



St James's
PICCADILLY

Midnight Mass



**Wednesday 24th December
2025 at 11.30pm**

With a congregation in the church
and live on YouTube



Welcome to St James's Church, Piccadilly!

Since 1684, Londoners and visitors have come to this holy place to celebrate Christmas. We warmly welcome you to this church to hear the story of the birth of Jesus, and to celebrate the universal themes of light in the darkness, and of hope in our hurting world. In today's city, we celebrate diversity and make no assumptions about your background or beliefs.

You are also warmly invited to support St James's work with people who are going through a really hard time this season. The meaning of Christmas is love, divine and human, for the whole world. St James's Church offers food, clothing and a listening ear every day to people who need it most. We also work together to build a strong and diverse, inclusive community in a fragmented and often fractious society. We do this through our church services, our projects with people going through homelessness and the asylum system, and our year-round music and visual arts programme. You can help build this community together at Christmas and beyond. There are opportunities to volunteer, to learn more about St James's, and to donate to support our work. When the collection plate comes round, or at the tap donation points in the church, please be as generous as you can.

*We are here at Christmas to celebrate what unites us, which is always so much more than what divides us. And so we hope you have a wonderful time filled with music, joy, and, above all, love. **Happy Christmas from everyone at St James's!***

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.

At 11.30pm, the choir sings:

INTROIT

Es Ist Ein Ros' Entsprungen/A Great and Mighty Wonder

Words by Germanus of Constantinople (634-734) tr. J.M. Neale; Music by Michael Praetorius 1609

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

OPENING CAROL

[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, súscipe 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

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

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.

CAROL

[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

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 for prayers led by a member of the
congregation.*

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 offertory carols, a collection will be taken for St James's **Christmas for All** appeal.*

The tap donation machine is set to £10. If you would like to give a different amount, please use the machines at the entrance.

£10 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.

FIRST OFFERTORY CAROL

[Tune: Silent Night; Words: J. Mohr]

**Silent night! holy night!
all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child:
holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace;
sleep in heavenly peace!**

**Silent night! holy night!
shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar:
heavenly hosts sing, 'Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born'.**

**Silent night! holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light:
radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of saving grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

SECOND OFFERTORY CAROL

[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 blessed 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.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

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 **My Lord Has Come**, words and music by Will Todd.*

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 CAROL

[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 Lunch

Thursday 25th December at 1pm in the church

On Christmas Day, we welcome everyone to a community lunch in the church. There will be turkey and vegetarian



Christmas Lunch

options, served with all the trimmings. No need to book, just turn up! Christmas lunch costs £10 per head (for 100-120 guests).

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

You can do this by scanning the QR code.



St James's Christmas For All Appeal

In 1684 Sir Christopher Wren's vision of St James's as a place of beauty and justice became a reality.

We often use words like home and family when we talk about Christmas, as we gather to celebrate with love and joy.

Yet, we should remember that for others there is no home, and many feel little love or joy at this time of year.



This Christmas, we invite you to support our work and help us continue to bring hope and comfort to those who need it most.

Your donation will make a difference in our community.

Donations may be made by visiting www.sjp.org.uk/christmas, by scanning the QR code, or by using one of the tap donation points in the church.



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