

The Gathering

1 - Welcome - [OLIVER]

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

[INSERT]

3 - Collect for Purity - [ANNE]

**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.**

5 - 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.**

7 - Gloria - [MORVEN]

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.

8 - Collect - [OLIVER]

Amen.

The Ministry of the Word

11 - GOSPEL: Luke 2.1-14– [MICHAEL]

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

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!'

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

12 - Sermon [KELVIN]

One of the odd features of coronavirus time for me has been vivid dreams and disturbed sleep.

I know that I'm not alone in this, I've heard others speak about it too.

Particularly during the various lockdown experiences I've found myself suddenly sitting bolt upright at 3 in the morning trying to sort out my dreams from reality – something that hasn't always been settled quickly.

Perhaps modern life normally gives me so much contact with others that I work stuff out in the course of my day and sleep relatively undisturbed by dreams or nightmares.

But these have not been normal times.

Perhaps that experience of social isolation leading to vivid dreams connects me somehow with an ancient world when dreams were taken with the utmost seriousness.

In the Christmas stories, God turns up at night as much if not more than in the day.

Joseph is told in a dream to stick with Mary.

The shepherds were famously watching their flocks by night when the news of the birth was told to them.

The Magi see the star by night which leads them to Bethlehem.

And then they in their turn are told in a dream to return by another road in order that the child be protected from wicked Herod.

Night time matters in the nativity stories and you can feel the participants each in their way trying to sort their dreams from reality.

What on earth were they seeing? What on earth were they hearing?

Disturbed nights and puzzling days are all part of the Christmas story.

For these were not normal times.

There was a census on to start with and many people were not where they wanted to be.

There was an occupation on by the Romans too and many people were not governed by those they wanted to be governed by.

The shepherds might well have thought they were best out of it up on the hills. Away from the crowded town and minding their own business as much as they were minding their sheep.

But into their world, the news of something far from normal breaks.

Into their world, the message of the angels – do not be afraid.

Into their world, the planting of a dream that has never died amongst all who have found the babe of Bethlehem.

Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace among those whom he favours.

That a dream. Not a reality yet.

That's the dream.

The one we keep alive.

Over the last two years we've heard quite a lot about saving Christmas.

Boris saves Christmas! The newspapers have proclaimed joyfully.

Nicola says only a lockdown can save Christmas! The newspapers have proclaimed more cautiously.

But salvation isn't about how many people can eat a turkey – notwithstanding how difficult our current circumstances are.

Salvation is that baby being born and a dream planted in people's hearts.

Of a God who is good to know, wonderful and loving and her right now.

Of a world put right by those who dare to dream of peace on earth.

Of a world put right by those who believe in goodwill to everyone.

Of a world put right by those who catch hold of the vision of God's intentions for us.

Of a world put right by a babe in a manger who will inspire, save, heal, comfort, challenge and bless.

Christmas only needs one saviour and it isn't Boris Johnson nor any other politician.

These are not normal times. And there are dreams to be dreamed.

The coronavirus time has been a nightmare in so many ways. And we're not out of it yet.

But there are dreams to be dreamed that are inspired by the babe in a manger that are worth dreaming.

I dream of churches renewed so that people find the babe of Bethlehem in them and are as amazed as the shepherds and tell everyone about it.

I dream of good news of great joy in our common life. Of tyrants toppled. Of integrity in public life restored. Of time and space for all people to wonder.

I dream of joy. I dream of love. And yes, I dream of this pandemic being over.

Yet babies come in their own time.

Christ is born in a world that was hurting.

Christ is born in a time where disease was far more common than our own.

Christ was born when conflict was common and peace only a dream.

Christ didn't come at a time when it seemed as though the world was sorted out enough for him to appear.

He came into a world where people were sad, tired, grieving and in pain.

And he came to them. And for them

He comes this year into a world where people are sad, tired, grieving and in pain.

And he comes to us. And for us.

When I look into the manger, I start to dream of a world put right by God and those inspired by the message of the babe that I find there.

It is a dream worth dreaming.

For the Christmas story is not merely a collection of dreams to put behind us when daylight comes and sleep is over.

The dream is worth dreaming for God's love is a reality.

And that love is here, and everywhere. In this world. And in human hearts.

And is lying in a manger.

14 - Intercessions [ROBERT]

Let us pray to Jesus our Saviour.

Christ, born in a stable, give courage to all who are homeless.

Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

Christ, for whom the angels sang, give the song of the kingdom to all who weep.

Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

Christ, worshipped by the shepherds, give peace on earth to all who are oppressed.

Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

Christ, before whom the Magi knelt, give humility and wisdom to all who govern.

Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

Christ, whose radiance filled a lowly manger, give the glory of your resurrection to all who rest in you.

Jesus, Saviour, **hear our prayer.**

Jesus, Saviour, child of Mary, you know us and love us, you share our lives and hear our prayer. Glory to you for ever.

Amen.

Communion

17 - Offertory - [OLIVER]

[INSERT]

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.

18 - Eucharistic Prayer

[OLIVER] The Lord be with you.

[KELVIN] **And also with you.**

[OLIVER] Lift up your hearts.

[KELVIN] **We lift them to the Lord.**

[OLIVER] Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

[KELVIN] **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 - [MORVEN]

**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 God's children 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.

19 - Breaking of the Bread - [OLIVER]

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

20 - Lord's Prayer - [KELVIN]

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.**

21 - 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 - Ecce Novum Gaudium - Kenneth Elliott]

24 - Post Communion Prayer - [TONY]

Father of all, tonight you have united earth and heaven in sending your Son to take our human nature. May we who have tasted heavenly things share in the life of his eternal kingdom. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

25 - Blessing - [OLIVER]

□

Voluntary - [STEVEN]

Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich BWV 605 - JS Bach