



LANCASTER PRIORY

A welcoming, inclusive, Christian community

THE EUCHARIST

Midnight Mass

24th December 2021

11.30pm

Welcome to Lancaster Priory

We are really pleased that you are worshipping with us today. Wherever you have come from, this is your church and you are unconditionally welcome.

The celebration of Christ's coming among us at Christmas (known as the 'Incarnation') is one of the two poles of the Christian year, along with the story of Christ's death and resurrection. Christmas is much more than the celebration of Jesus's birth: it reminds us of the central truth that 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1.14), fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah (7.14) that 'a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son.'

The restrictions under which our services are being conducted at the moment are part of our responsibility to ensure that all who worship and visit the priory feel safe and valued. These are available on an additional flyer at the back of church. Thank you for your patience.

A Merry Christmas from everyone at Lancaster Priory.

Today's service (Midnight Mass):

President and Preacher: The Revd Leah Vasey-Saunders, Vicar of Lancaster

The Readers: Dylan Bushell, Tom Barnish

Intercessor: Mark Vasey-Saunders

Organist: Ian Pattinson FRCO, Priory Organist.

Choir: Full Choir

Setting: *Messe de minuit* (Charpentier)

Today's Booklet is sponsored by...

Nick Walker

**In memory of John Watson Walker, Chorister and long-time servant of
this church who died in December 1995**

Please remain seated as the choir enter during organ music.

The Welcome and Notices

Please stand as the Servers and Clergy process to the Crib.

Choir Introit

O Little One Sweet (J.S. Bach)

O little one sweet, O little one mild,
Thy Father's purpose thou hast fulfilled;
Thou camest from heaven to mortal ken,
Equal to be with us poor men,
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

O little one sweet, O little one mild,
With joy thou hast the whole world filled;
Thou camest here from heaven's domain,
To bring men comfort in their pain,
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

O little one sweet, O little one mild,
In thee Love's beauties are all distilled;
Then light in us thy love's bright flame,
That we may give thee back the same,
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

O little one sweet, O little one mild,
Help us to do as thou hast willed.
Lo, all we have belongs to thee!
Ah, keep us in our fealty!
O little one sweet, O little one mild.

Old German carol, trans Percy Dearmer

The Blessing of the Crib

The congregation faces the crib and the president says

Dear friends, as we meet to celebrate the birth of Christ, let us pray that God will bless this crib, that all who worship his Son, born of the Virgin Mary, may come to share his life in glory.

God our Father, on this night your Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary for us and for our salvation: bless this crib, which we have prepared to celebrate that holy birth; may all who see it be strengthened in faith and receive the fullness of life he came to bring, who is alive and reigns for ever.

Amen.

The crib is sprinkled with Holy water and censed as we sing. The procession moves to the east and the altar is censed.

Hymn (HCFC p260)

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

2. He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and mean and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

3. And through all his wondrous
childhood
he would honour and obey,
love and watch the lowly maiden,
in whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be
mild, obedient, good as he.

4. For he is our childhood's pattern,
day by day like us he grew,
he was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.

5. And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love,
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

6. Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
where like stars his children crowned
all in white shall wait around.

CF Alexander 1818-95

The Greeting *The president says*

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

The Lord be with you.
and also with you.

Prayers of Penitence and Forgiveness

The Deacon invites us to confess our sins

Christ the Light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts. Let us turn to the light and confess our sins.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

The choir sings the Kyrie

Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us.

The Absolution

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw you to himself,
that you may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh,
and be cleansed from all your sins, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Gloria *The choir sings*

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.

The Collect *The priest says 'let us pray' and silence is kept.*

Eternal God, who made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of your one true light: bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth, to see the radiance of your heavenly glory; 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.

The First Reading *Isaiah 52.7-10 Please sit.*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.' Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

For the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Hymn (HCFC p234)

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee to-night.

3. How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
so God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

2. O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to all the earth;
for Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love

4. O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.

Phillips Brooks (1835-189)

The Second Reading Hebrews 1.1-4 (5-12)

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you'? Or again, 'I will be his Father, and he will be my Son'? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.' Of the angels he says, 'He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire.' But of the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever, and the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.' And, 'In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end.'

For the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Reading John 1.1-14

Please stand for the Gospel Acclamation, the cantor sings

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia

The deacon says

The Lord be with you.

And also with you

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

Glory to you, O Lord

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon *Please sit.*

The Creed *Please stand.*

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit
and the Virgin Mary and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Please sit.

At the end we say Amen.

The Peace *Please stand.*

This holy night the angels sang, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, And on earth
peace to all in whom he delights.'

The peace of the Lord be always with you

and also with you

The deacon says

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

We acknowledge one another with a sign of peace.

The Offertory Hymn (HCFC p194) *During this hymn a collection will be taken.*

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
'Glory to God! On earth be peace,
from heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

2 Still through the cloven skies they come,
with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing;
and ever o'er its Babel-sounds
the blessed angels sin

3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel-strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and warring humankind hears not
the love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise of mortal strife,
and hear the angels sing.

4 For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophet-bards foretold,
when, with the ever-circling years,
comes round the age of gold;
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

Edmund Hamilton Sears (1810-1876)

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

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 thanks and praise

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty creator, ever-living God. We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who for love of our fallen race humbled himself, was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of your Spirit, and lived as one of us. In this mystery of the Word made flesh you have caused his light to shine in our hearts, to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In him we see our God made visible and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see. Therefore with all the angels of heaven we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

The choir sings

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.

The priest continues

Accept our praises, heavenly Father, through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and as we follow his example and obey his command, grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit these gifts of bread and wine may be to us his body and his blood; who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Therefore, heavenly Father, we remember his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross; we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; we look for the coming of your kingdom, and with this bread and this cup we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

The deacon says

Jesus Christ is Lord:

**Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.
You are the Saviour of the world.**

The priest continues

Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise, and as we eat and drink these holy gifts in the presence of your divine majesty, renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, with all who stand before you in earth and heaven, we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

As our saviour taught us, so we pray

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

**And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.**

Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

We break the bread of life, and that life is the light of the world.

God here among us, light in the midst of us, bring us to light and life.

The Agnus Dei *Please sit. The choir sings*

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

The Giving of Communion

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

The priest and people receive communion. We welcome communicant members of all Christian denominations to receive communion. If you would prefer to receive a blessing, please carry this booklet with you. Gluten-free hosts are available, please indicate this to the president, green cards are available from the sidespeople for this purpose.

Communion Anthem *The choir sings*

Quelle est cette odeur agreable? (arr. David Wilcocks)

*Quelle est cette odeur agreable,
Bergers, qui ravit tous nos sens?
S'exhale-t'il rien de semblable
Au milieu des fleurs du printemps?*

*Mais quelle éclatante lumière
Dans la nuit vient frapper nos yeux!
L'astre du jour, dans sa carrière,
Fut-il jamais si radieux?*

*A Bethléem, dans une crèche,
Il vient de vous naître un Sauveur;
Allons, que rien ne vous empêche
D'adorer votre Rédempteur.*

*Dieu tout-puissant, gloire éternelle
Vous soit rendue jusqu'aux cieux;
Que la paix soit universelle,
Que la grâce abonde en tous lieux.*

What is this pleasant fragrance,
shepherds, which delights all our senses?
Does anything like this breathe
amongst the flowers of Spring?

But what a brilliant light
in the darkness beats upon our eyes!
The star of day, in its course,
was it ever as radiant as this?

At Bethlehem, in a crib,
there has just been born to you a Saviour.
Come, let nothing prevent you
from worshipping your Redeemer.

All-powerful God, may eternal glory
be paid to you in the highest heaven.
May peace reign universal,
and may grace abound in all lands.

Communion Hymn (HCFC p304) *We remain seated.*

1.Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright,
round yon virgin mother and child;
holy infant so tender and mild:
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

2.Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing alleluia:
Christ the Saviour is born
Christ the Saviour is born.

3.Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, Love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace:

Jesus, Lord at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord at thy birth. Joseph Mohr (1792-1848)

Prayer After Communion *The president prays*

God our Father, in this night you have made known to us again the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him until the day dawns and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts. To him be glory both now and for ever.
Amen.

Hymn (HCFC p226) *Please stand.*

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
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

2. God of God,
Light of Light,
lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
very God,
begotten, not created:
O come, let us adore him
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

3. See how the shepherds
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks,
draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps:
O come, let us adore him...

4. Lo! star-led chieftains,
magi, Christ adoring,
offer him incense, gold, and myrrh;
we to the Christ child
bring our heart's oblations:
O come, let us adore him...

5. Child, for us sinners
poor and in the manger,
fain we embrace thee,
with awe and love;
who would not love thee,
loving us so dearly?
O come, let us adore him...

6. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
'Glory to God
in the highest:'
O come, let us adore him...

7. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning,
Jesu to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him...

Latin 18th Century Tr Frederick Oakeley
1802-80 & others.

The Blessing and Dismissal *The priest prays*

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

The Deacon says

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

Glory, thanks and praise to God. Amen.

Organ Voluntary *Finale (Symphony No.1) (Vierne)*

Please remain standing while the servers, choir and clergy depart.

Acknowledgements

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