

## The Gathering – first video

### Welcome - [KELVIN]

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

The third candle on our Advent wreath is now lit here in St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow.

Welcome to the worship for today. My name is Kelvin Holdsworth and I'm the Provost here.

In our worship today we will find one of the central questions of the Christian faith.

Who is this person Jesus about whom we speak and to whom we offer our worship?

Is he the long expected hope of the world? Is he the Messiah? Is he coming to save the world?

For behold, he *\*is\** coming.

And he's coming soon!

### Collect for Purity - [BOB]

Let us pray.

**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**

[HELENA] 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.**

### **KYRIE- [MORVEN]**

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

### **Collect - [KELVIN]**

With tender comfort and transforming power  
you come into our midst,  
O God of mercy and might.

Make ready a way in the wilderness,  
clear a straight path in our hearts,  
and form us into a repentant people,  
that the advent of your Son  
may find us watchful and eager for the glory he reveals.

We ask this through him whose coming is certain,  
whose day draws near:  
your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## The Ministry of the Word – second video

### **GOSPEL: John 1.6-8, 19-27 – [RUTH]**

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

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said,

'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

"Make straight the way of the Lord" ',

as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

### **Sermon [HELENA]**

There is no getting around it. John the Baptist is an odd duck. Probably not quite so odd in his own day when the heritage of the prophets was still strong and would-be Messiahs were part of the landscape. Still, John cuts a charismatic figure, appearing in the wilds by the Jordan, a strange, lean hermit preaching and attracting crowds. Definitely someone the authorities should investigate.

Is he mad? Is he dangerous? Is he—gasp—the real thing, and if so, what sort of ‘real thing’ is he? Jerusalem launches an inquiry, sending priests and Levites asking questions: Who are you? Are you the Messiah? Are you Elijah? Are you the mysterious prophet people talk about? To all these John answers simply, ‘I am not.’ They remain frustrated even by his identification of himself as ‘the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord”’. Obviously, his interrogators recognize the words of Isaiah, but why is he preaching and baptizing? What are his credentials? Even his enigmatic reference to a greater one who is both present and yet to come leaves them scratching their beards. These investigators are asking the wrong questions. Indeed, they would have done better to listen. But they are men who know things, men close to government and religious leaders, and they probe for what seems important to them, missing the message by dismissing the messenger.

Stay alert. Stay awake. Repent—turn around your understanding to greet the coming of the Anointed One. Do even John’s devoted followers understand that repentance goes beyond apology for sin to oblige them to change not only themselves, but the relationships on which society is based? He is asking them to clear that road along which the Coming One will lead us to God’s kingdom of true Liberty.

We who have been blest by the teaching of the Law and the Prophets, by the example of Jesus Christ—do we understand? Do we understand that this peculiar time of chaos and upheaval opens a whole new way? Are we asking the right questions? Are we anticipating the inestimable wonder on offer, or are we so distracted by our wants and our sense of entitlement that we lose sight of the world's crying needs?

Looking around us it is easy to lose sight of that promise. It is not just businesses going bankrupt: thousands of people are jobless and hungry while others crash the websites of dying firms looking for bargains like vultures picking at a corpse. The very leadership who spent decades cutting social funding are paradoxically dispensing money like sticking plasters to hide the cancerous inequities increasingly exposed by pandemic and Brexit. We sorrow over missed carol services and family gatherings, planning who we can cram into the five-day Christmas bubble. Even the miraculous news of a Covid vaccine is greeted with modified rapture and debates over the fairness of its distribution. A septuagenarian is overheard muttering that the over-80s should just be left to die. And there are still people who believe safety measures are an affront to their personal freedom and selfishly endanger everyone else.

I love the beauties of Christmas Mass and lights and music as much as anyone. I enjoy the cosy company of friends with a mince pie in every hand. All of these are lovely, celebratory things, but they are not what Isaiah and John the Baptist meant. Without hearts open to the poor, the despised, the neglected; without a deep commitment to the radical reordering of our values and our actions all this can look a lot like 'normal' self-indulgence, not wonder.

My prayer in this Advent of the enforced stripping down of 'normal' customs we learn what to ask: not about traditions but the One who is coming; not about the messenger, but about how and for

Whom we are preparing. May we recognise and never lose or fail to share this wonder!

### **Intercessions [DEBBIE]**

God, we wait for you. Come, and bring new healing to our world.

Come into our places of conflict and injustice and help us make straight the way of peace.

In your great mercy, hear our prayer

God, we wait for you. Come, and bring new life to your Church.

We pray this week for the church in the Falkland Islands. In our Diocese, we pray for the Church of the Holy Name in Cumbernauld and St Matthew's in Possilpark. We pray your light and blessing on the Companions of Our Lady and St Mungo: Sister Helena and Sister AJ. And at the Cathedral, we pray for all the work of the Justice and Aid network.

In your great mercy, hear our prayer

God, we wait for you. Come, and bring new hope to our community.

Come into our city and bless all who struggle. We pray for businesses and industries that have suffered from the uncertainties of Covid. May all whose livelihoods depend on them be sustained.

In your great mercy, hear our prayer

God, we wait for you. Come, and bring new joy to our lives. Where there is darkness, we pray for your light. Where there is pain and loneliness, we pray for comfort. May we seek your way into a new time, with you.

In your great mercy, hear our prayer

God of all light, we pray your infinite peace on those who have died this week. And we remember especially at this time Alice Louisa Morgan, whose year's mind is today.

May they rest in peace, and rise in glory.

All this we ask in the name of the one for whom we wait, Jesus Christ.

Amen

## Communion – third video

### Offertory - [KELVIN]

This year we've been talking about money more than we've ever done before. (We're following Jesus's example, he talked about it a lot too). And we've chosen to speak about it here, by the altar rather than from the pulpit or in sermons. That's because what we give is a real offering and standing by this altar today I remember all the offerings that have been given to help this place spread the news of Jesus Christ.

If you would like to help to do that 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.

Worship and praise belong to you, God our maker.

Out of nothing, you called all worlds to be,  
and still you draw the universe to its fulfilment.

Dawn and evening celebrate your glory  
till time shall be no more.

In Christ your Son  
the life of heaven and earth were joined,  
sealing the promise of a new creation,  
given, yet still to come.

Taught by your Spirit,  
we who bear your threefold likeness  
look for the City of Peace  
in whose light we are transfigured  
and the earth transformed.

As children of your redeeming purpose  
who await the coming of your Son,  
we offer you our praise,  
with angels and archangels  
and the whole company of heaven  
singing the hymn of your unending glory:

**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.

In Jesus you showed us yourself.  
Our hope is built on him,  
the first, the last, the living one.

Obedient, even to accepting death,  
He opened the gate of glory  
and calls us now to share the life of heaven.

Before he was given up to suffering and death,  
alight with the vision of a feast  
that heralded a kingdom yet to come,  
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 - [HELENA]**

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 - [CHRISTINE]**

*Carol of the Advent - John Bell*

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

Let us pray...

Merciful God, may this eucharist free us from our sins, fill us with unending joy, and prepare us for the

birthday of our Saviour. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## **Blessing - [KELVIN]**

My thanks go to everyone involved in producing this online worship and for everyone who contributed to all that we do here. The covid situation makes it difficult to know from one week to the next exactly what we will be doing – but keep your eye on the website. Information about the services over the festive season will be put online there when it is available. And if you are finding a way into the congregation either online or in person in church then do fill in a welcome card which you can find on the website - [thecathedral.org.uk](http://thecathedral.org.uk)

But now the blessing...

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and illuminate the path before you; 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]**

Fughette on Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland by Andreas Vetter

Picture during Communion

Unknown

*Joseph and Mary on their Way to Bethlehem*, 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. 243v

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Ms. 33, fol. 243v

*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)*