wantage parish

Midnight Mass

Before we begin…

Tonight's service can be followed in this booklet. Please feel free to join in by singing the hymns and by saying **the words in bold**.

We worship with our bodies as well as our voices, so this order of service sometimes invites you to sit, stand, and kneel. Please feel free, however, to do whatever helps you to pray.

At Communion, all are welcome to come forward to the Altar. If you are baptized and have received Holy Communion before, in any church, you are welcome to receive tonight. If you need a gluten-free wafer, please bring this booklet up with you. If you are not receiving Communion today, for any reason, you are welcome to receive a Blessing. Please come forward to the Altar with your arms crossed over your chest.

We have a **Christmas Appeal** each year, supporting local, national, and international charities. We welcome donations to these causes on your way out, which you can give by using the contactless donation point or the cash baskets.

Please be aware that Wantage Parish may use photos and videos from this event for communication and publicity purposes. For any queries, contact our Parish Administrator (*administrator@wantageparish.com*).

The Proclamation

A Minister announces the birth of Christ in traditional words.

Opening Hymn

When the bell is rung, please stand to sing.

1 It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
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 heav'nly 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 blessèd angels sing.

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 man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of 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.

words: Edmund Sears; music: traditional English, arr. Arthur Sullivan

During the hymn, the Choir and Ministers enter, carrying with them the Baby Jesus to set in the Crib.

The Welcome

When peaceful silence lay over all and night was in the midst of her swift course, from your royal throne, O God, down from the heavens, leapt your almighty Word.

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.

The Priest introduces the service.

Prayers of Penitence

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

He was in the world, and the world was made through him,
yet the world did not know him.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

He was born in poverty and laid in a manger,
because we did not make room for him.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

He came as Prince of Peace,
yet the kings of the earth sought to destroy him.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

May God, who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour,
forgive you your sins and make you holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Blessing of the Crib

The Ministers go to the Crib, which the Priest blesses. We respond **Amen.**

Gloria in Excelsis

The Choir sings the Angelic Hymn, a Song of God's Glory. During the Gloria*, the Priest censes the Crib and the Babe is laid in the manger.*

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.	*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.*
Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te, gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam, Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.	*We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we thank you for your great glory, O Lord God, King of heaven, God the Father Almighty.*
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris:	*O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father:*
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis; qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram; qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.	*You who take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us; you who take away the sins of the world, hear our prayer; you who sit at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.*
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus: Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.	*For you only are holy, you only are the Lord, you alone are high above all: Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit: in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

The Collect

After a period of silent prayer, the Priest prays the set prayer for this night. During this, a Minister lights all the candles in the Wreath, including, for the first time, the white Christmas candle.

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.

Reading: Hebrews 1.1–4

We sit to hear God's word in scripture.

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.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: John 1.1–14

We stand during the Gospel acclamation.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Today Christ is born: Today the Saviour has come:
Today the angels sing on earth: Glory to God in the highest.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

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. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

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. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

We sit for the Sermon.

Creed

After a period of reflection, we stand to affirm the faith of the Church.

**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 kneel or sit as a Minister leads the intercessions, using the response:

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

At the end we say together:

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Peace

We 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.

We 'pass the peace' to our immediate neighbours with a handshake, bow, or hug. Please be mindful of what is comfortable for one another.

Preparation of the Table

We sing as gifts of bread and wine are brought to the Altar.

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heav'n cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day,
A breastful of milk and a manger full of hay;
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But only his mother in her maiden bliss
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb,
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

words: Christina Rossetti; music: Gustav Holst

The Priest may say:

Pray brothers and sisters, that this my sacrifice and yours
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good, and the good of all his holy Church.

The Priest prays over the gifts and we respond **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

It is traditional to stand or kneel throughout the Eucharistic Prayer, but please do whatever helps you to pray.

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.

The Priest praises God for his mighty acts, and especially tonight because God took on our humanity in order to save us from sin.

The Choir then sings:

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis!	*Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!*
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis!	*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!*

The Priest continues by recalling the Last Supper, before we respond:

Great is the mystery of Faith.
Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

The prayer continues and leads into the final praise, to which we respond

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us.

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.

Breaking of the Bread

We break the bread of life,
and that life is the light of the world.
Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.

The choir sing the Agnus Dei *as the bread is broken.*

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: miserere nobis.	*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.*
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: miserere nobis.	*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.*
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: dona nobis pacem.	*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world: grant us peace.*

Communion

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven.
Lord, give us this bread always.

All are now welcome to come forward to the Altar.

If you are baptized and have received Holy Communion before, in any church, you are welcome to receive tonight.

If you need a gluten-free wafer, please bring this booklet up with you.

If you are not receiving Communion today, for any reason, you are welcome to receive a Blessing. Please come forward to the Altar with your arms crossed over your chest.

During Communion, the Choir sing an Anthem.

We all then sing:

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!

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!

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!

words: Joseph Mohr, trans. John Freeman Young; music: Franz Grüber

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

Closing Hymn

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!

God of God, light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God, begotten not created:

See how the Shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps:

Sing, choirs of Angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God in the Highest:

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

words: 18th century Latin, trans. Frederick Oakeley et al.; *music: J.F. Wade; descant: David Willcocks*

The Blessing and Dismissal

The Priest gives God's blessing, which ends

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

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.
Thanks be to God.

There is a basket and contactless donation point for our Christmas Appeal as you exit.

Please return this booklet as you leave, and have a very Happy Christmas!



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