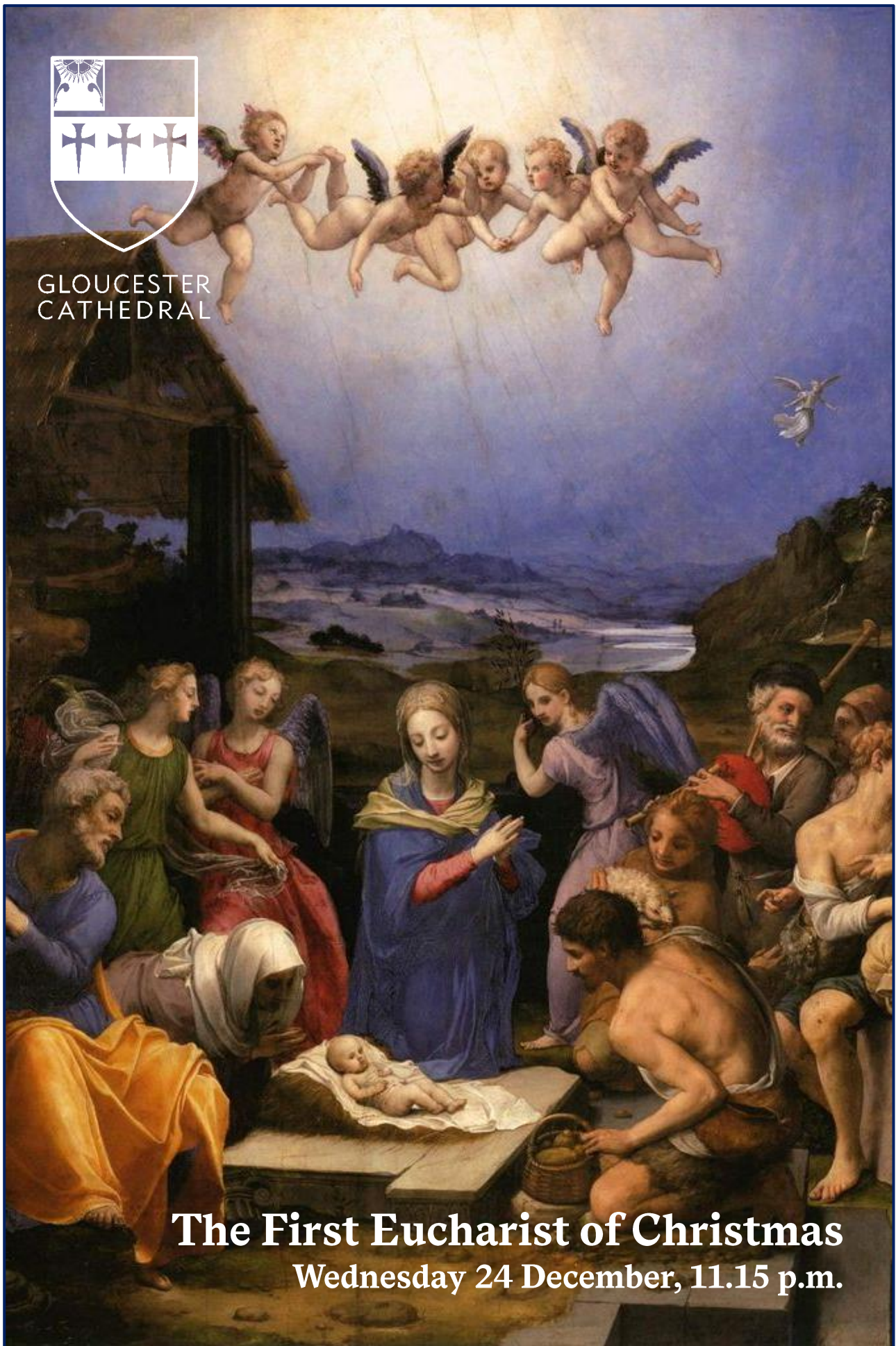




GLOUCESTER
CATHEDRAL



The First Eucharist of Christmas
Wednesday 24 December, 11.15 p.m.

Safeguarding

Gloucester Cathedral is committed to being a **safe** and **welcoming** place for **all**. The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in the life of the Cathedral is everyone's responsibility.

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

If you have a safeguarding concern here at Gloucester Cathedral, you should email: safeguarding@gloucestercathedral.org.uk



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.

Introduction

Midnight Mass is the first act of worship of Christmastide, when all that has been anticipated throughout the Advent season is brought to fulfilment in the birth of Christ, the promised Messiah.

The Gospel reading is not one of the accounts of the Nativity, but John's poetic, if sometimes perplexing, *Prologue*, in which he gives a deeper explanation of who Jesus is. The 'Word' of God was present before the foundation of the universe; the 'Word' is the creative power of God, by which all creation came to be, for it is by God speaking that all things were made. '*God said, 'Let there be light.'*' The whole passage builds to a profound crescendo with John's famous expression, 'And the Word became flesh and lived among us.' This 'Word', this God who created all things, is born as a tiny, vulnerable child, revealing in flesh the fulness of God's glory, grace, and truth.

That is why this first act of worship at Christmas happens in the context of Holy Communion, because in the outward signs of bread and wine, Christ is made present to us in a special way, when the president recalls Jesus' own words, 'This is my body, my blood, which is given for you.'

So, as we begin our Christmas celebrations, remember that whatever is on your heart, whether this season is joyful or tinged with pain and sadness, remember above all things that Christ is very near.



The service is sung by the Trinity Singers of Gloucester Cathedral

The musical setting of the Eucharist is
MISSA BREVIS BY JONATHAN DOVE

The president and preacher is the Dean of Gloucester
The Very Reverend Andrew Zihni

¶ *The Gathering*

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

At 11.15 p.m., the congregation stands to sing the processional hymn



**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.**

The president places the Christ-child in the Nativity Scene and says

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.



**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.**

Words, Phillips Brooks 1835-93

Tune, FOREST GREEN; English traditional melody

Arranged, Sir David Willcocks 1919-2015

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 congregation sits.

The president gives a welcome and introduces the service.

The Proclamation of the Birth of Christ

The president says

Throughout the season of Advent,
the Church has reflected on God's promises,
so often spoken by the prophets,
to send a Saviour to the people of Israel
who would be Emmanuel, that is, God with us.
In the fullness of time those promises were fulfilled.
With hearts full of joy let us listen
to the proclamation of our Saviour's birth.

The cantor sings

The Twenty-fifth Day of December,
when ages beyond number had run their course
from the creation of the world,
when God, in the beginning, created heaven and earth,
and formed humankind in his own likeness;
when century upon century had passed
since the Almighty set his bow in the clouds after the Great Flood
as a sign of covenant and peace,
in the twenty-first century since Abraham, our father in faith,
came out of Ur of the Chaldees;
in the thirteenth century since the People of Israel
were led by Moses in the Exodus from Egypt;
around the thousandth year since David was anointed King;
in the sixty-fifth week of the prophecy of Daniel;
in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;
in the year seven hundred and fifty-two
since the foundation of the City of Rome;
in the forty-second year of the reign of Caesar Octavian Augustus,
the whole world being at peace;
Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,
desiring to consecrate the world by his most loving presence,
was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and when nine months had passed since his conception,
was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Juda, and was made man.
The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

The final candle on the Advent wreath is lit.

Prayers of Penitence

The deacon says

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.

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 **Christ, 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 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 congregation stands and the choir sings

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax
hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te,
gratias agimus tibi propter
magnam gloriam tuam.

*Glory to God in the highest,
and in earth peace,
goodwill to all people.
We praise you, we bless you,
we worship you, we glorify you,
we give thanks to you
for your great glory.*

Domine Deus, Rex cælestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite,
Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,
Filius Patris,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram,
qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.

*Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us,
who takes away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer,
who sits 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 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 in the peace of this Christmas celebration
that our joy in the birth of Christ will last for ever.

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.



The congregation sits.

¶ *The Liturgy of the Word*

Old Testament Reading

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.

52.7-10

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

The congregation stands to sing



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 holy fear;
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps:

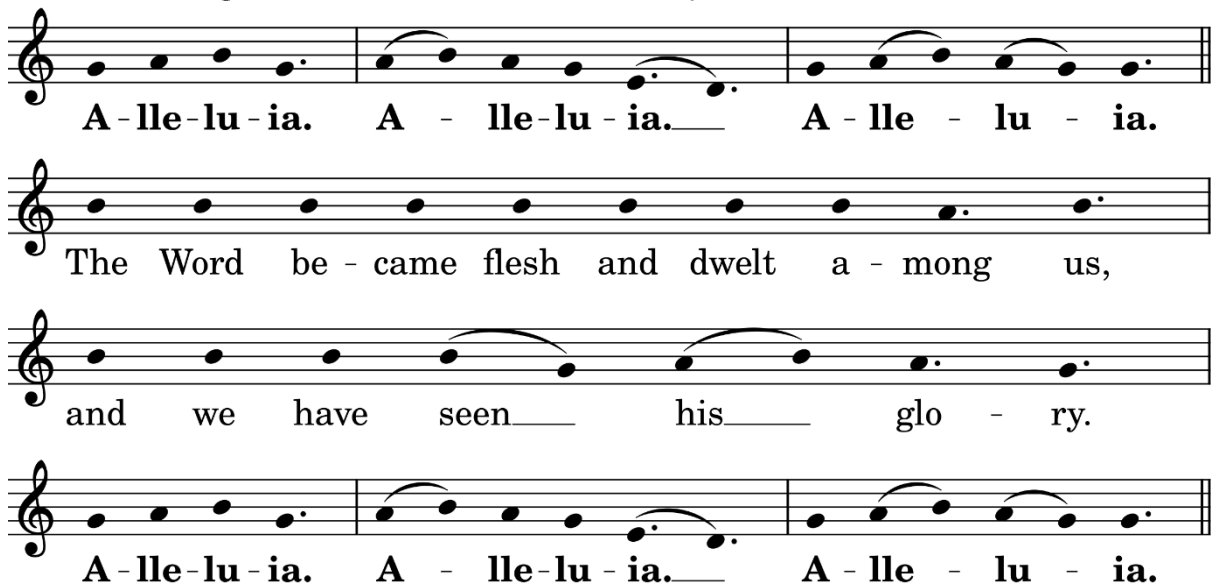
Sing, choirs of Angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God in the highest:

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

Words, Latin 18th century; translated, Frederick Oakeley 1802-80 and others
Tune, ADESTE FIDELES; melody probably by J. F. Wade 1711-86
Arranged, Sir David Willcocks 1919-2015

Gospel Reading

The choir sings the Acclamation and all repeat



A - lle - lu - ia. A - lle - lu - ia. A - lle - lu - ia.

The Word be - came flesh and dwelt a - mong us,

and we have seen his glo - ry.

A - lle - lu - ia. A - lle - lu - ia. A - lle - lu - ia.

The musical notation consists of four staves. The first staff contains three measures of the acclamation 'A - lle - lu - ia.' with a repeat sign at the end. The second staff contains the text 'The Word be - came flesh and dwelt a - mong us,'. The third staff contains the text 'and we have seen his glo - ry.' with a repeat sign at the end. The fourth staff contains three measures of the acclamation 'A - lle - lu - ia.' with a repeat sign at the end.

When the Gospel is announced, the deacon says

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



Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

The musical notation consists of a single staff with six measures of the text 'Glo - ry to you, O Lord.'.

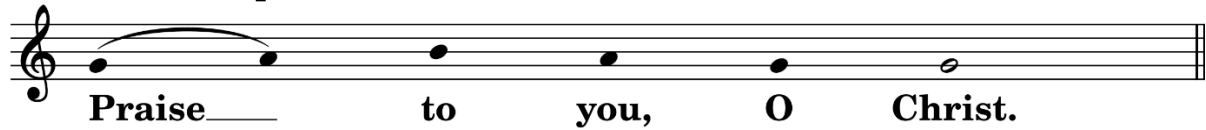
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines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

1.1-14

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Sermon

The congregation sits.

The Affirmation of Faith

The congregation stands and the president says

We proclaim the Church's faith in Jesus Christ.

All **We believe and declare that our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Son of God, is both divine and human.**

God, of the being of the Father,
the only Son from before time began;
human from the being of his mother, born in the world;

All **fully God and fully human;
human in both mind and body.**

As God he is equal to the Father,
as human he is less than the Father.

All **Although he is both divine and human
he is not two beings but one Christ.**

One, not by turning God into flesh,
but by taking humanity into God;

All **truly one, not by mixing humanity with Godhead,
but by being one person.**

For as mind and body form one human being
so the one Christ is both divine and human.

All **The Word became flesh and lived among us;
we have seen his glory,
the glory of the only Son from the Father,
full of grace and truth.**

Prayers of Intercession

The president says

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

The congregation sits.

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 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 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 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 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.**

The president says

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

The congregation stands.

The president says

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

Luke 2.14

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All **and also with you.**

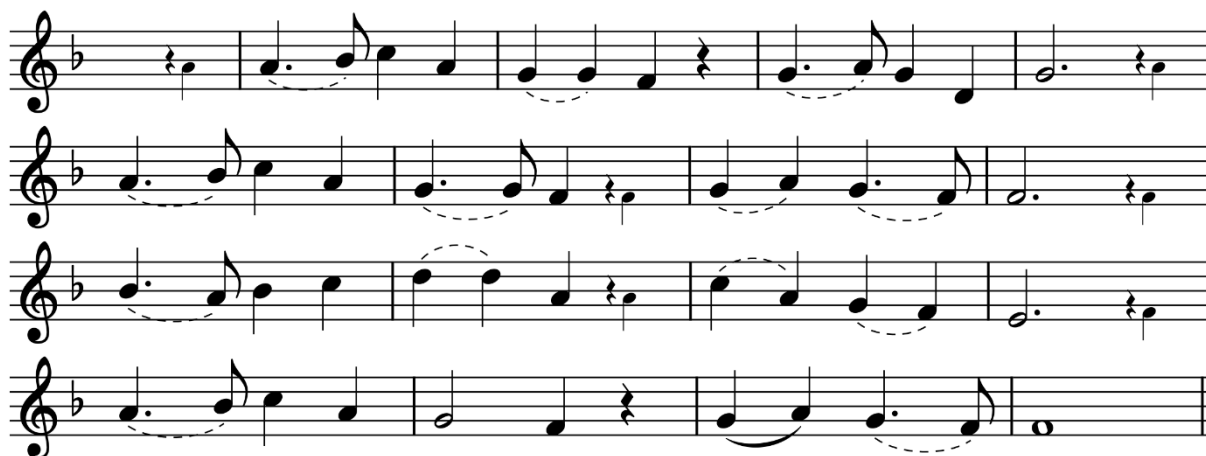
The deacon says

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

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

The musical notation consists of four staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and half notes) and rests, with some notes beamed together. The lyrics are as follows:

President The Lord be with you *All* and al - so with you.

President Lift up your hearts. *All* 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.

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:

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt cæli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of power and might,
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.*

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.

Christ has died: Christ is ris - en: Christ will come___ a - gain.

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:

Bless - ing and hon - our and glo - ry and power

be yours for ev - er and ev - er. A - men.

The congregation sits.

The Lord's Prayer

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

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

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread, saying

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.

Giving of Communion

The president says the invitation to communion

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

All **Lord, give us this bread always.**

The president and people receive Communion; please follow the direction of the stewards.

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 go to the front of the Cathedral.

The choir sings the Agnus Dei

*Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.*

*Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.*

*Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.*

*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.*

Prayer after Communion

The president introduces a period of silent prayer, saying

Let us pray.

Silence is kept.

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.

**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.**

¶ *The Dismissal*

The congregation stands to sing



**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.***

**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 the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel:
*Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.***

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

*Words, Charles Wesley 1707-88
Tune, MENDELSSOHN; F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy 1809-47
Arranged, Sir David Willcocks 1919-2015*

The Blessing

The president says

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.**

The congregation remains standing as the choir and ministers depart.

The organist plays

Dieu parmi nous, *La Nativité du Seigneur* Olivier Messiaen 1908-1992

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