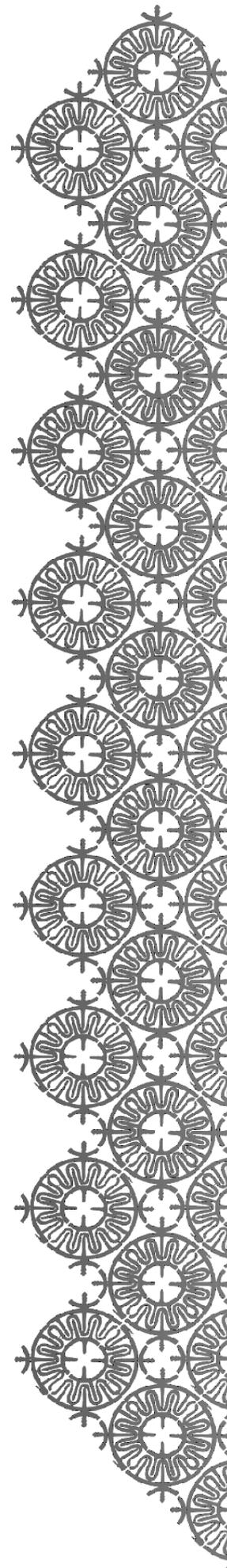


Rochester
CATHEDRAL

The Eucharist of Christmas Night

24th December 2020
at 11.30pm





Growing in Christ since AD604

Welcome to Rochester Cathedral – a place of Christian worship since AD604.

Please help us to keep staff, visitors and worshippers safe by following guidance and instructions, wearing a mask, observing social distancing and using the sanitisers at the entrances and exits.

The president will sanitise their hands regularly (and, in particular, before the distribution of Holy Communion). Holy Communion is administered in silence and the consecrated wafer is dropped into the hands of communicants. The president will wear a mask.

Please note that this service may be recorded and/or livestreamed for those unable to attend in person. If you do not wish to appear on camera, please speak to a member of staff. For online services, prayer and other devotional material, please visit our website:

www.rochestercathedral.org/worship-online

**On behalf of the Chapter and staff of Rochester Cathedral,
we wish you a very Happy Christmas.**



Please do not take photographs,
sound or video recordings during the service.
As part of our safeguarding, no photography of children
is permitted in the Cathedral.



An induction loop system is installed in the Cathedral.
Hearing aid users should adjust their aid to T.



Large print orders of service are available.

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The Gathering

At 11.25 the Dean of Rochester welcomes the congregation

Stand as the clergy enter in procession

During the Introit, the Deacon carries the image of the Baby Jesus (the Word made flesh) to the Nativity Scene in the North Nave Transept and then carries the Book of the Gospels (the Word of God) from the Nativity Scene to the Altar

Introit

sung by the choir

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 This is the truth sent from above,
The truth of God, the God of love;
Therefore don't turn me from your door,
But hearken all, both rich and poor. | 3 Thus we were heirs to endless woes
Till God the Lord did interpose;
And so a promise soon did run:
That he would redeem us by his Son. |
| 2 The first thing which I do relate,
Is that God did man create;
The next thing which to you I'll tell
Woman was made with man to dwell. | 4 And at this season of the year
Our blest Redeemer did appear,
He here did live, and here did preach,
And many thousands he did teach. |
| 5 Thus he in love to us behaved,
To show us how we must be saved;
And if you want to know the way,
Be pleased to hear what he did say. | |

*English Traditional Carol
arr. R Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)*

Bishop ✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

The Greeting

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

All and also with you.

Introduction

Bishop Dear friends, we meet in this holy night
to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ,
born of the Virgin Mary, the Word made flesh;
let us worship and adore him
and pray that we may come to share his life in glory;
for to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.
Glory to God in the highest

All and peace to his people on earth.

Prayers of Penitence

Deacon 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.

After a silence

Deacon 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.

Bishop 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.

Gloria in Excelsis

sung by the choir

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.
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.

*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.*

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe: Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Lord God, Lamb of God,
Filius Patris, qui tollis peccata mundi, you take away the sin of the world:
miserere nobis. have mercy on us;
Qui tollis peccata mundi, you are seated at the right
suscipe deprecationem nostram. hand of the Father:
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, receive our prayer.
miserere nobis.

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.*

Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

Messe Solennelle

(If you need to sit during the Gloria, please do so)

The Collect

Bishop Let us pray in the peace of this Christmas celebration
that our joy in the birth of Christ will last for ever.

After a short period of silent prayer:

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 our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

Sit

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading: Isaiah 9.2-7

A reading from the prophecy of 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.

Reader For the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Second Reading: Titus 2.11-14

A reading from the letter of Paul to Titus.

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Reader For the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Stand

As the Gospel is carried to the lectern, the choir sing the first verse of 'O come, all ye faithful'

Gospel Reading: Luke 2.1-20

Deacon Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

All Alleluia.

Deacon The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Deacon 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.

Deacon This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

After the Gospel, the choir sing the final verse of 'O come, all ye faithful'

Once the sermon is announced, please sit

Sermon

by the Bishop of Rochester

Stand

The Creed

Bishop Let us declare our faith in God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**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

Bishop In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Kneel or sit

Deacon 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.

We pray for refugees and war victims stricken by winter and all who
seek neighbours they can trust.

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, remembering
particularly the holy lands of the Middle East where our Saviour was
born.

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.**

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

Stand

The Peace

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

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

Preparation of the Table

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

All **Amen.**

Stand

The Eucharistic Prayer

Bishop The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

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

Bishop Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Bishop 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:

Choir	<p>Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.</p>	<p><i>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.</i></p>
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Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

Messe Solennelle

Bishop

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.

Deacon Great is the mystery of faith.
All Christ has died: Christ is risen: Christ will come again.

Bishop 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:

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

Kneel or sit

The Lord's Prayer

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

**All 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

Bishop 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

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

All Lord, give us this bread always.

Bishop The body and blood of Christ.

All Amen.

The Bishop and people receive communion

(If you are not a communicant, you are welcome to come forward to receive a blessing)

***At the distribution, Holy Communion is administered in silence.
The consecrated wafer is dropped into the hands of communicants.
Please maintain 2 metre distance whilst waiting to receive.***

Choir Agnus Dei, qui tollis
peccata mundi,
miserere nobis,
dona nobis pacem.

*Lamb of God,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us,
grant us peace.*

Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

Messe Solennelle

In the bleak mid-winter ~ Harold Darke (1888-1976)

Prayer after Communion

Bishop Let us pray.

Stand

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 You have opened to us the Scriptures, O Christ,
and you have made yourself known
in the breaking of the bread.
Abide with us, we pray,
that, blessed by your royal presence,
we may walk with you
all the days of our life,
and at its end behold you
in the glory of the eternal Trinity,
one God for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Dismissal

Blessing

Bishop The Lord be with you
All **and also with you.**

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.**

Deacon Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.
All **Glory, thanks and praise to God.**

Organ Voluntary: Finale from Symphony No. 6 ~ Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937)

Please leave this booklet on your seat or take it home with you

The Cathedral Church of Christ
and the Blessed Virgin Mary

