

## The Gathering – first video

### **Welcome - [KELVIN]**

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

I guess that for Mary and Joseph the implications of the birth of the baby didn't sink in immediately. It is the same for us – one holy night and the story of the stable isn't enough to get anywhere near to grasping at what it meant for God to come into the world.

The church gives us a season of Christmas rather than just one day, to ponder these things and, with the child's parents to store them up in our hearts.

Today we hear more about the childhood of Jesus and his presentation in the Temple of Jerusalem.

Welcome to this temple today for this Christmas worship, in which we ourselves will encounter the same holy child.

### **Collect for Purity - [MICHAEL]**

**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**

[OLIVER] 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.

[KELVIN] 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 - [KELVIN]**

Eternal God,  
you have shed upon us  
the new light of your incarnate Word.  
May this light,  
enkindled in our hearts,  
shine forth in our lives;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the  
Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **The Ministry of the Word – second video**

### **GOSPEL: Luke 2:22-40 – [BETH]**

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

Glory to Christ our Saviour.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” And the child’s father and mother were

amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

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

### **Sermon [OLIVER]**

In 2009, comedian Eddy Izzard had a great idea. She would run a thousand miles up and down the United Kingdom as part of a Sport Relief challenge to raise money for charity. ‘I’m interested in people,’ she said positively. ‘It’s hopefully an adventure that can be fun.’ Yes, ‘fun’. With no prior running history (she told a documentary crew she’d only ever ‘run for a bus’ before), Izzard thought running 43 marathons back-to-back would be a lark.

Izzard spent just five weeks training for the event, which proved, unsurprisingly, to be a struggle. What began casually and light-heartedly turned out to be a gruelling test of endurance, ending with an exasperated cry at the end of the journey: ‘I feel dead’.

Lots of us start things wide-eyed and unflappable like Izzard. Things seem like a good idea at first. It’s an admirable attitude really—the kind of celebrated can-do spirit that makes the world a

better place. But coping with real-world challenges is another matter, and good intentions only get you so far.

Waking up ruins the most beautiful dreams. Eddie Izzard was examined by a team of experts at the Olympic Medical Institute before she began her run. They were incredulous at her proposal. The trainers were discouraging and pessimistic, suggesting Izzard might want to rethink the whole thing.

It's disappointing to hear someone tell you what you want to do won't work or remind you of all the obstacles and challenges you face. Bad news isn't what you want to hear when something fantastic is planned or is about to happen.

Imagine the joy with which Mary and Joseph brought their child to the temple—a joy many might share when bringing their child for baptism. It's a beautiful moment to be celebrated. With hearts full—perhaps still reeling from the breathtaking miracles surrounding their child's birth—a priest, who'd seen all kinds of people come and go, informs the family their child is destined for rejection and dissent. On top of that, he'll bring them personal pain and sorrow.

Mary and Joseph might not have presumed an easy road, but who could've blamed them for thinking the Messiah, the Son of God, would bring relief—triumph over the cruel forces plaguing them and their world. They had dreams. This birth gave them optimism. Their lives were—indeed, the whole world was—going to change.

We might join with the Holy Family in thinking something so wonderful, so longed-for, such good-news-to-hear will make everything better. What is broken will be fixed with the advent of a delivery, shown up in the nick of time. All of us have experienced the hope of a promise, the prospect of a permanent solution to a problem.

Many of us have waited for a vaccine. We've been patient, keeping our eye on the horizon, while living with restrictions and delayed plans. We've buoyed ourselves, saying, 'When the vaccine comes,

we'll be golden.' And now, here we are with several vaccines in the pipeline—the moment we've anticipated, the gateway to normal life. It should be a joyful celebration. Yet, many of us sit at home, with more restrictions, more doubts, more waiting.

In today's Gospel, we hear that the thing most anticipated—the saving grace of the world—isn't a solution that makes everyone happy. There's forthcoming disappointment, misunderstanding and contradiction. The long-awaited heaven-sent day of redemption doesn't usher in an era of rest and comfort. It, instead, is complicated. We might well wonder with Mary and Joseph if this is cause for despair.

You might be surprised to know (if you don't already) that since her 2009 adventure, Eddie Izzard hasn't hung up her running shoes. She has gone on to run more. In South Africa in 2016, Izzard ran 27 marathons in 27 days—one for every year Nelson Mandela spent in prison. And this year, 2020, she ran 29 marathons to raise money for child refugees in Europe.

Eddie Izzard isn't a masochist. Along with Mary and all of us who claim faith, she remains hopeful, despite the challenges, despite the reality of life's zigs and zags. For the world has seen God's salvation, and God's promises are true. There is light at the end of this tunnel. The news this Christmas is good. Don't forget that.

### **Intercessions [TAYLOR]**

## **Communion – third video**

### **Offertory - [KELVIN]**

The gospel reading today has a lot to say about making offerings and indeed about making sacrifices. We are still here as a congregation proclaiming the good news of the Christ Child at Christmastime because others have made their own sacrifices and brought their own offerings.

If you would like to join them and make your own offering, please go to [thecathedral.org.uk](http://thecathedral.org.uk) and click on DONATE TO ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL for more information.

And thank you.

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 - [KELVIN]**

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 [OLIVER]**

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 - [KELVIN]**

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 - [MORVEN]**

O my deare hert, young Jesu sweet,  
Prepare thy creddil in my spreit  
And I sall rock thee in my hert,  
And never mair from thee depert.

But I sall praise thee evermore  
With sangis sweet unto thy gloir.  
The knees of my hert sall I bow,  
And sing that richt Balulalow.

### **Post Communion Prayer - [MICHAEL]**

Source of truth and joy, may we who have received the gift of divine life always follow the way of your Son. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

### **Blessing - [KELVIN]**

My thanks go to everyone who has made this worship possible and indeed to everyone who has had a part to play in this very unusual Christmas.

Every year at this time, there are those who join us for the first time. That may be you. If it is, and if you are finding a way into the congregation or just want to get in touch then do fill in a welcome card which you can find on the website - [thecathedral.org.uk](http://thecathedral.org.uk). There's a feedback form there too for anyone who would like to make contact.

But now the blessing...

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will; and the blessing; 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]**

*Votre bonté Grand Dieu - Balbastre*

**Picture at Communion**

*Unknown*

*The Nativity, about 1400 - 1410, Tempera colors, gold, silver paint, and ink on parchment*

*Leaf: 33.5 × 23.5 cm (13 3/16 × 9 1/4 in.), Ms. 33 (88.MP.70), fol. 245*

*The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Ms. 33, fol. 245*

*A hymn and materials for Young Church are available on the online worship page at [www.thecathedral.org.uk/worship](http://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](http://www.thecathedral.org.uk)*