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All things come from you, and of your own we give you.

Eucharistic Prayer - [OLIVER]

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 God thanks and praise.

Worship and praise belong to you, Father, in every place and at all times.

All power is yours. You created the heavens and established the earth; you sustain in being all that is.

In Christ your Son our life and yours are brought together in a wonderful exchange.

He made his home among us that we might for ever dwell in you.

Through your Holy Spirit you call us to new birth
in a creation restored by love.

As children of your redeeming purpose
for whom Christ Jesus humbled himself
And became poor to make us rich,
we offer you our praise,
with angels and archangels
and the whole company of heaven,
singing the hymn of your unending glory:

SANCTUS & BENEDICTUS - [MAGNUS]

**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.**

Glory and thanksgiving be to you,
most loving Father,
for the gift of your Son born in human flesh

He is the Word existing beyond time,
both source and final purpose,
bringing to wholeness all that is made.

Obedient to your will he died upon the Cross.

By your power you raised him from the dead.

He broke the bonds of evil
and set your people free to be his Body in the world

On the night when he was given up to death,
knowing that his hour had come,
having loved his own,
he loved them to the end.

At supper with his disciples
he took bread and offered you thanks.
He broke the bread,
and gave it to them, saying:
"Take, eat.
This is my Body: it is broken for you."
After supper, he took the cup,
he offered you thanks,
and gave it to them saying:
"Drink this, all of you.
This is my Blood of the new covenant;
it is poured out for you, and for all,
that sins may be forgiven.
Do this in remembrance of me."

**We now obey your Son's command.
We recall his blessed passion and death,
his glorious resurrection and ascension;
and we look for the coming of his Kingdom.
Made one with him, we offer you these gifts
and with them ourselves,
a single, holy, living sacrifice.**

Hear us, most merciful Father,
and send your Holy Spirit upon us
and upon this bread and this wine,
that, overshadowed by his life-giving power,
they may be the Body and Blood of your Son,
and we may be kindled with the fire of your love
and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.

**Help us, who are baptised into the fellowship of Christ's Body
to live and work to your praise and glory;
may we grow together in unity and love
until at last, in your new creation,
we enter into our heritage
in the company of the Virgin Mary,**

**the apostles, and prophets,
and of all our brothers and sisters living and departed.**

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be to you,
Lord of all ages,
world without end.

Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

The living bread is broken for the life of the world.
Lord, unite us in this sign.

Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour has 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.
Do not bring us
to the time of trial
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Communion - [OLIVER]

God is with us wherever we are.

As we gaze in adoration we feed on God in our hearts and minds that we may in turn feed the world.

O God, even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.

Amen.

Music at Communion - [CHOIR]

HODIE

Post Communion Prayer - [FRANNY]

Father of all, the child born for us is the Saviour of the world. May he who made us your children welcome us into your kingdom, where he is alive and reigns with you now and for ever. **Amen.**

Blessing - [OLIVER]

I am grateful to all who've made this event joyful.

The shepherds told everyone they met what they heard and saw for themselves about the child in the manger. This Christmastime let us be eager to do the same.

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one all things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Voluntary - [STEVEN]

Toccata on Vom Himmel Hoch - Garth Edmundson

A hymn and materials for Young Church are available on the online worship page at www.thecathedral.org.uk/worship.

There is an online coffee hour on Sunday at 1 pm. Details in the weekly congregational email. Sign up for emails at www.thecathedral.org.uk