

Morning Prayer

at home with your
Parish Church

in the Diocese of Birmingham



ALL SAINTS
KINGS HEATH

Christmas 2022

Preparation

You may wish to mark your time of worship by arranging a table with a cloth, a candle and your Bible, or anything, such as flowers, that makes it a special reflective space. You might have four candles lit and another ready to light shortly

Music: click on the links to hear and join in the music. Click stop at the end of each.

HYMN [O come, all ye faithful](#)

1. O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him, born the king of angels:

*O come, let us adore him, (x3)
Christ the Lord.*

2. God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
very God, begotten not created:

3. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
glory to God in the highest:

4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n;

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

*(words: Original Latin attrib John Francis Wade, trans Frederick Oakeley;
music: attrib John Francis Wade, arr David Willcocks)*

At home, we pause to remember those gathered in Church who, in turn remember us.

We take this time, united in Christ, to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world, and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may find new ways to serve God.

Emmanuel, God is with us.

Born as one of us.

Light the fifth candle, representing Christ and pray:

Jesus Christ, born of Mary, we have remembered the glow of faith in our ancestors, the light of truth in your prophets, the fire of anger in John the Baptist and the brightness of expectation in Mary. Today we know that all such light refracted through your people comes from you. For you are the light of the world. Illumine our lives, our culture, our politics and our faith today, and open our hearts to rejoice in the glimpses of your light in every human soul. **Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

We confess:

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts. In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

SILENCE

Honouring Joseph's protective courage we confess the hindrance we set before those who seek refuge. God, come to our aid.

Christ, restore our humanity.

Honouring Mary's patient depth, we confess the busyness that crowd out prayer. God, come to our aid.

Christ, restore our humanity.

Honouring the Shepherds' joyous wonder, we confess the cynicism that stunts our growth. God, come to our aid.

Christ, restore our humanity.

Honouring the Magi's generous open-mindedness, we confess the fear of difference that turns to prejudice. God, come to our aid.

Christ, restore our humanity.

Then we pray:

May almighty God who forgives all who truly repent have mercy upon us, pardon us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness and keep us in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Word of God

NEW TESTAMENT READING Titus 3:4-7

But when the goodness and loving-kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

PSALM *If you are able, you might stand to read this psalm aloud.*

O sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvellous things.
His right hand and his holy arm
have gained him victory.
The LORD has made known his victory;
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen
the victory of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.
Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy
at the presence of the LORD, for he is coming

to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.

GOSPEL READING Luke 2:1-20

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!'

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.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH If able, we stand and turn to look in the direction of Church, to emphasise our gathering around a precious, shared story, and respond to our Colossians reading:

We declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ:

**We believe in God the Father
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

This is the faith of the church.

This is our faith.

We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Prayers

We pray THE COLLECT for Christmas

Almighty God, you have given us your only begotten Son to take our nature upon him and, as at this time to be born of a virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; 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. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

We pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

All: Our Father in heaven...

FOR REFLECTION

We are sometimes rather embarrassed about the talk of our "sin" and of God as "Judge." Because the church has, in this part of the world, been part of the ruling establishment for so long, and seemed to sit in frowning judgement over people, we have spend some energy in recent decades trying to shed the reputation of superiority, gloomy judgmentalism. But the church is not judge, thank God. God is.

We spend time this Christmas thinking over some of the crises and human folly witnessed this year that cry out for God's judgement; things for which the word sin might be considered too mild. We bring them candidly before God, then with Psalm 98 wait and see what picture of God as judge comes to mind. What is the posture of that bared right holy arm? Is God sitting or standing?

Then we shift in our imagination to the place where he did indeed come to judge the world: the manger, enfleshed as a baby. Picture the bare arm of a new-born infant, creased and jerky as it tests its movement and feels the cold air for the first time, unsure whether it likes this new freedom, then suddenly restricted again, wound tight with swaddling bands.

How do you think this presence judges human behaviour? What does it draw out of us as we bring war, pantomime politics and our own regrets into his presence?

We turn our reflection into PRAYERS:

Infant God, dependent, crying, needy, vulnerable: be our judge.

Beckon out of us our sympathy, our protectiveness;

Let your cries penetrate the walls of our defensiveness, challenge our militarism and unsettle our feigned adult control. Raise the compassion we have long suppressed.

In your vulnerability, on the brink of refugee status, hold before us the bombed maternity hospitals, shivering soldiers, be-suited lying leaders and judge the invasion of neighbours; judge the deceit, judge the destructiveness that makes humanity look ridiculous. From your make-shift cot, judge our rejection of neighbours in need.

From your less than hygienic birth place, judge our healthcare crisis and all who strive to improve provision. Judge the disparities in healthcare around the world. Among those who are unwell we pray for Iain Galloway, for the Brookes family: Phil's father in hospital over Christmas, and others facing different medical crises. We pray for anyone feeling tugged in many directions.

HYMN [Hark, the herald-angels sing](#)

1. Hark, the herald-angels sing
glory to the new-born King;
peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled:
joyful all ye nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies,
with th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

*Hark, the herald-angels sing
glory to the new-born King.*

2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb!
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

3. Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris'n with healing in his wings;
mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.

*(words: Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Martin Madan & others alt;
music: adapted from Felix Mendelssohn by William Hayman Cummings, v3 arr David Willcocks)*

THE BLESSING

God the Father, who has loved the eternal Son from before the foundation of the world, shed such love upon us, his children.

Amen.

Christ, whose incarnation gathered into one all things earthly and heavenly, fill us with joy and peace.

Amen.

Holy Spirit, by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer, give us grace to carry the good news of Christ.

Amen.

and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.

We proclaim the Word made flesh.

Glory, thanks and praise to God.

Imagining all whom we miss, we pray for each other:

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. Amen.

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England

is copyright © the Archbishop's Council (2000)

Hymns and Songs printed under CCL Licence No. 116429

