



St Mary's Parish Church, Ross-on-Wye

Sung Eucharist

The First Eucharist of Christmas – “Midnight Mass”



Please return this booklet for future use.

Everyone is welcome to worship at St Mary's. If you are new here, or a visitor, and would like to know more, please stay for coffee after the service so that we can get to know you better.

The weekly newsletter or insert gives more detail on the specifics of this service and about what is going on in our churches.

As a Christian community, striving to be faithful followers of Jesus, we are here to love God in our lives and worship, and to love and serve our neighbours.

The content in this booklet covers the whole of the Christmas season from Midnight Mass to Epiphany. The content may be adapted slightly.

- At various points in the service people are invited to stand. However, if you prefer to remain seated, please don't feel embarrassed to do so.
- This service is being live streamed to YouTube and recorded. Unless you are told otherwise, only the area at the front from where the service is led is usually in shot. However if you wish to be assured that you will remain off camera please sit further back in the nave. You will find all streamed services from our website.
- Gluten-free wafers are available, please let one of the welcomers know at the door if you would like to receive one.

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The Gathering

Welcome & Notices

Before the service, the president offers words of welcome. More about what's going on will be found on our website, rossparishes.uk and Facebook page. After that we stand to sing:

Introit Hymn

During the hymn the clergy and choir enter.

**It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold;
"Through all the earth, goodwill and peace
From Heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.**

**With sorrow brought by sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
And since the angels sang have passed
Two thousand years of wrong;
And nations still at war hear not
The love-song which they bring;
Oh, hush the noise, and cease the strife
to hear the angels sing.**

**And those whose journey now is hard,
Whose hope is burning low,
Who tread the rocky path of life
With painful steps and slow,
O listen to the news of love
Which makes the heavens ring!
O rest beside the weary road
And hear the angels sing!**

And still the days are hastening on -
By prophet seen of old -
Towards the fulness of the time
When comes the age foretold
Then earth and heaven renewed shall see
The Prince of Peace, their King,
And all the world repeat the song
Which now the angels sing

The Greeting

Welcome all wonders in one sight!
Eternity shut in a span.
Summer in winter, day in night,
heaven in earth and God in man.

Great little one whose all-embracing birth
brings earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth.

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you

All And also with you.

Blessing of the Crib

At Midnight, and on Christmas Morning we remain standing to light the Christmas candle and bless the crib.

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.

All Amen.

Prayers of Penitence

One of these invitations to Confession is used:

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.
Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God's commandments
and to live in love and peace with all.

The sun of righteousness has dawned
with healing in his wings.

Let us come to the light of Christ,
confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

We sit for the confession

God our Father,
you sent your Son full of grace and truth:
forgive our failure to receive him.
Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

Jesus our Saviour,
you were born in poverty and laid in a manger:
forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.
Christ, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

Spirit of love,
your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:
forgive the hardness of our hearts.
Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

The Absolution

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

All Amen

The Gloria

We stand as the choir sings the Gloria, tonight's setting is by Harold Darke (in F).

The Gloria (which has not been sung for the last four weeks of Advent) begins with the words of the angels at the Nativity, the other words were added quite early in the history of the Christian Church, turning it into a hymn praising God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All Glory be to God on high,
and on earth peace, good will toward men.
We praise thee, we bless thee,
we worship thee, we glorify thee,
we give thanks to thee for thy great glory:
O Lord God, heavenly King;
God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father:
That takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For thou only art holy;
thou only art the Lord;
thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art the most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect

This is the special prayer for the day.

Almighty God, you make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Please sit for the first reading.

Reader: A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when
dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod
of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in
blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for
evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

[Isaiah 9.2-7]

This is the word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God

Gradual Hymn

We stand to sing the hymn to introduce the Gospel. The Gospel procession moves to the top of the nave symbolising the coming of God into our world.

**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, ...
Christ the Lord.***

**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 ...***

**See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw near with lowly fear;
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps
*O come, let us adore Him ...***

**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 ...***

**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 ...***

The Gospel

We remain standing to hear the Gospel

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

All Alleluia.

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

All Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

[Luke 20.1-20]

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you, O Christ

After the response the Gospel procession returns, as the organ plays, and we sit for:

The Sermon

The Creed

We stand to join in with the words of the historic Nicene Creed.

**All 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

We sit or kneel for the prayers. This or another form is used. "In this night" should be omitted or other words substituted for services other than Midnight Mass. Additional prayer intentions can be added as indicated.

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Father, in this holy night your Son our Saviour
was born in human flesh.

Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night there was no room for your Son in the inn.

Protect with your love those who have no home

and all who live in poverty.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night Mary, in the pain of labour,

brought your Son to birth.

Hold in your hand [...and] all who are in pain or distress.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night your Christ came as a light shining in the darkness.

Bring comfort to [...and] all who suffer in the sadness of our world.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night the angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.'

Strengthen those who work for peace and justice

in [...and in] all the world.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy.

Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redemption.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night strangers found the Holy Family,
and saw the baby lying in the manger.

Bless our homes and all whom we love.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night heaven is come down to earth,
and earth is raised to heaven.

Hold in your hand [...and] all those who have passed through death
in the hope of your coming kingdom.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

In this holy night Christians the world over celebrate Christ's birth.
Open our hearts that he may be born in us today.

Holy God

All hear our prayer.

Father,
in this holy night angels and shepherds worshipped at
the manger throne.

Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary,
Joseph and the saints
through him who is your Word made flesh,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

All Amen

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9.6

The peace of the Lord be always with you:
All and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

We exchange a sign of peace. If you are joining us online, you might like to use the chat to do this.

The Offertory Hymn

We stand to join in with the Offertory Hymn. During this hymn a collection is taken. We welcome your offering. If you prefer to give digitally please tap this link: <https://rossparishes.uk/giving> or use the contactless card reader by the north door. If you are a regular member of our community, we encourage you to consider the Parish Giving Scheme. Full details at <http://rossparishes.uk/giving>

**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 tonight.**

O morning stars together,
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king,
And peace to all on earth!
For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.

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.

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.

Preparation of the Table

The gifts of the people are presented at the altar. The table is prepared and the bread and wine placed upon it.

Word made flesh, life of the world,
in your incarnation you embraced our poverty:
by your Spirit may we share in your riches.

All Amen

The Eucharistic Prayer

This long prayer, containing many elements, is the very heart of our Eucharist. In it we all pray that the Real Presence of Christ may be present in form of bread and wine, and that by partaking in this remembrance of Christ we may be spiritually united with God.

We stand for Eucharistic Prayer G with an extended preface.

The Lord is here.

All His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All 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,
and [on this night] 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:

We remain standing to join in with the Sanctus and Benedictus.

All Holy, holy, holy, Lord of hosts,
heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Glory be to thee, O Lord most high.

**Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

How wonderful the work of your hands, O Lord.
As a mother tenderly gathers her children,
you embraced a people as your own.
When they turned away and rebelled your love remained steadfast.

From them you raised up Jesus our Saviour, born of Mary,
to be the living bread,
in whom all our hungers are satisfied.

He offered his life for sinners,
and with a love stronger than death
he opened wide his arms on the cross.

On the night before he died,
he came to supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he gave you thanks.
He broke it and gave it to them, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,
he gave you thanks, and said:
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.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died;

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Father, we plead with confidence
his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross;
we remember his dying and rising in glory,
and we rejoice that he intercedes for us at your right hand.

Pour out your Holy Spirit as we bring before you
these gifts of your creation;
may they be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

As we eat and drink these holy things in your presence,
form us in the likeness of Christ,
and build us into a living temple to your glory.

Bring us at the last with St Mary and all the saints
to the vision of that eternal splendour
for which you have created us;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
by whom, with whom, and in whom,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

All Blessing and honour and glory and power
Be yours for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

We sit to say the words that Jesus taught us to pray.

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All 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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.

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

All God here among us,

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

Agnus Dei

This is sung by the choir alone.

All O Lamb of God,
That takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

O Lamb of God,
That takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

O Lamb of God,
That takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.

Giving of Communion

The president gives words of invitation to communion

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven.

All Lord, give us this bread always.

Everyone is invited to take communion at St Mary's.

During the communion, carols or other appropriate music is sung by the choir or played by the organist. Please see the newsletter for details.

Prayer after Communion

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.

All To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

We stand.

The Post Communion Hymn

**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 the angelic host proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."**

***Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the new-born King!"***

**Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.**

***Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the new-born King!"***

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings;
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
*Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the new-born King!"*

The Dismissal

The Blessing

May the Father,
who has loved the eternal Son
from before the foundation of the world,
shed that love upon you his children.

All Amen

May Christ,
who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace.

All Amen.

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

All Amen.

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

All Amen.

The Dismissal

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

All Glory, thanks and praise to God.

Thank you for being with us tonight. We wish you the joy and peace of Christmas, have a great day today, and a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Please join us again in St Mary's.

The full Christmas season continues to Candlemas. Full details of services yet to come are at <https://rossparishes.uk/christmas-2025>