



ST. LAURENCE CHURCH
THE PARISH EUCHARIST
SERVICE CELEBRATED IN CELTIC
STYLE
THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT,
YEAR B
24.12.2023



The Zoom details for this service are:

Meeting ID: 457 244 0784
Passcode: 5i1UCa

**The sides people today are:
Sarah and Charles Vernede**

Hymn (Please stand if you are able)

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of
the Lord!

Unnumbered blessings give my
spirit voice;

Tender to me the promise of His
Word;

In God my Saviour shall my heart
rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of
His name!

Make known His might, the deeds
His arm has done;

His mercy sure, from age to age the
same;

His holy Name, the Lord, the
mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of
His might!

Powers and dominions lay their
glory by;

Proud hearts and stubborn wills are
put to flight;

The hungry fed, the humble lifted
high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of His
Word!

Firm is His promise, and His mercy
sure.

Tell out my soul, the greatness of
the Lord

To children's children and forever-
more!

**The Lighting of the Fourth Advent
Candle**

Today we light the Fourth Candle of
Advent, the Candle of Joy, as we
remember Mary the mother of Jesus

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.

Amen.

The fourth candle is lit

Let us pray

Holy God you left the glory of heaven to take upon yourself our fragile humanity. You came to us in love and yet we denied you room and you were laid in a manger. We have lit candles of hope, peace, love and joy, may these virtues shine brightly in our lives as we welcome you into our hearts this Christmas. **Amen.**

Welcome/The Gathering

Gather us in, the lost and the lonely, the broken and breaking, the tired and aching, who long for the nourishment found at your feast.

Gather us in

The done and the doubting, the wishing and wondering, the puzzled and pondering, who long for your company, found at your feast.

Gather us in

The proud and pretentious the sure and superior the never inferior who long for the levelling found at your feast

Gather us in

The bright and the bustling, the stirrers, the shakers, the kind laughter makers who long for the deeper joys found at your feast

Gather us in

From corner or limelight, from mansion or campsite, from fears and obsession, from tears and depression, from untold excesses, from treasured successes; to meet, to eat, to be given a seat; be joined to the vine; be offered new wine;

become like the least; be found at the feast

Gather us in!

Confession

Create a clean heart within me, O God, so that it may become your chosen shelter and the resting place of the Holy Spirit. I take the cross upon me, over the tablet of my heart, and I beseech the living God of the universe, may the light of lights come to my dark hard heart so that I may live in the power of your love. Amen.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Collect

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

First Reading read by Jane Cooper

A reading from the Second Book of Samuel, chapter seven beginning at the first verse

When King David was settled in his palace, and the LORD had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" Nathan answered the king, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you." But that night the LORD spoke to Nathan and said:

"Go, tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Should you build me a house to dwell in?'

"It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth. I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I

will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever."

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Gradual Hymn

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes
as flame;
"All hail," said he to meek and
lowly Mary,
"most highly favoured maiden."
Gloria!

"I come from heav'n to tell the
Lord's decree:
a blessed virgin mother you shall
be.
Your Son shall be Immanuel, by
seers foretold,
most highly favoured maiden."
Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed
her head;
"To me be as it pleases God," she
said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify his
holy name."
Most highly favoured maiden,
Gloria!

Of her, Immanuel, the Christ, was
born

In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say,
"Most highly favoured maiden."
Gloria!

Gospel Reading

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The Lord be with you
And also with you

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

The angel Gabriel was sent from God

to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he

will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

This is the Gospel of the Lord,
Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Affirmation of Faith

There is no other God, there never was and there never will be, than God the Father, unbegotten and without beginning, the Lord of the universe, as we have been taught.

And His son Jesus Christ, whom we declare to have always been with the Father in a way that baffles description. He was made man, defeated death and received into heaven by the Father and given power over all names, in heaven, on earth and under the earth.

We believe in Him and look for His coming soon as a judge of all, treating

everyone according to their faith and deeds.

He has poured out His Spirit on us in abundance, the gift and guarantee of eternal life.

We acknowledge and adore Him as one God in the Trinity of the Holy Name. Amen.

The Prayers of the Church led by Stephen Ringer

In the power of the Spirit, and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Everlasting God we come today on the last Sunday of our Advent journey towards Christmas and we give thanks as we remember those journeys that were being taken on that first Christmas more than 2000 years ago.

Mary and Joseph – travelling by foot to enrol in the Roman census; The Wise Men following the signs in the heavens; The unsuspecting Shepherds moving from pasture to pasture with their flocks; The people of God also unsuspecting, moving through history towards a world changing event.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Gracious God As we think of Mary, pregnant with the Holy child journeying towards motherhood we pray for all women who are expecting a new addition to their

families. We also remember that not all pregnancies are wanted and so we pray for all who are carrying unwanted babies and for the decisions they have to make, some of which may be very unpleasant.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Merciful God, we pray for all who like Mary and Joseph are making long and difficult journeys by foot especially those fleeing from war and terror. For those trying to escape war, hardship, drought, famine or persecution. For those embarking on perilous journeys across the Mediterranean and the English Channel in dreadfully unsuitable craft and for those who are providing rescue services.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Creator God we pray for our world, which like that of the Holy Land at the time of Jesus' birth, is facing an incredible change which was to be the basis of the history of the next two millennia. We pray the future of our world as climate change continues to make itself felt in so many unsettling ways.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Mighty God we pray for the wise men and women of our modern world who are making amazing

technological advances and moving our world ever faster into the future. Help us at all times to use that technology for the good of your creation and let it never get in the way of the way that we live our lives for you and for our neighbours in Christ

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Faithful God we pray for the sick and the suffering especially when having to travel to hospital for treatment or surgery and for those who love them and care for them: Robbie Robinson, Eleanor Ash, David Winstone, Christian Jarvis-Read, Jan Edwards, Jill Fitzpatrick, Nigel Lemon, Ray Wicks, John Tanner, Hilary Deller, Georgie Whitaker, Brian Elliott.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Loving God, give us ears to hear and minds to understand the message and gift of Christmas so that we may look forward with patience and confidence to that time when we will join you in the peace of eternity. And we especially pray for any we know who recently died and are on that journey to you. We pray for the recently departed:

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Living God, We pray for those whose years' mind falls at this time: Michael Roger Fisher-Barham, David Colvin, Alice Mary Bennett, Diana Jones, Leslie Richardson, Hebert Fautly, Elizabeth Jones, George Longley, Millicent Butler, Lilian Guest, Sarah May Scrivener, Mark Ryan, Sylvia Doreen Gould, Audrey May Fautly, Irene Nora Reed, Nancy Bennett, Charles Newcomb, Gerald Larkin, Ignace van Kan,

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Gracious God, who chose the Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us with your grace, that like Mary we might rejoice in your salvation; send us out to finish our Advent journey filled with love and joy and peace ready to receive that promise afresh into our lives.

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

So, in the presence of the Bread of Life who refused food for himself in order to nourish others, we deepen our devotion by praying His words:

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**

Hymn (Please stand if you are able)

Ye who own the faith of Jesus,
sing the wonders that were done
when the love of God the Father
over sin the victory won,
when he made the Virgin Mary
mother of his only Son.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

Blessed were the chosen people
out of whom the Lord did come;
blessed was the land of promise
fashioned for his earthly home;
but more blessed far the mother,
she who bare him in her womb.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

Wherefore let all faithful people
tell the honour of her name;
let the Church, in her foreshad-
owed,
part in her thanksgiving claim;
what Christ's mother sang in glad-
ness
let Christ's people sing the same.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

Let us weave our supplications,
she with us and we with her,
for the advancement of the faithful,
for each faithful worshiper,

for the doubting, for the sinful,
for each heedless wanderer.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

May the Mother's intercessions
on our homes a blessing win,
that the children all be prospered,
strong and fair and pure within,
following our Lord's own footsteps,
firm in faith and free from sin.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

For the sick and the aged,
for our dear ones far away,
for the hearts that mourn in secret,
all who need our prayers today,
for the faithful gone before us,
may the holy Virgin pray.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

Praise, O Mary, praise the Father,
praise thy Saviour and thy Son,
praise the everlasting Spirit,
who hath made thee ark and throne
o'er all creatures high exalted,
lowly praise the Three in One.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary,
full of grace.

Prayer of Adoration

Heaven is here, and earth and the space
between them is thin. Distance may di-
vide, but Christ's promise unites those
bounded by time, those blessed by eter-
nity.

Let heaven be glad;

Let the whole earth cry GLORY!

Heaven is here, and earth, and the Church above and below is one. Peter is here, and Paul, Martha and all the Mary's, the saints from far back and those who left us not long ago. And only sight prevents us from seeing them, one with us on the other side.

Let heaven be glad

Let the whole earth cry GLORY!

Heaven is here, and earth, and the God who made them is present. The lamb, glorious on the throne, sits beside us; the Spirit of God, the Dove makes her resting place among us.

God inhales the breath of our prayers and spreads a table for our satisfaction.

Let heaven be glad.

Let the whole earth cry GLORY!

Blessing and honour and glory and power be to our God for ever and ever.

Amen!

The Invitation

He was always the guest. In the homes of Peter and Jairus, Martha and Mary, Joanna and Susanna. At the meal tables of the wealthy where he pleaded the case of the poor, he was always the guest. Upsetting polite company, befriending isolated people; welcoming the stranger, he was always the guest. But here, at this table, He is the host. Those who wish to serve Him must first be served by Him, those who wish to follow Him, must first be fed by Him, those who would wash His feet, must first let Him make them clean.

For this is the table where God intends us to be nourished. This is the time when God can make us new. So come,

you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith, a better life, a fairer world. Jesus Christ who has sat at our tables, now invites us to be guests at His.

The Story

What we do here, we do in imitation of what Christ first did. To his followers in every age, Jesus gave an example and command rooted in the experience he shared with his disciples in an upstairs room in Jerusalem.

On the night when he was betrayed, as they were sitting at a meal, Jesus took a piece of bread and broke it, he gave it to the disciples saying 'This is my body. It is broken for you. Do this to remember me.'

Later after they had eaten, he took a cup of wine and said 'This cup is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you, to remember me.'

So now, we do as Jesus did. We take this bread and this wine, the produce of the earth and fruit of human labour. In these Jesus has promised to be present; through these, Christ can make us whole.

**All that I am, all that I do,
all that I'll ever have, I offer now to you.**

**Take and sanctify these gifts
for your honour, Lord.**

**Knowing that I love and serve you
is enough reward.**

**All that I am, all that I do,
all that I'll ever have I offer now to you.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give our thanks and praise

It is indeed right for you made us, and before you made us you made the world we inhabit, and before the world you made the eternal home in which, through Christ we have a place.

All that is spectacular, all that is plain have their origin in you; all that is lovely, all who are loving point to you as their fulfilment. And grateful as we are for the world we know and the universe beyond our ken, we particularly praise you, whom eternity cannot contain, for coming to earth and entering time in Jesus. For his life which informs our living, for his compassion which changes our hearts, for his clear speaking which contradicts our harmless generalities, for his disturbing presence, his innocent suffering, his fearless dying, his rising to life breathing forgiveness, we praise you and worship him. Here too our gratitude rises for the promise of the Holy Spirit, who even yet, even now, confronts us with your claims and attracts us to your goodness. Therefore we gladly join our voices to the song of the Church on earth and in heaven:

Holy, holy, holy, holy.

Holy, holy, Lord God almighty!

And we lift our hearts before you as a token of our love:

holy, holy, holy, holy.

**Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,
come and fill our hearts anew, Holy Spirit.**

**And we lift our voice before you as a token of our love,
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit.**

And now, lest we believe that our praise alone fulfils your purpose, we fall silent and remember him who came because words weren't enough. Setting our wisdom, our will, our words aside, emptying our hearts and bringing nothing in our hands, we yearn for the healing, the holding, the accepting, the forgiving which Christ alone can offer...

Merciful God, send now in kindness, your Holy Spirit to settle on this bread and wine and fill them with the fullness of Jesus. And let that same Spirit rest on us, converting us from the patterns of this passing world, until we conform to the shape of Him whose food we now share. **Amen.**

Among friends, gathered round a table, Jesus took bread and broke it, and said, 'This is my body—broken for you'. Later he took a cup of wine and said 'This is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Take it, all of you, to remember me.' He whom the universe could not contain, is present to us in this bread. He who redeemed us and called us by name now meets us in this cup. So take this bread and this wine. In them God comes to us so that we may come to God.

Holy, holy, holy, holy.

Holy, holy, Lord God almighty!

And we lift our hearts before you as a token of our love:
holy, holy, holy, holy.

The Prayer of Humble Access

We do not presume to come to this your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

A Prayer as we join with those watching and worshipping with us on Zoom

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

The Distribution of Communion

We advise those who do not wish to receive the wine to indicate this by raising their hand when offered it.

The Chalice Bearers are: Felicity Robinson and Alison Jones

Communion Hymn

Jesus, the very thought of thee
with sweetness fills the breast;
but sweeter far thy face to see,
and in thy presence rest.

O hope of every contrite heart,
O joy of all the meek,
to those who fall, how kind thou art!

How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah,
this

nor tongue nor pen can show;
the love of Jesus, what it is,
none but his loved ones know.

Jesus, our only joy be thou,
as thou our prize wilt be;
Jesus, be thou our glory now,
and through eternity.

Post Communion Collect

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Peace

Christ who has nourished us, is our peace. Strangers and friends, male and female, old and young. He has broken down the barriers to bind us to him and to each other. Having tasted His goodness, let us share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

The Peace is shared.

In gratitude, in deep gratitude for this moment, this meal, these people, we give ourselves to you.

Take us out to live as changed people because we have shared the Living Bread and cannot remain the same.

Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us and encourage many by us. So Lord may we live to your glory, both as inhabitants of earth and citizens of the commonwealth of heaven. Amen.

Benediction

On our heads and our homes

The blessing of God

In our coming and going

The Peace of God

In our life and believing

The Love of God

Be with us all

Today until the end of time. Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit, by whose working the Virgin Mary conceived the Christ, help you bear the fruits of holiness. And the blessing

...Amen

Notices

Hymn (Please stand if you are able)

Lo, he comes with clouds descending,

once for favoured sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
God appears on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at naught and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
deeply wailing,
shall the true Messiah see.

Those dear tokens of his passion
still his dazzling body bears,
cause of endless exultation
to his ransomed worshippers:
with what rapture, with what rapture,
with what rapture,
gaze we on those glorious scars!

Yea, Amen, let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
claim the kingdom for thine own:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
Thou shalt reign and thou alone.

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Let us bless the Lord

Thanks be to God

May the divine assistance remain with us always.

**And with all our brothers and sisters
in Christ.**

May the souls of the faithful departed
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
And rise in glory. Amen.

**We listen to the Organ Voluntary -
Veni Emmanuel - Pietro Yon**

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES
TODAY – 5.00pm.
Crib Service**

**TODAY –11.30pm.
Midnight Mass with carols
and the blessing of the Crib.**

**CHRISTMAS DAY – MON-
DAY 25 DECEMBER
8.00am.Holy Communion
BCP
10.00am. Parish Communion
with carols for
Christmas Day.**

**ALL CHRISTMAS DAY
COLLECTIONS WILL BE
DONATED TO MEDICINS
SANS FRONTIERES
WHO PROVIDE MEDICAL
ASSISTANCE TO SAVE LIVES
AND EASE THE SUFFERING OF
PEOPLE IN CRISIS SITUATIONS.**