

St John's Harpenden



Parish Eucharist

during Christmas and Epiphany

'the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it' John 1:5

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

The season of **Christmas** encompasses the Sundays immediately following Christmas up to the feast of the Epiphany and the Baptism of Christ. It is a time when we particularly rejoice in the presence of God with us in the Child of Bethlehem, and seek to worship him with the faithfulness of Saint Joseph, the devotion of Our Lady Mary, the joy of the angels, the humility of the Shepherds, and the perseverance of the Wise Men.

The first Sunday after Christmas is sometimes kept as a celebration of the **Holy Family**, mindful all the while of our own families and the complexity and frailty of human relationships. Our Lord knew the challenges and joys of a real human family, and the Holy Family fled to Egypt where they lived for some time. Christ shared the experience of all oppressed people, all who are forced to seek refuge because of war, violence and persecution, of which there are so many still in our world today.

The second Sunday after Christmas falls around the feast of the **Epiphany**, which means 'showing' or 'revealing'. During this time, the Christmas 'stable' of Luke's Gospel gives way to the Epiphany 'house' described by Saint Matthew. It is the epiphany of the Wise Men which is most famous, but the Church also remembers the epiphanies of Christ's Baptism and Christ's first miracle at the Wedding at Cana in which he '*revealed his glory*'. Christ continues to reveal his glory in the world today through lives transformed by grace, and like the Wise Men we '*open our treasure chests*' to offer to him our gifts, so that we might receive back so much more through His love for us.

The fullness of the Christmas season is often said to continue until the feast of Candlemas on 2nd February, the last of the celebrations of the infancy and boyhood of Christ, and many churches keep some elements of Christmas decoration up until this time.

A prayer to say before the service:

Lord Jesus, our Master, go with us while we travel to the heavenly country; that, following your star, we may not wander in the darkness of this world's night, while you, who are our Way, and Truth, and Life shine within us to our journey's end. Amen.

WELCOME AND NOTICES

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

The hymn numbers can be found on the weekly Pew Sheet and on the hymn boards.

✠ **IN** the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

The president introduces the Eucharist.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts. In his light let us kneel and confess our sins.

Kneel

**ALMIGHTY God,
our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past,
and grant that we may serve you
in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.**

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

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 forgiven ✠ from all your sins, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Stand for the GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

When the Choir is absent another form of the Gloria may be used, which can be found on the Pew Sheet.

**Glory to God, Glory to God,
Glory to God in the Highest.**

**Glory to God in the Highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, Heav'nly King,
almighty God and Father.**

**We worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Glory to God, Glory to God,
Glory to God in the Highest.**

**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.**

**Glory to God, Glory to God,
Glory to God in the Highest.**

**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.**

**Glory to God, Glory to God,
Glory to God in the Highest.**

THE COLLECT

Let us pray.

A short period of silence is kept.

*The president says the Collect of the Day, at the end of which all say **Amen.***

Sit

OLD or NEW TESTAMENT READING

At the end of the reading:

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL PSALM or HYMN

please stand

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Stand and turn towards the Gospel

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

✠ Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to N.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end of the Gospel:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit for the SERMON

A short silence follows.

Stand

THE NICENE CREED

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 (*bow*) *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

The president introduces the prayers and the people sit or kneel.

After each petition:

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

At the end of the prayers:

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers,

for the sake of your Son,

our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Stand for 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:
And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

We shake hands with those immediately around us saying 'Peace be with you'.

OFFERTORY HYMN

*Normally a collection is gathered and the gifts processed to the altar. If you would consider offering a gift to the Church to support our ministry, please do so.
Thank you for your gift.*

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

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you
And also with you.

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

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

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:

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!

How wonderful the work of your hands, O Lord.
As a mother tenderly gathers her children,
you embraced a people as your own.
When they turned away and rebelled
your love remained steadfast.

From them you raised up Jesus our Saviour, born of Mary,
to be the living bread,
in whom all our hungers are satisfied.
He offered his life for sinners,
and with a love stronger than death
he opened wide his arms on the cross.

On the night before he died,
he came to supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he gave you thanks.
He broke it and gave it to them, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,
he gave you thanks, 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.

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

Father, we plead with confidence
his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross;
we remember his dying and rising in glory,
and we rejoice that he intercedes for us at your right hand.

Pour out your Holy Spirit as we bring before you
these gifts of your creation;
may they be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

As we eat and drink these holy things in your presence,
form us in the likeness of Christ,
and build us into a living temple to your glory.
Remember, Lord, your Church in every land.
Reveal her unity, guard her faith,
and preserve her in peace.

Bring us at the last with our Lady Mary, John, Alban
and all the saints to the vision of that eternal splendour
for which you have created us;

through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
by whom, with whom, and in whom,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

**OUR Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses;
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ.
Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

AGNUS 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 your peace.**

**✠ BEHOLD the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.
Lord I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

All Baptised Christians who normally receive Communion in their own church are welcome to do so here. If you were prefer a blessing, please bring your order of service with you.

During Communion, if the Choir is present an ANTHEM may be sung,

Remain seated or kneeling to sing the COMMUNION HYMN.

A time of silent prayer is kept after Communion.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

The President prays the Post-Communion of the day at the end of which all say
Amen.

Stand for the FINAL HYMN.

Remain standing

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with peace and goodwill and make you partakers in the divine nature; and the blessing of God Almighty ✠ the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you now and always. **Amen**

Go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Remain standing as the RECESSION takes place and a VOLUNTARY is played.

Please join us for refreshments in the Parish Hall after the service – make your way through the porch doors and turn left.

If you are new to Saint John's please speak to the one of the ministry team or welcomer.





StJohnsAL5

www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

