



# The Cathedral Eucharist on Christmas Morning



*Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> December 2025  
at 10:30am*



# Welcome to Coventry Cathedral

We are delighted that you have been able to join us  
this Christmas Morning.

In this service, we say the words in **bold** together,  
and invite you to stand and sit as indicated.  
However, please stay seated if you prefer.

If you have brought small children, thank you! Feel free to explore the space with them, and to use the toys and books provided.

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The President today is the Very Reverend John Witcombe, Dean of Coventry. The Right Reverend Sophie Jelley, Bishop of Coventry, is preaching. The Deacon is the Reverend Kate Massey, Canon for Arts and Reconciliation and the Reverend Nitano Muller, Canon for Worship and Welcome is the subdeacon.

The Cathedral Choir is directed by Joe Watson, Acting Director of Music. The organist is Liam Condon, Assistant Director of Music.

The Setting today is the Communion Service in B Flat by Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924).

The artwork on the front cover is a detail from *Nativity in initial letter H* by Don Simone Camaldoiese (1400)

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# **The Gathering**

*The Very Reverend John Witcombe, Dean of Coventry, welcomes the congregation and invites them to STAND for the acclamation.*

## **Acclamation**

*The Reverend Kate Massey, Canon for Arts and Reconciliation, deacon, says from the Great Pulpit:*

Today, in the city of David, a Saviour has been born to you:

**All: he is Christ the Lord.**

The Word is made flesh and lives among us:

**All: the glory of the Lord is revealed.**

The glory as of the only Son from the Father:

**All: full of grace and truth.**

Alleluia! God has come to us.

**All: O come, let us adore him! Alleluia!**

## **Carol**

*As we sing, the procession moves to the chancel.*

**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:**

**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 from 18th century Latin translated by F. Oakeley (1802-1880) and others

Tune Adeste Fideles probably by J. F. Wade (1711-1786),  
arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

## **The Greeting**

We remain standing. The Very Reverend John Witcombe, Dean of Coventry, presiding, says:

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

All: **And also with you.**

## **The Lighting of the Advent Candles**

The candle for Christmas Day on the Advent Wreath is lit as the president says:

God our Father,  
today the Saviour is born  
and those who live in darkness are seeing a great light.  
Help us, who greet the birth of Christ with joy,  
to live in the light of your Son  
and to share the good news of your love.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
the light who has come into the world.

All: **Amen.**

## Prayers of Penitence

*The deacon says:*

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph:  
'You shall call his name Jesus,  
for he will save his people from their sins.'  
Therefore, let us seek the forgiveness of God  
through Jesus the Saviour of the world.

*After a short pause, the deacon leads everyone in saying:*

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 prays:*

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

**All: Amen.**

## **Gloria in Excelsis**

We remain standing as the choir sings the *Gloria*:

*Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards 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 most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

## **The Collect**

*The president introduces a time of silent prayer, after which he offers the Collect for the day:*

Almighty God,  
you have given us your only-begotten Son  
to take our nature upon him  
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:  
grant that we, who have been born again  
and made your children by adoption and grace,  
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;  
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.**

# **The Liturgy of the Word**

## **The First Reading**

We SIT for the First Reading, read by Martin R. Williams, Cathedral Churchwarden and representative of the Friends of the Cathedral.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.**

## The Gospel Acclamation

We STAND. As we prepare to hear the Gospel Reading, we join with the choir, singing the words in bold:

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
All: **Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**



The choir sings the acclamation:

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

We respond:

All: **Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

## The Gospel

We turn to face the deacon. The deacon introduces the Gospel:

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.  
All: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> 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:

<sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

<sup>15</sup> 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.’ <sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

*Luke 2:1 – 20*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*There may follow a short organ improvisation.*

## **The Sermon**

*The Right Reverend Sophie Jelley, Bishop of Coventry, preaching, prays and then we SIT for the sermon. After the sermon silence is kept.*

## The Nicene Creed

We STAND and the president introduces the Creed.

Let us affirm our faith in God, who dwells in our midst:

**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;  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate of 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.  
With the Father and the Son  
he is worshipped and glorified.  
He 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**

*The president introduces the intercessions:*

In the joy and hope of Christ's birth,  
and in the power of the Spirit, let us pray to God the Father.

We *SIT as the Reverend Nitano Muller, Canon for Worship and Welcome, subdeacon, leads the prayers of intercession.*

In the joy of this Christmas morning,  
let us pray to the God who chooses nearness.

For the Church,  
that like the angels it may learn again the language of praise,  
and like the shepherds the courage to go and see,  
making room for wonder even in familiar fields.  
Lord of light,  
**hear our prayer.**

For the world you love,  
for nations still walking in deep shadow,  
for leaders who carry heavy authority,  
that the wisdom of the child of Bethlehem  
may unsettle violence and reimagine power.  
Lord of peace,  
**hear our prayer.**

For this city and this Cathedral,  
marked by destruction and shaped by hope,  
that the promise spoken over ruins  
may continue to become flesh among us,  
turning scars into signs of grace.  
Lord of reconciliation,  
**hear our prayer.**

For all who wake this morning with more grief than gladness,  
for the lonely, the displaced, the fearful,  
and for those whose nights are long with pain or regret,  
that the light no darkness can overcome  
may find them where they are.  
Lord of compassion,  
**hear our prayer.**

For ourselves, gathered at your table,  
that receiving the bread of heaven  
we may become bread for others,  
bearing Christ into the ordinary hours ahead.  
Lord of life,  
**hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, loving God,  
we place all for whom we pray,  
trusting the promise made flesh among us,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## ***The Liturgy of the Sacrament***

### **The Peace**

We **STAND**. *The president introduces the Peace:*

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

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.

*Everyone shares the Peace.*

## The Offertory Hymn

We remain STANDING to sing the hymn.

**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?**

**'As we watched at dead of night,  
lo, we saw a wondrous light;  
angels, singing "Peace on earth",  
told us of a Saviour's birth.'**

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

**Teach, O teach us, holy Child,  
by thy face so meek and mild,  
teach us to resemble thee  
in thy sweet humility.**

Words by Edward Caswall (1814-1878)  
Tune CP 67 Humility John Goss (1800-1880)

## The Eucharistic Prayer

The president sings, and we join in with the words in bold:



The Lord be with you R and al-so with you.



Lift up your hearts. R We lift them to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



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 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:

*The choir sings the Sanctus:*

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord most High. Amen.  
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

*The president continues:*

We praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

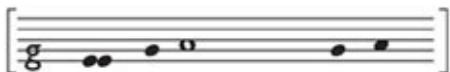
On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them 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.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice  
made once for all upon the cross.  
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

*The deacon introduces, and we respond with the words in bold:*



Great is the mystery of faith:



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

*The prayer continues:*

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with Michael, Mary, Joseph and all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

All: **Amen.**

Silence is kept.

## The Lord's Prayer

We SIT. Please feel free to say the Lord's Prayer in any language or version you feel comfortable with. If you are able, we encourage you to pray in German as a way of expressing our close partnerships with German churches, schools and chaplaincies.

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

**Vater unser im Himmel,  
Geheiligt werde dein Name.  
Dein Reich komme.  
Dein Wille geschehe,  
wie im Himmel, so auf Erden.  
Unser tägliches Brot gib uns  
heute,  
und vergib uns unsere Schuld,  
wie auch wir vergeben unseren  
Schuldigern.  
Und führe uns nicht in  
Versuchung,  
sondern erlöse uns von dem  
Bösen.  
Denn dein ist das Reich  
und die Kraft und die Herrlichkeit,  
in Ewigkeit.  
Amen.**

**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.**

## The 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.**

## The Invitation to Communion

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

All: **Lord, give us the bread always.**

## Agnus Dei

*The Choir sings the Agnus Dei:*

*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.*

## The Giving of Communion

*Please wait in your seat to be directed by a churchwarden or steward. Those who do not intend to receive Communion, but would prefer to receive a blessing, are asked to carry this booklet as an indication of your preference to the ministers. If you wish to receive gluten-free bread, please ask and we will be happy to accommodate you.*

*During the distribution the choir sings the following anthem:*

Ding dong! merrily on high  
in heav'n the bells are ringing:  
Ding, dong! verily the sky  
is riv'n with angel singing.  
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis.

E'en so here below, below,  
let steeple bells be swungen,  
and i-o, i-o, i-o,  
by priest and people sungen.  
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis.

Pray you, dutifully prime  
your matin chime, ye ringers;  
may ye beautifully rime  
your evetime song, ye singers:  
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis.

Words by George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848-1934)  
Music 16th century French, arr. Mack Wilberg (b. 1955) and Peter Stevens (b. 1987)

## Communion Hymn

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room.  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!  
let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rock, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.**

Words by Isaac Watts (1674-1748)  
Tune CP 57 Antioch G.F. Handel (1685-1759)

## The Prayers after Communion

*Silence is kept and the president prays:*

God our Father,  
whose Word has come among us  
in the Holy Child of Bethlehem:  
may the light of faith illumine our hearts  
and shine in our words and deeds;  
through him who is Christ the Lord.

All: **Amen.**

*The president then introduces:*

All: **Father of all,**  
**we give you thanks and praise,**  
**that when we were still far off**  
**you met us in your Son and brought us home.**  
**Dying and living, he declared your love,**  
**gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.**  
**May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;**  
**we who drink his cup bring life to others;**  
**we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.**  
**Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,**  
**so we and all your children shall be free,**  
**and the whole earth live to praise your name;**  
**through Christ our Lord.**  
**Amen.**

### **The Blessing**

We **STAND**. The **Bishop** pronounces the *blessing from the High Altar*:

Our help is in the name of the Lord

All: **who has made heaven and earth.**

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All: **Now and for ever. Amen.**

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 his 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.

**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 the Virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see:  
hail, the incarnate Deity,  
pleased as Man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.**

**Hail, the heaven born Prince of Peace,  
hail, the Sun 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.**

Charles Wesley (1707-1788) and others  
Tune Mendelssohn from a chorus by F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)

## The Dismissal

The deacon says:

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

All: **Glory, thanks and praise be to God.**

## Organ voluntary

*The organ voluntary, performed today by Liam Condon.*

Toccata from Symphony No. 5 by Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937)

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***The Bishop of Coventry, the Dean and Cathedral Chapter wish  
you a blessed and happy Christmas and New Year!***

We invite those joining us for worship to contribute to the costs of mission at the Cathedral. Please use the cash or contactless donation points, or the QR code below. This will take you to the Cathedral's page for the Parish giving Scheme which will enable you to make a one off donation, or set up a regular gift should you wish. Thank you so much for your support and generosity.



Please note that our opening hours from 26<sup>th</sup> December 2025 – 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2026 are 11am – 3pm,  
We are closed on 1<sup>st</sup> January.

### Save the Date:

#### **Epiphany Carols Service**

*Sunday, 18 January 2025 at 4pm*

This reflective service of readings and carols traces the light of Christ revealed to the nations, weaving scripture with music that shimmers, sighs, and soars. The choir will sing works by Lauridsen, Warlock, Stopford, Mathias, and Rachmaninov.

