

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK

Welcome to our Christmas Service 2020

*Click on the underlined links to take you to safe content on the internet.
If you are able light a candle as you start the service and if others are in the house
encourage them to reading some of the service with you.*

Hymn [Once in Royal David's City](#)

Introduction

We light the Christmas candle which reminds of the birth of Jesus, God becomes human.



God, of Love,
the birth of your Son brought light into
a dark world.

Make us a people of light.

Make us faithful to your Work,

that we may bring your life to the waiting world.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and brother. **Amen**

Prayer of Penitence

Hear the words of the angels 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.

God our Father,
you sent your Son full of grace and truth;
forgive our failure to receive him.

Lord, have mercy.

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.

Christ, have mercy.

Spirit of Love,
Your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:
forgive the hardness of our hearts.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Hymn [Away in a Manger](#)

The Word of God

Scripture Readings – [click Here](#)

First reading: Isaiah 52: 7-10 read by David Marshall

Gospel Reading: Luke 2: 1-20 read by Pam Dimbleby

Reflection by Rev Stephen Hannam

One Christmas Eve very much like this a vicar was preaching at the Midnight Mass. He rambled on with quite a long talk that was difficult to follow. After the service he spoke to everyone as they left. One lady surprised him when she said:-

“Your sermon reminded me of God’s peace and love.” “How was that” he asked.

“Well it reminded me of God’s peace in the way it surpassed all understanding! And it reminded me of God’s love because it seemed to endure forever!”

So what about God’s peace and love?

Every year at this time we listen to scriptures and sing carols about peace on earth. We light candles and sing “Silent night, all is calm and all is bright” And that’s good, and perhaps in some ways reassuring. But does it really make any difference? Looking at the world around us do we see peace and calm? This year we have seen all sorts of crises’

And we are living in one now. It seems to me there are so many obvious examples of brokenness in the world. In fact some of us live with them day by day. The world is not the way it’s supposed to be. Our lives are not the way they’re supposed to be. God has something else – a better plan - in mind. If you like a vision for “shalom.” That’s a Hebrew word that means wholeness and peace.

So what’s gone wrong. Sadly some things in our world are in a bit of a mess. But it seems God refuses to leave us in this mess. So what does he do?

God comes down into this brokenness. God comes to be with us and calls us to be his chosen people – “a light to the nations.” God comes to break down the divisions and to mend the brokenness. The prophet Isaiah talks about a child who will be a light in the darkness.

A Messiah, a Saviour who will bring God’s peace to all people. This child has a name:-

“Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace – Jesus And this Jesus has a face - the face of a new born baby. This helpless baby is bringing into the world the Kingdom of God. A kingdom of peace. This tiny baby brings into the world the peace of God. A peace that seems to be impossible.

The Swiss theologian Karl Barth called this the “impossible possibility” A God who is able to do what we can’t do. No wonder the angels sang out on that first Christmas Day:- “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace.”

And so tonight we would normally sing:-Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace, Hail the Son of Righteousness! Light and life to all he brings, Risen with healing in his wings.

“Well I wonder have I reminded you of God’s peace in the way it surpassed all understanding! And have I reminded you of God’s love because it seemed to endure forever?”

So tonight this Christmas Eve in the middle of all the brokenness that surrounds us we:- Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace We Hail the Son of Righteousness! We see the Light and life to all he brings, And we experience the healing in his wings.

God gave us all the courage to witness the “impossible possibility” of a better world. So tonight our prayer is for a way of peace that will mend the broken and rejoice in the love of God. My prayer for you is that this Christmas time you will know the peace and love of the baby Jesus in your life and in the lives of those you love. Amen

The Creed

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**All Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Prayers of intercession prepared by Susan Milnes

Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, Love Divine,
Love came down at Christmas, Stars and Angels gave the sign.

Father, we pray for your Church, for the Anglican communion throughout the world; for all those who serve in ordained and lay ministries and for all who offer themselves to your service. We pray for the church here at St John’s and say our heartfelt

thankyou to all those whose work and commitment in a myriad of different ways maintains and develops the Christian community in this place.

We welcome everyone and pray that all who are attending this service, whether in person or on line will experience and share your love as we focus on and give thanks for the birth of your Son, born into the most humble circumstances and who reigns with you in highest Heaven. Let us ring out the bells of faith, hope and love.

Holy God, Hear our prayer

Father, on this Christmas eve, we pray for your awesomely beautiful and wonderful world, marred and scarred by the sin and disobedience of mankind. Father, we cry out to you for your world, we pray for our Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, and for all those in authority that they will know and understand everyone's fears, anxiety, distress and reach rational, objective and balanced decisions that recognise the disparate difficulties faced by so many in your world.

We give our absolute thank you to all people who work in medical research and medicine throughout the world that vaccines have and continue to be developed that will protect people from the ravaging impact of covid 19. We give equal thanks for our fellow mankind who have volunteered to test all the vaccines.

We pray for all parts of your world where there is mistrust, injustice, misery and suffering, where it feels that evil reigns. We implore you, the fount of all Love to change the hearts and minds of those whose behaviour and actions generate such devastation. Look with mercy on the oppressed, the poor and all who are heavily laden with error, labour and sorrow.

Holy God, Hear our prayer

Father, we pray for our local community of Rastrick and seek that the St John's and St Matthew's communities serve all our neighbours. Lord we pray that you remove our defences for people who may be different and whom we neither know nor understand. We pray that you will share with us your ingenuity, patience and skill to break through our physical and emotional walls, that you will prevail upon us to reach out to our neighbours, despite our timidity. Just as you came as a helpless babe and lived with the vulnerable, the lonely, the isolated, those suffering prejudice and cruelty, let us break through to them and share the love and joy of our Christian beliefs.

Holy God, Hear our prayer

Father, we pray for all those throughout the world who suffer in body, mind or spirit. We ask that you enable us to find ways to reach out to them and hold them in your loving arms. We pray for the bereaved and for all those who have lost loved ones and are experiencing lost love at this Christmas time – such an incredibly difficult Christmas this year due to covid restrictions. We pray that all people will be able to be with or talk to someone with whom they share heartfelt love and knowledge of

those lost to them this year and that their devastating loneliness and isolation may be eased.

Holy God, Hear our prayer

Lord, we pray for the communion of Saints and for all those who have passed from this mortal life and those whose anniversaries fall at this time. Father may they rest eternal in the light which never no more may fade.

Holy God accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Carol: [Silent Night, Holy Night](#)

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

This next part of our service is taken from the service of Holy Communion, if you would like then use your own bread and wine at the appropriate point

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,
was on this night 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.**

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.

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

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 [N 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. **Amen.**

We share together The Lord's Prayer

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.**

The breaking of bread

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.**

**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.**

Invitation to Communion

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven
Lord, give us this bread always

Please take your communion or take a moment of quiet as you feel comfortable

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.
To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Carol **[O come, all ye faithful](#)**

The Sending out

May the Father,
who has loved the eternal Son
from before the foundation of the world,
shed that love upon you his children.
Amen.

May Christ,
who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace.
Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer,
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.