

GLOUCESTER  
CATHEDRAL

# **The Holy Eucharist**

*The Holy Innocents*

Sunday 28 December 2025  
10.15 a.m.

# Safeguarding

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**If someone is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999.**

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Please turn off any mobile devices.



For safeguarding, photography and videography are not permitted during services.



An induction loop is available for those using hearing aids. Please turn your hearing aid to the 'T' position.



Large print booklets are available on request. Please ask a steward.

# Welcome

Welcome to Gloucester Cathedral. There has been a place of worship on this site for over 1,300 years. Today, we join with the generations of people who have gone before us and with the whole company of heaven in the worship of God.

The Eucharist, which means 'thanksgiving', is perhaps the most important act of worship for Christians because it recalls the death and resurrection of Jesus, fulfilling his command at the Last Supper to remember him. Outwardly, the Eucharist takes the form of sharing bread and wine; inwardly, Christ is made present to us in a special way, and we are given a taste of the heavenly banquet, which God has prepared for those who love him.

If you are new and would like to discover more about congregational life, please do introduce yourself to a member of the clergy at the end of the service. There is also information about being part of the cathedral congregation on the website. You can contact the Cathedral clergy by emailing: [clergy@gloucestercathedral.org.uk](mailto:clergy@gloucestercathedral.org.uk)



*The service is sung by the Lay Clerks of Gloucester Cathedral*

*The musical setting of the Eucharist is*  
MISSA DE ANGELIS

*The president is the Succentor*  
*The Reverend Canon Michael Garland*

*The preacher is the Canon Precentor*  
*The Reverend Canon Craig Huxley-Jones*

# ¶ *The Gathering*

*The congregation is invited to join in the words printed in **bold**.*

*At 10.15 a.m., the congregation stands to sing the processional hymn*



Angels from the realms of glory,  
wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
ye who sang creation's story  
now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
***Come and worship Christ the new-born King.***

Shepherds in the field abiding,  
watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing;  
yonder shines the infant Light:  
***Come and worship Christ the new-born King.***

Sages, leave your contemplations,  
brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great Desire of Nations;  
ye have seen his natal star:  
***Come and worship Christ the new-born King.***

**Saints, before the altar bending,  
watching long in hope and fear,  
suddenly the Lord, descending,  
in his temple shall appear:  
*Come and worship Christ the new-born King.***

**Though an infant now we view him,  
he shall fill his Father's throne,  
gather all the nations to him;  
every knee shall then bow down:  
*Come and worship Christ the new-born King.***

*Words, from Iris 1816 and The Christmas Box 1825;  
vv. 1-4, James Montgomery 1771-1854*

*Tune, IRIS; French traditional carol, harmonised by Martin Shaw 1875-1958*

*The president greets the people*

**+ In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.**

**All Amen.**

## **The Greeting**

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

*The president gives a welcome and introduces the service.*

## **The Prayer of Preparation**

**All 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.**

## The Prayers of Penitence

*The deacon says*

On this day when we recall the murder of innocent lives,  
let us stand before our just and holy God,  
and remembering the violence and injustice of our world,  
confess our sins in penitence and faith.

You are the God of the weak and the vulnerable.

Lord, have mercy.

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

You judge the tyrant and the cruel.

Christ, have mercy.

*All* **Christ, have mercy.**

You wipe away the tears of the broken-hearted.

Lord, have mercy.

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

*The president gives 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.

*All* **Amen.**

## **Gloria in Excelsis**

*The cantor 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 president introduces a period of silent prayer, singing*

Let us pray.

*Silence is kept.*

Heavenly Father,  
whose children suffered at the hands of Herod,  
though they had done no wrong:  
by the suffering of your Son  
and by the innocence of our lives  
frustrate all evil designs  
and establish your reign of justice and peace;  
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.



*The congregation sits.*



# ¶ *The Liturgy of the Word*

## Old Testament Reading

A reading from the prophecy of Jeremiah.

Thus says the Lord:

A voice is heard in Ramah,

lamentation and bitter weeping.

Rachel is weeping for her children;

she refuses to be comforted for her children,

because they are no more.

Thus says the Lord:

Keep your voice from weeping,

and your eyes from tears;

for there is a reward for your work,

says the Lord:

they shall come back from the land of the enemy;

there is hope for your future,

says the Lord:

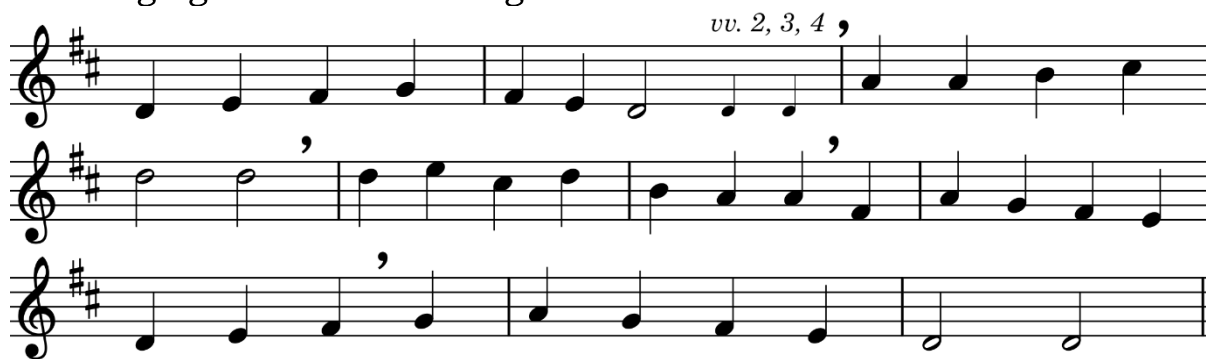
your children shall come back to their own country.

31.15-17

This is the word of the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

*The congregation stands to sing*



**1. Unto us a boy is born!  
The King of all creation,  
came he to a world forlorn,  
the Lord of every nation.**

**2. Cradled in a stall was he  
with sleepy cows and asses;  
but the very beasts could see  
that he the world surpasses.**

**4. Now may Mary's son, who came  
so long ago to love us,  
lead us all with hearts aflame  
unto the joys above us.**

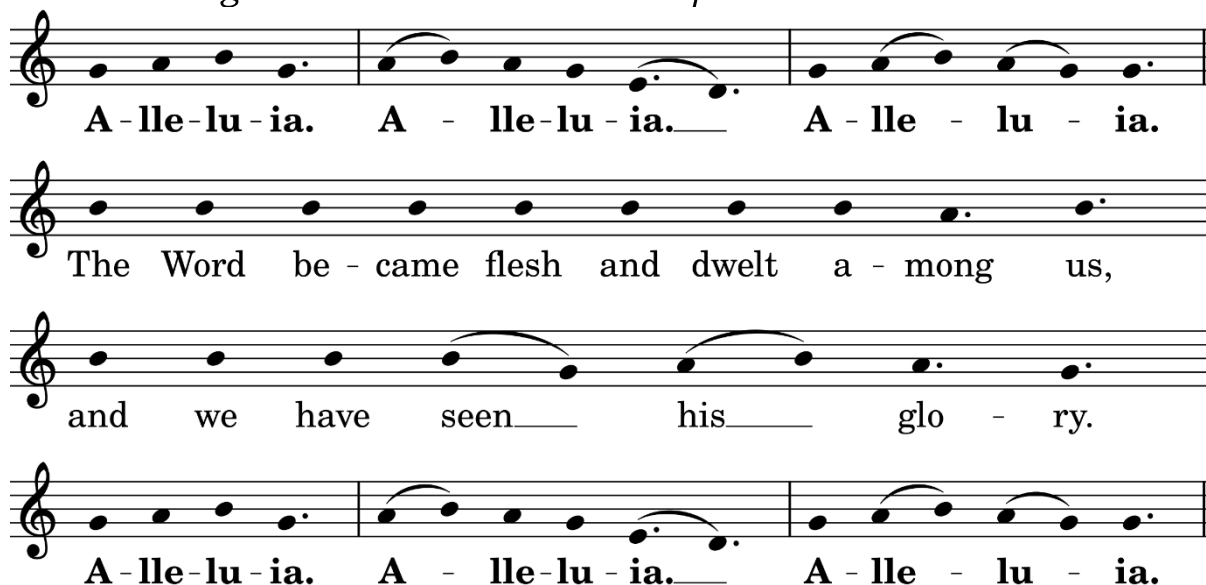
**3. Herod then with fear was filled:  
'A prince,' he said, 'in Jewry!'  
All the little boys he killed  
at Bethl'hem in his fury.**

**5. Omega and Alpha he!  
Let the organ thunder,  
while the choir with peals of glee  
doth rend the air asunder.**

*Words, Latin, 15<sup>th</sup> century  
Music, from Piæ Cantiones 1582*

## Gospel Reading

*The choir sings the Acclamation and all repeat*



*When the Gospel is announced, the deacon says*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew.



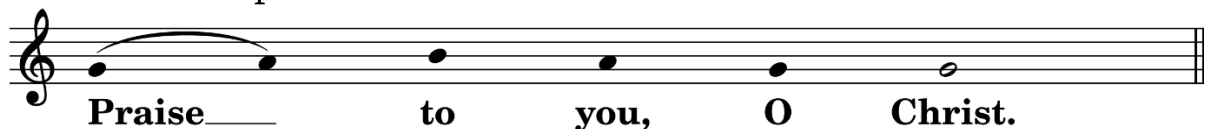
Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

'A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'

*2.13-18*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



## **Sermon**

*The congregation sits.*

# The Creed

*The congregation stands and the president says*

Let us declare our faith in God.

*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.**

# The Prayers of Intercession

*The president says*

In peace let us pray to the God of love.

*The congregation sits.*

Righteous God,  
your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ dwelt among us  
and shared our grief and our pain.

We pray for the children of our world,  
that they may grow up knowing love and security.

*Silence is kept.*

We pray for all children who suffer physical or mental abuse.

*Silence is kept.*

We pray for all communities in our world  
who live with the memories of massacre and gross cruelty.

*Silence is kept.*

We pray for all who are corrupted by power  
and who regard human life as cheap.

*Silence is kept.*

We pray for parents who have suffered the death of a child.

*Silence is kept.*

We pray for parents and guardians,  
that they may be given grace to care for the children entrusted to them.

*Silence is kept.*

*The president says*

As we celebrate the coming of the Christ-child,  
we rejoice in the fellowship of the Holy Innocents  
and commit the children of this community,  
our nation and our world to you,  
our righteous God.

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

# ¶ *The Liturgy of the Eucharist*

## **The Peace**

‘I will comfort you,’ says the Lord, ‘as a mother comforts her child,  
and you shall be comforted.’

*Isaiah 66.13*

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

*The deacon says*

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

*All may exchange a sign of peace.*

## **Preparation of the Table**

*As the altar is prepared, the congregation remains standing to sing*



**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, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign.  
In the bleak midwinter 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 mangerful of hay;  
Enough for him, whom angels fall 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 only, 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 1830-94  
*Tune*, CRANHAM; Gustav Holst 1874-1934

## **Taking of the Bread and Wine**

*The president says*

Pour upon the poverty of our love,  
and the weakness of our praise,  
the transforming fire of your presence.

*All* **Amen.**

# The Eucharistic Prayer

*President*  
The Lord be with you and also with you.

*President* *All*  
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

*President*  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*All*  
It is right to give thanks and praise.

*The president recalls God's mighty acts*

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,  
mighty creator, ever-living God,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
In love for our fallen human race,  
you sent your Son into the world to lighten our darkness.  
In his life he rejoiced in the innocence and beauty of children;  
in his death he carried in his body the violence and cruelty of our world;  
in his resurrection he brought life and salvation to his people  
and began the new creation.  
As our ascended and merciful high priest,  
he hears our cries and knows our grief;  
and will come as universal Lord to whom all must give account.  
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:

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 president recalls the Last Supper*

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;  
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
and according to your holy will,  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

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.

Great is the mystery of faith:



And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,  
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world;  
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,  
and looking for his coming in glory,  
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.  
As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,  
we bring before you this bread and this cup  
and we thank you for counting us worthy  
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people  
 and gather into one in your kingdom  
 all who share this one bread and one cup,  
 so that we, in the company of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
 Peter, Benedict, Kyneburga, and all the saints,  
 may praise and glorify you for ever,  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord;  
 by whom, and with whom, and in whom,  
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,  
 for ever and ever.



*The congregation sits.*

## The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us,  
 each in our own language

<i>All</i> <b>Our Father,</b>	<b>Notre Père...</b>
<b>who art in heaven,</b>	
<b>hallowed be thy name;</b>	<b>Vater Unser...</b>
<b>thy kingdom come;</b>	
<b>thy will be done;</b>	<b>Onze Vader...</b>
<b>on earth as it is in heaven.</b>	
<b>Give us this day our daily bread.</b>	<b>Padre Nuestro...</b>
<b>And forgive us our trespasses,</b>	
<b>as we forgive those who trespass against us.</b>	<b>Ojcze Nasz...</b>
<b>And lead us not into temptation;</b>	
<b>but deliver us from evil.</b>	<b>Baba Yetu...</b>
<b>For thine is the kingdom,</b>	
<b>the power and the glory,</b>	<b>E to matou Matua...</b>
<b>for ever and ever.</b>	
<b>Amen.</b>	<b>Ein Tad...</b>

## Breaking of the Bread

*The president breaks the consecrated bread, saying*

We break this bread  
to share in the body of Christ.

*All* **Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

*The cantor sings the Angus Dei*

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.

## Giving of Communion

*The president says the invitation to communion*

Jesus is the Lamb of God  
who takes away the sin of the world.  
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

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

*The president and people receive Communion.*

*If it is your custom to receive Communion in your own church, you are welcome to do so today. If you would rather receive a blessing, please bring this order of service with you so that we may know how best to minister to you. Communion is offered in both bread and wine, though you may wish to receive the bread only. For hygiene reasons, intinction (dipping the bread in the wine) is prohibited. If you require a gluten free wafer, please tell the ministers.*

## Prayer after Communion

*The president introduces a period of silent prayer, saying*

Let us pray.

*Silence is kept.*

Lord Jesus Christ,

in your humility you have stooped to share our human life  
with the most defenceless of your children:

may we who have received these gifts of your passion

rejoice in celebrating the witness of the Holy Innocents

to the purity of your sacrifice

made once for all upon the cross;

for you are alive and reign, now and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

*All* **Almighty God,**

**we thank you for feeding us**

**with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.**

**Through him we offer you our souls and bodies**

**to be a living sacrifice.**

**Send us out in the power of your Spirit**

**to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

*Notices are given.*

# ¶ *The Dismissal*

*The congregation stands to sing*



See, amid the winter's snow,  
born for us on earth below,  
see, the Lamb of God appears,  
Promised from eternal years!  
*Hail, thou ever-blessed morn!*  
*Hail, redemption's happy dawn!*  
*Sing through all Jerusalem:*  
*Christ is born in Bethlehem!*

Lo, within a manger lies  
he who built the starry skies,  
he who, throned in height sublime,  
sits amid the cherubim!

Say, ye holy shepherds, say,  
what your joyful news today;  
wherefore have ye left your sheep  
on the lonely mountain steep?

Sacred Infant, all divine,  
what a tender love was thine,  
thus to come from highest bliss  
down to such a world as this!

Words, Edward Caswall 1814-1878  
Tune, HUMILITY; John Goss 1800-1880

## The Blessing

*The president says*

God, who gives life to the dead and comfort to the desolate,  
sustain you, keep you and console you;  
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

*The deacon says*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

*All* **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

*The congregation remains standing for the procession.*

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Material in this Order of Service is taken from *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* and *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, copyright © 2000–2006 the Archbishops' Council. The texts of the Scripture readings are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (Anglicized edition), copyright © 1989, 1994 the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. The words of copyright hymns and songs are reproduced under CCL 1299149. This compilation is copyright © 2025 The Chapter of Gloucester.

# Notices

## **Organ Rebuild**

*From Monday 5 January*

The time has come for the organ to be rebuilt! From Monday 5 January, scaffolding will be built around the Pulpitum Screen to enable this work, which means that there will be more noise than usual during the working week. This will also necessitate Sunday Eucharists in the Quire for 11, 18 and 25 January. We plan to set up the liturgical furniture as it is in the Lady Chapel, so that we can make use of the space in a way which underlines the progression from Word to Sacrament, with ministers moving from the West Quire to the East, where the modern Nave altar will be set up in the Presbytery. Once the scaffolding has been built, worship will return to the Nave. Do speak to Canon Craig if you have any questions.

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## **Prayers for Peace and Justice**

*Tuesday 6 January, 12.00 noon, Lady Chapel and on Zoom*

Twenty minutes of spoken and silent prayer for peace, justice and human rights. This month's focus will be World Leprosy Day on 26 January. To join online, email [reception@gloucestercathedral.org.uk](mailto:reception@gloucestercathedral.org.uk) and to submit a prayer, email [clergy@gloucestercathedral.org.uk](mailto:clergy@gloucestercathedral.org.uk)

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## **Cathedral Community Coffee Morning**

*Wednesday 7 January, 10.30 a.m.–11.30 a.m., Monk's Kitchen*

All welcome for coffee and friendly conversation. Contact Barbara Merrick on 01452 504376 or [congregation@gloucestercathedral.org.uk](mailto:congregation@gloucestercathedral.org.uk)

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## **Cathedral Book Club**

*Monday 8 January, 2.00 p.m.–3.00 p.m., Laud Room*

This month we will meet for a discussion of *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf.

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## **Sip and Study: Cathedral Lectio Group**

*Tuesday 13 January, 2.30 p.m.–3.45 p.m., Prinknash Abbey*

Join our monthly gathering using Lectio Divina to reflect on Scripture. Arrive any time from 1.00 p.m. for lunch, coffee or cake. No previous experience needed. Contact Barbara Merrick on 01452 504376 or [congregation@gloucestercathedral.org.uk](mailto:congregation@gloucestercathedral.org.uk)

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