

St George's Pontesbury
An Order of Service for
Christmas and Epiphany.

[A way to use the resources on the Bulletin.
Our Holy Communion Service Books
and Angela Ashwin's "Woven Into Prayer"]

Use whatever sections are helpful.

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

Hymn.

Confession:

**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.
[Matthew 1:21].**

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

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

**The wise men followed the star to find Jesus the King. Forgive our reluctance to seek you.
We have sinned forgive us and heal us.**

**The Word was made flesh and lived among us:
And we have seen his glory. Amen.**

The Collect.

Readings 1 and 2.

This the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Hymn.

Gospel Reading.

Either Christmastide:

Alleluia, alleluia. The Word was made flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory.

[John 1:14].

Or Epiphanytide:

Alleluia, alleluia. Christ was revealed in the flesh, proclaimed among the nations and believed in throughout the world.

[I Timothy 3:16].

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

Biblical Reflections.

Hymn.

Intercessions.

A Creed.

Let us bless the living God:

**He was born of the Virgin Mary,
revealed in his glory.**

**Worshipped by the angels,
proclaimed among the nations.**

**Believed in throughout the world,
exalted to the highest heaven.**

**Blessed be God, our strength and our salvation,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Hymn.

Either (Christmastide):

**My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord:
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.
For he has looked with favour on his lowly servant:
from this day all generations will call me blessed.
The Almighty has done great things for me:
and holy is his name.
He has mercy on those who fear him:
throughout all generations.
He has shown strength with his arm:
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones:
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things:
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant, Israel:
for he has remembered his promise of mercy.
The promise he made to our forebears:
to Abraham and his children for ever.
[Magnificat Luke 1:46-55].**

Or (Epiphanytide):

**Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation:
which you have prepared in the sight of every people.
A light to reveal you to the nations:
and the glory of your people Israel.
[Nunc Dimittis Luke 2:29-32].**

The Lord's Prayer.

Either (Christmastide):

**What shall we offer you, O Christ,
who for our sakes appeared on earth as man?
The angels offer you a hymn; the heavens, a star;**

**the Magi, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder;
the earth, a cave.**

**And from our human race we offered you a Virgin
Mother.**

God before all ages, have mercy upon us. Amen.

[A Song of Earth's Offering of the Russian Orthodox Church].

Or (Epiphanytide):

**Worthy are you, our Lord and our God,
to receive glory and honour and power.**

For you created all things,

and by your will they exist and have their being.

Worthy are you, O Lamb of God, for you were slain,

and by your blood you have ransomed for God

those of every tribe, language, people and nation.

[A Song of God's Holiness Revelation 4:11, 5:9-10].

Hymn.

Either (Christmastide):

Son of God, Child of Mary,

born in a stable in Bethlehem,

be born again in us this day,

that through us the world may know

the wonder of your love. Amen.

[A New Zealand Prayer Book].

Or (Epiphanytide):

All-loving God,

who led the wise men to Bethlehem;

guide us, your people, on our journey of faith,

that we may live according to your will

and witness to the joy of the gospel,

in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Angela Ashwin].

**May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of
God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.
Amen.**

Collects, readings and prayers For Christmas day

Collect:

Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth: accept our heartfelt praise, as we worship you, our Saviour and our eternal God. **Amen.**

A reading from the Book of the Prophets Isaiah:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

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.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

[Isaiah 9:2-7]

Hear the Gospel of our Lord according to Luke:

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region

there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

[Luke 2:1-20]

Post Communion Prayer:

God our Father, whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem: may the light of faith illumine our hearts and shine in our words and deeds; through him who is Christ the Lord.

Intercessions for Christmas 2020

At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the light of the world.

We ask, Lord, that your light will shine on each one of us. Let it shine in all places on earth; especially the dark places where Covid-19 abounds, where people suffer due to war, strife, hunger and neglect; and any place where darkness lies, thinking especially of the friends we have lost during recent times. Let our light shine on those who have need, help us to bring comfort to those who need our strength in order that they may cope.

Be with us as we come to adore him, Christ the Lord.

Like the shepherds we come to the stable with joyful footsteps and with glad hearts, giving thanks for all the stuff relationships are made of, giving thanks for challenges and opportunities, giving thanks for the love we share, the love we hope to share.

This is our blessing, our bounty, our thanksgiving as we come to adore him, Christ the Lord.

Like the wise men we bring our gifts – not gold, frankincense or myrrh, but the gift of ourselves; our talents, our hearts and our best efforts to serve our fellow men.

May we serve you by bringing harmony where there is restlessness, by making straight crooked places and by celebrating our abundance of all good things from you which we accept through grace. **Accept these gifts as we come and adore him, Christ the Lord.**

We come as the angels did, singing with exultation and joy as we celebrate the birth of the babe in Bethlehem. We pray that this greatest blessing of joy at your birth, Lord, will remain with us in our hearts and in our daily lives. Help us to know the secret of the power of joy in you; the feeling and the realisation that joy in you is what matters. Stir up warm feelings of joy from within us for then you will have released the greatest power of heaven and earth. Bless us with your love, Lord, renew us so we may go forward and do great things in your name, make peace and sing the song of joy that we came to sing.

With joy we come and adore him, Christ the Lord. Amen.