

The Order of Service

for Home Worship

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS



Hymn 1: In the bleak mid-winter

1. In the bleak mid-winter frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter long ago.
2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign.
In the bleak mid-winter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ.
3. Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day,
A breast-full of milk and a manger full of hay:
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.
4. Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But only his mother in her maiden bliss
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.
5. What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father of glory, holy and eternal, look upon us now in power and mercy. May your strength overcome our weakness, your radiance transform our blindness, and your Spirit draw us to that love shown and offered to us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we come into the presence of our heavenly Father let us seek his forgiveness of our sins that we may know his peace in our hearts.

Lord Jesus, mighty God and Prince of Peace.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, Word made flesh and splendour of the Father. **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Alleluia, alleluia, glory be to God on high;

Alleluia, to the Saviour who has gained the victory;

Alleluia to the Spirit, fount of love and sanctity;

Alleluia, Alleluia, to the Triune Majesty.

Collect. Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

63. 7-9

I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favour to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, 'Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely'; and he became their saviour in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 148 7-14

Response: Praise the Lord for his glory is above all heav'n and earth.

Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command! (R)

Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds! (R)

Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
Young men and women alike,
old and young together! (R)

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the Lord! (R)

A reading from the letter of S. Paul to the Hebrews. 2. 10-18

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, 'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.' And again, 'I will put my trust in him.' And again, 'Here am I and the children whom God has given me.' Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. Matthew.

2. 13-23.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.' When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.' When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Meditation: Today we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. We give thanks for the example of a family devoted in love with one another. Mary and Joseph had been given the responsibility of caring for and nurturing the new-born Jesus, as Matthew explains for us, the Messiah, the Son of God. Matthew's account of the early days of Jesus' life is a very human story, one which is particularly poignant for us living in today's world. News of the birth of Jesus had incurred Herod's wrath. He feared the child who he saw as a real threat to his own authority. In his fear Herod orders that all children under two years old and living in or around Bethlehem is to be killed. The Holy Family, warned by an angel, flee for their lives. They become refugees, forced to run, to leave their home and escape to Egypt in search of sanctuary. The welcome the family received in Egypt was such that they could live in safety among new friends.

It is a story which is particularly poignant for us living in today's world. We live in a world where increasing conflicts and oppression have made refugees of many people. The conflict in Ukraine and in conflicts around the world have forced many who feared for their lives to seek safety in other countries. Many who are threatened and who fear for their lives by the authorities governing their countries because of their political views, gender or sexuality have been forced to seek sanctuary far from home. Genuine refugees, like the Holy Family, need sanctuary and should be received as the Holy Family were received in Egypt, with love and compassion. Sadly the experience of the Holy Family is one which is all too common today. Already Jesus is sharing the lives and experiences of all his people, identifying himself with those others would prefer to overlook, raising the lowly to share his glory, bringing hope to all in need. Amen.

Intercessions:

In the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with Christ let us bring our prayers for the Church and for the world to our heavenly Father.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, for the leaders of the Church among them Mary our Bishop. We pray for the clergy and people of our diocese and for our own churches; that the Church may proclaim the saving power of Jesus, the name above all names, to all people,

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the people of the world, for the victims of violence and oppression, for all suffering the effects of natural disaster and for those suffering from famine or drought; May the saving power of Jesus bring reconciliation and peace wherever there is division and conflict.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own community, for our families, friends and neighbours. We give thanks for all who serve the needs of the vulnerable; may we share the saving love of Jesus with all we meet.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick, for those who are bereaved, for the lonely and isolated and for all in any kind of need. We hold in our hearts before God those known to us who are in need at this time and all whose names are recorded in our parish intercession books; may they be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and consoled with the love of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have died. We remember before God our own departed loved ones and we pray for the recently departed and those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. May they share the eternal glory of heaven in the company of all the saints.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring all our prayers to our heavenly Father as we pray together:

**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 Peace:

Our Saviour Christ is the Prince of peace; of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.

The peace of the Lord be with you and with all those whom you love.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

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. Amen.

The Blessing:

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Christ, who by taking our flesh, gathered into one all things earthly and heavenly, fill you with all joy and peace and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Hymn 2: Joy to the World

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King:
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.
2. Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns;
Let us our songs employ:
While fields and floods,
Rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.
3. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love,
And wonder of his love,
And wonders, and wonders of his love.