



St James's  
PICCADILLY

# Midnight Mass



**Sunday 24th December  
2023 at 11.30pm**

With a congregation in the church  
and live on YouTube



*Welcome to St James's Church. Whether you are with us in person or joining us online, you are very welcome.*

*Tonight, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we gather for one of the most significant and poignant celebrations of the Eucharist in the Christian year. At this deepest midnight, the light shines in the darkness and as the gospel of John reminds us, the darkness cannot overcome it.*

***We wish you a blessed and happy Christmas.***

*Before the service, Dominic will play meditative music from 11pm to 11.20pm then silence will resume.*

*At 11.30pm, the choir sings:*

## **INTROIT**

### **Come to Bethlehem**

words: Anthony Gregory Murray; music: Peter Warlock

*During the introit, the Cross and Gospels are brought in and the altar is censed.*

## **OPENING HYMN**

[Tune: Irby; Words: Cecil Frances Alexander, Michael Forster]

**Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattle shed,  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.**

**He came down to earth from heaven,  
who is God and Lord of all,  
and his shelter was a stable,  
and his cradle was a stall;  
with the poor and mean and lowly,  
lived on earth our Saviour holy.**

**And our eyes at last shall see him  
through his own redeeming love,  
for that child so dear and gentle  
is our Lord in heav'n above;  
and he leads his children on  
to the place where he is gone.**

## **OPENING RESPONSES**

*The priest says*

Grace, mercy and peace from God and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you.

**And also with you.**

*The priest welcomes everyone and introduces the service.*

**Eternal God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden;  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

*The deacon says*

As we gather with the shepherds before the new born  
Christ-child,  
let us open our hearts in penitence and faith.

## **PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION**

**Ever-loving God,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy  
forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be,  
that we may do justly,  
love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you our God.  
Amen.**

## **THE ABSOLUTION**

*The priest says*

May the God of mercy and truth forgive you and set you free.  
May you take God's forgiveness to heart and be at peace.  
**Amen.**

## **THE GLORIA**

The choir sings

### **Gloria In Excelsis**

from the Spatzen-Messe by W.A. Mozart K.220 (1776)

Glória in excélsis Deo  
et in terra pax homínibus bonae voluntátis.  
Laudámus te,  
benedícimus te,  
adorámus te,  
glorificámus te,  
grátias ágimus tibi propter magnam glóriam tuam,  
Dómine Deus, Rex caeléstis,  
Deus Pater omnípotens.

Dómine Fili unigénite, Jesu Christe,  
Dómine Deus, Agnus Dei, Fílius Patris,  
qui tollis peccáta mundi, miserére nobis;  
qui tollis peccáta mundi, súdece deprecatióem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserére nobis.

Quóniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dóminus, tu solus  
Altíssimus,  
Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spíritu: in glória Dei Patris.  
Amen.

*Glory to God in the highest  
and peace on earth to all men of good will  
we praise you  
we bless you*

*Lord, begotten son, Jesus Christ  
Lord God, lamb of God, son of the father  
take all sins from the world, have mercy on us  
take all sins from the world, receive our invocation  
you who are seated at the right of the father, have mercy on us.*

*Because only you are Holy, only you are Lord, only you are  
Highest Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God  
the Father.  
Amen.*

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### The Collect

*During this prayer, the final candle on the Advent Wreath is lit.*

*The priest says*

Let us pray.

Eternal God,  
in the stillness of this night  
you sent your almighty Word  
to pierce the world's darkness with the light of salvation;  
give to the earth the peace that we long for  
and fill our hearts with the joy of heaven  
through Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

*Please sit.*

### FIRST READING

#### Isaiah 52.7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,  
who brings good news,  
who announces salvation,  
who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'  
Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,  
together they sing for joy;  
for in plain sight they see  
the return of the Lord to Zion.  
Break forth together into singing,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the Lord has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

The Lord has bared his holy arm  
before the eyes of all the nations;  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God.

Listen for what the Spirit is saying.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand.*

### **HYMN**

[Tune: Mendelssohn; Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)  
et al.]

**Hark! The herald-angels sing  
glory to the new-born King;  
peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled.  
Joyful, all ye nations rise,  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with th'angelic host proclaim:  
'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'**

*Refrain:*

***Hark! The herald-angels sing  
glory to the new born King.***

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin's womb!  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!  
Hail, th'incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel:**

**Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth,  
born to give us second birth:**

*Please remain standing.*

## **THE GOSPEL**

**John 1.1-14**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.  
**Glory to you O Lord.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you O Christ.**

*Please sit.*

## **SERMON**

The Revd Dr Mariama Ifode-Blease

*A period of silence is kept for personal reflection.*

*Please stand.*

## **THE NICENE CREED** *(from the 4th century)*

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,**

was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge  
the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with Father and Son  
is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Led by a member of the congregation.*

*The deacon says*

Let us pray for the world, for the church,  
for all in need and for those who have asked for our prayers.

*Please kneel or sit.*

## THE PEACE

*The priest says*

The angels sang 'Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to all in whom God takes delight!'

*The deacon says*

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

*The priest says*

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

*Please share the Peace in a socially distanced way if you are in the building, and in the YouTube chat function if you are online.*

*During the hymn, the altar is censed and a collection is taken for the St James's **Christmas for All** appeal. An opportunity for cash or tap donations will be passed around the congregation. £5, £10, £15 or more will make a huge difference to the work St James's does with people who need a listening ear, hot food or clothing at this time of year and will support music and arts education programmes too. Please also use the QR code on page 20.*

## OFFERTORY HYMN

[Tune: Noel; Words: Edmund Hamilton Sears (1810-1876)]

**It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold:  
'Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,**

from heaven's all gracious King!  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,  
with peaceful wings unfurled;  
and still their heav'nly music floats  
o'er all the weary world:  
above its sad and lowly plains  
they bend on hov'ring wing;  
and ever o'er its Babel-sounds  
the blesséd angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
the world has suffered long;  
beneath the angel-strain have rolled  
two thousand years of wrong;  
and warring humankind hears not  
the love-song which they bring:  
O hush the noise of mortal strife,  
and hear the angels sing!

For lo, the days are hast'ning on,  
by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years  
comes round the age of gold;  
when peace shall over all the earth  
its ancient splendours fling,  
and all the world send back the song  
which now the angels sing.

## **PRAYER AT THE PREPARATION OF THE TABLE**

*The priest says*

Word made flesh, life of the world,  
in your incarnation you embraced our poverty:  
by your Spirit may we share in your riches.

**Amen.**

## **GATHERING**

*All are invited to gather round the altar. Should you need to sit, please use any of the benches or seats around the altar at the front of the church. While moving to the altar, we sing the Taizé chant ...*

**Jubilate Deo, jubilate Deo. Alleluia.**

*(Rejoice in God. Alleluia.)*

*The priest leads the Church's Thanksgiving for Creation and Redemption in Christ ...*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

*The priest continues the Church's prayer of thanksgiving ...*

**SANCTUS and BENEDICTUS**

from the Spatzen-Messe by W.A. Mozart K.220 (1776)

*The choir sings*

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.  
Osanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.  
Osanna in excelsis.

*Holy, holy, holy  
Lord God of Hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

*Blessed is the one that comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

*The prayer of consecration continues recalling Christ's  
command to his disciples at the Last Supper, ending with:  
"... as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me"*

*The cantor sings  
Great is the mystery of faith.*

*Sing after the cantor*

**Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

*The prayer continues. At the end of the prayer, sing after the  
cantor . . .*

**Blessing and honour,  
glory and power,  
be yours forever and ever.  
Amen.**

*Silence is kept.*

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

*You are invited to pray in your own language.*

*The priest says*

Let us pray in the words that Jesus gave us.

**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.**

*The Bread is broken and the priest says*

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

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

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

*The priest says*

This is the table of Christ.  
It has been made ready for those who love God,  
and those who want to love more.  
So come; you who have much faith and you who have little.

You who have been to this sacrament often  
and you who have not been for some time.  
You who have tried to follow Christ and you who have failed.  
Come. It is Christ who asks us to meet him here.

## **THE COMMUNION**

*During Communion, the Lay Singers and Singing Scholars will sing **Silent Night** (words: Josef Mohr; music: Franz Gruber) and **Bethlehem Down** (words: Bruce Blunt; music: Peter Warlock).*

### ***A Prayer for Spiritual Communion***

*inspired by Richard of Chichester (1198-1253)*

*Thanks be to you, Christ Jesus,  
for all the benefits you have given me for all the pains and  
insults you have borne for me.*

*Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
I ask you to be present with me spiritually in my heart.*

*O most merciful redeemer,  
friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly,  
day by day.*

*Amen.*

### ***Prayers for use during Communion***

*Christ Jesus, you promised in your gospel  
'I am with you always'. Be with me as part of  
this community today in this Eucharist;  
Hear my prayers for others and for myself.  
May I bind myself to you, in communion with*



*all that lives this day, knowing that nothing can separate me from your love.*

*Amen.*

*O God, help me to trust you,  
and to know that you are with me now.*

*Help me to know that all are yours,  
and you are ours,*

*in this Eucharist and for ever.*

*Amen.*

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**Eternal God,**

**in this night you have made known to us again**

**the coming of our Redeemer Jesus Christ;**

**confirm our faith and fix our eyes on you,**

**until the day dawns**

**and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts.**

**Amen.**

## **FINAL HYMN**

[Tune: *Adeste fideles*; Words: John Francis Wade (1710-1786)]

**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:**

*Refrain:*

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him,*

*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:**

**Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;  
glory to God in the highest:**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
born this happy morning,  
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n:  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:**

## **THE BLESSING**

*The priest says*

Christ, who by the incarnation gathered into one  
things earthly and heavenly,  
fill you with joy and peace on this holy night.  
And the blessing of God almighty:  
Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit  
be with you this Christmas and for ever.

**Amen.**

*The deacon says*

Go in peace.  
Proclaim the Word made flesh.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Christmas Day Eucharist and Lunch

Monday 25th December at 11am

Join us for our Christmas Day Eucharist with carols, followed by lunch in the church. The Revd Dr Ayla Lepine will be celebrating and The Revd Lucy Winkett will be preaching.

Everyone is welcome to a community lunch in the church at 1pm. There will be turkey and vegetarian options, served with all the trimmings. No need to book, just turn up!



Christmas lunch costs £8-£10 per head (for 100-120 guests).

If you would like to make a donation towards the cost of the lunch, that would be wonderful and deeply appreciated.

Donations may be made online at [www.sjp.org.uk/giving](http://www.sjp.org.uk/giving) or with cash or contactless payment in church, and if you would like to ask any questions or let us know about your donation, please email [associaterector@sjp.org.uk](mailto:associaterector@sjp.org.uk)



Together, this Christmas, we can make a real difference in the lives of people who are struggling. St James's Piccadilly and The Passage, a leading homelessness charity in Westminster, have joined forces to bring warmth, hope, and comfort to those experiencing homelessness in our community. Your support will provide shelter, hot meals and vital services during this cold season.

Please, today as you read this, open your hearts and donate to our Christmas appeal. Every single gift, large or small, makes a real difference to the lives of those experiencing homelessness across the festive season.

Your gift of £5 could directly provide a hot meal to someone experiencing homelessness, served in the church itself to anyone who needs it. Your gift of £50 will help provide free counselling, warm clothes, advice and support.

### **Ways to donate:**

Text ALL followed by your donation amount to 70490 to give that amount (e.g. ALL 10 to donate £10). Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message.

Use one of the contactless giving devices located in the church. You may also see these in local shops and offices: please don't feel as if you can give only once....!

Visit the **Christmas for All** page on our website using this QR code:

