

Caritas

**A Contemplative Holy Communion
In the**

Christmas-Epiphany Season

From the first Sunday of Christmas to Candlemas

'Where charity and love are, there God is'

'Ubi Caritas et amor, Deus Ibi Est'

Welcome

Welcome to this sacred space and quiet service. The name *Caritas* calls to mind that gift of love which unites us to God. It is our prayer that we all experience something of God's love each and every day.

May we invite you to see this service in three stages. Before the service begins, allow the quieter atmosphere to focus your heart and mind on what God might be *speaking* to you. During the service, we will sing, and pray and be *speaking* to God. After the service we are sent out into the world encouraged in *speaking* the message of Love to others.

We want everybody to feel at home here today; this is an Inclusive Church. All are included within the friendship, community and united praise of God, in this place.

Accessible and Inclusive Church

If you are wearing a **hearing aid**, please switch to position "T" to pick up the induction loop (only effective on the back of the church).

A **larger print service** sheet is available, please ask a warden who will be happy to help. If you would prefer to receive a **gluten free host**, please speak to a warden.

Anglican worship includes a number of **physical** as well as **verbal** responses. Where *italics* indicate, the congregation is invited to join in with any physical or verbal response as they find most appropriate and helpful for worshipping God. Throughout the service the request **Please STAND** may be taken as an invitation. Be assured you remain part of the worship by your presence whether sitting or standing.

Language in Worship

Anglicanism is founded on scripture, tradition and reason and hence we read ancient scripture, sing traditional hymns and share in familiar prayers. God is beyond gender or any other differences which make up the beauty and diversity of our human family. So, while honouring the poetry of beloved texts and rejoicing in our historic understandings of God known as Father, Son and Holy Spirit we recognise that God is both beyond gender and embracing all gender. In God's creation, we reflect God's image and so we seek to reflect that in our language about humankind.

As we begin a time of worship, be encouraged by the words of St Paul: "*Faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love*".

(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Opening Worship

Welcome to this contemplative and quiet Eucharist. The congregation is invited to STAND for an opening hymn, processional music, or choir introit.

The President says.

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

All Amen.

Where charity and love are, there God is.
The love of Christ has gathered us into one.

All Let us exult, and in Him be joyful.

The President lights three candles as the Deacon says.

We light a light in the name of the Father,
who lit the world and breathed the breath of life for us.

We light a light in the name of the Son,
who saved the world and stretched out his loving arms for us.

We light a light in the name of the Spirit,
who encompasses the world and blessed our souls with yearning.

All We light three lights for the Trinity of Love.

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.

A short silence is kept.

Lord of grace and truth,
we confess our unworthiness
to stand in your presence as your children.
We have sinned:

All forgive and heal us.

The Virgin Mary accepted your call
to be the mother of Jesus.
Forgive our disobedience to your will.
We have sinned:

All **forgive and heal us.**

Your Son our Saviour
was born in poverty in a manger.
Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.
We have sinned:

All **forgive and heal us.**

The shepherds left their flocks
to go to Bethlehem.
Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision.
We have sinned:

All **forgive and heal us.**

The wise men followed the star
to find Jesus the King.
Forgive our reluctance to seek you.
We have sinned:

All **forgive and heal us.**

The President says.

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive us our sins
and make us holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Deacon introduces a period of prayer with the words.

Let us pray for grace that we might reveal God's love in our lives.

The Collect

All respond with **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

Please SIT for a reading from the Old or New Testament.

Reading

Hear the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Please STAND. Music or a hymn follows.

Gospel Reading

The gospel is announced.

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

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

The Sermon

Please SIT.

A longer period of stillness and reflection follows the sermon.

Prayers of Intercession

Lord in your mercy,

All **Hear our prayer.**

At the end we say

Trusting God who listens to those who pray, we say together.

All **Jesus, Saviour, child of Mary,
you know us and love us,
you share our lives
and hear our prayer.
Glory to you for ever. Amen.**

Please STAND.

The Affirmation of faith

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through
faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

**Because you made the world,
and intended it to be a good place,
and called its people your children;
because, when things seemed at
their worst,
you came in Christ,
to bring out the best in us;
so, gracious God, we gladly say:**

**Goodness is stronger than evil;
Love is stronger than hate;
Light is stronger than darkness;
Life is stronger than death.**

**Because confusion can reign inside
us, despite our faith;
because anger, tension, bitterness
and envy distort our vision;
because our minds sometimes
worry small things
out of all proportion;
because we do not always get it
right, we want to believe:**

**Goodness is stronger than evil;
Love is stronger than hate;
Light is stronger than darkness;
Life is stronger than death.**

**Victory is ours through Him who
loves us. Amen.**

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The Peace

Please STAND. The President may say these words or use an alternative introduction.

We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that we may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. Gathered as his people we share his 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 God's peace.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

An offertory hymn is sung, during which the collection is taken and gifts are offered.

Preparation of the Table

The President may say.

Lord, accept your people's gifts,
not gold, frankincense or myrrh,
but hearts and voices raised in praise
of Jesus Christ, our light and our salvation.

All **Amen.**

The congregation is invited to STAND for the Eucharistic Prayer.

One of the following Eucharistic prayers will be used:

Prayer B on page 8.

Prayer E on page 10.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER B

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

Lift up your hearts.

All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Father, we give you thanks and praise
through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, your living Word,
through whom you have created all things;
who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our Saviour.
By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh;
as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin,
he lived on earth and went about among us;
he opened wide his arms for us on the cross;
he put an end to death by dying for us;
and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life;
so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.

A Short Proper Preface may be used when appropriate

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and *saying*:

All **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.

The Deacon says

Great is the mystery of faith:

All **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 St Mary 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.

All **Amen.**

Please SIT. The service continues with the Lord's Prayer on page 12.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER E

The Lord is here.

All **His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

A Seasonal Preface or the following is used.

And now we give you thanks
because, in the incarnation of the Word,
a new light has dawned upon the world;
you have become one with us
that we might become one with you in your glorious kingdom.

All **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.**

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 says.

Christ is the bread of life.

All **When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
We proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory.**

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 St. Mary 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.**

Please SIT.

The service continues with the Lord's Prayer on page 12.

The Lord's Prayer

President As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All **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.**

Breaking of the Bread

The President breaks the bread and says

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,
Because we all share in one bread.**

All **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.**

Giving of Communion

Jesus is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All **Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

The giving of communion follows, please be welcome to come and receive as is your tradition. If you would prefer to come to the altar for a blessing, please keep this book with you to mark that intention.

Prayers after Communion

After a period of stillness and reflection, the President leads any post communion prayer(s), the congregation then says.

All We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples. Amen.

Please STAND for a final hymn.

The Dismissal

The Changing of the Light

The three candles are extinguished by the President as the Deacon says

Our Eucharist draws to a close, we now change this light;

All as the flame of the candle ends the smoke now fills this space.

This changed light spreads out to fill this church;

All and we go out to fill the world with the light of Christ.

The Blessing

This or another blessing is used.

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ-child
be yours this Christmas;

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

All Amen.

The Deacon says

The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven
and gives life to the world.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

The ministers depart as music is played.

Christmas and Epiphany Introduction to the Season

The celebration of Christ's incarnation at Christmas is one of the two poles of the Christian year. The wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, as Emmanuel, foretold by the prophets and born of Mary, provides the material of the feast:

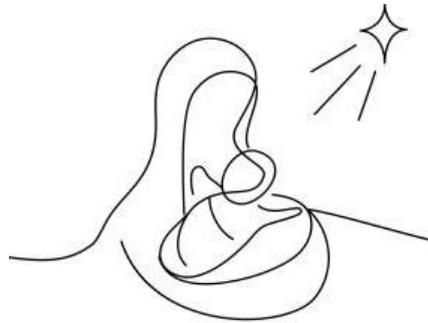
*Hark, hark, the wise eternal word,
like a weak infant cries!
In form of servant is the Lord,
and God in cradle lies.*

Thomas Pestel

Christmas is much more than simply the celebration of Jesus' birth, and neither of the great Christmas morning readings (Hebrews I and John I) is taken from the infancy narratives. The task of the Christmas liturgy is to recall us, amid all the joyful customs and celebrations of Christmas, to this central truth of the Word made flesh for our salvation.

The Christmas season is often celebrated for twelve days, ending with the Epiphany.

Contemporary use has sought to express an alternative tradition, in which Christmas lasts for a full forty days, ending with the Feast of the Presentation on 2nd February: *Candlemas*.



*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
Isaiah 9.6*

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