

**ST MARY'S CHURCH
SAWSTON**

**MIDNIGHT
MASS**

CHRISTMAS EVE



THE GATHERING

HYMN: O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

**O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by:
Yet in the dark streets shineth
the everlasting light:
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.**

**O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on Earth.
For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.**

The infant Jesus is placed in the crib.

Welcome all wonders in one sight!
Eternity shut in a span.
Summer in winter, day in night,
Heaven in earth and God in man.

Great little one whose all embracing birth
brings Earth to Heaven, stoops Heaven to Earth.

THE GREETING

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

THE BLESSING OF THE CRIB

**How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given.
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls
will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in:
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.**

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

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.

Silence is kept

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 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.**

THE ABSOLUTION

THE GLORIA

Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory to the Father.
To God be glory forever
Alleluia Amen.
Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory to Christ Jesus.
Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory to the Spirit.

THE COLLECT

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

READING Hebrews 1.1–4

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

CAROL: THE CROWN OF ROSES

THE GOSPEL *We stand for the Gospel*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All **Glory to you, O Lord**

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All **Praise to you, O Christ**

John 1.1–14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. 3All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

THE SERMON: REV'D PETRA SHAKESHAFT

THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
And he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

This response may be used

Lord in your mercy **All Hear our prayer**

At the end

**All Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

THE PEACE

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

The peace of the Lord be always with you
All And also with you

THE OFFERTORY

CAROL: INFANT HOLY, INFANT LOWLY

THE PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

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

The prayer continues ...

Therefore with all the angels in 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, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.

The prayer continues ...

Great is the mystery of faith

Christ has died:

Christ is risen

Christ will come again.

The prayer continues ...

for ever and ever.

Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us so we pray

**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**

We break the bread of life,
And that life is the light of the world.

**All God is here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.**

**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.**

THE DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

CAROL SILENT NIGHT

POST COMMUNION

**Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood
of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory.
Amen**

CAROL: O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

**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,
Christ the Lord***

**God of God,
Light of Light,
lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
begotten, not created:
*O come, let us adore him***

**Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens of heaven above:
Glory to God
in the highest.
*O come, let us adore him***

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning:
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:
*O come, let us adore him,
Christ, the Lord!***

THE BLESSING

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

THE DISMISSAL

All Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. **Amen**

THE COMING

And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted buildings
Cast their shadows: a bright
Serpent, A river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With slime.
On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. many People
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.

R S Thomas