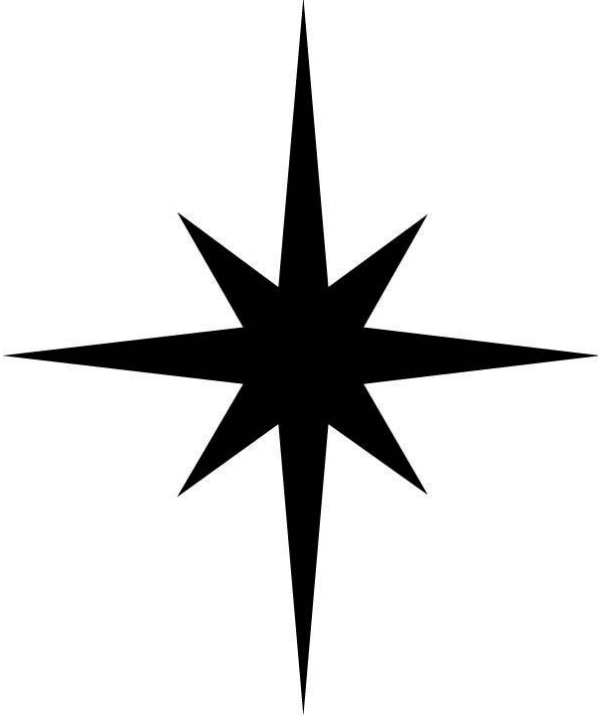


St James', Prebend Street, NI



PARISH MASS
First Sunday of Christmas
31st December 2023

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the Church of England*, material from which
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The Archbishops' Council 2000 Hymn
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AM58 A great and mighty wonder [t Es ist ein entsprugen]

**A great and mighty wonder,
a full and holy cure!
The Virgin bears the infant
with virgin-honour pure:
Repeat the hymn again:
'To God on high be glory,
and peace on earth to men.'**

**The Word became incarnate,
and yet remains on high;
and cherubim sing anthems
to shepherds from the sky:**

**While this they sing your Monarch,
those bright angelic bands,
rejoice, ye vales and mountains,
ye oceans, clap your hands:**

**Since all he comes to ransom,
by all be he adored,
the Infant born in Beth'lem,
the Saviour and the Lord:**

(Words: St Germanus tr JM Neale)

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

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

The sun of righteousness has dawned with healing in his wings.

Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

God our Father,
you sent your Son full of grace and truth:
forgive our failure to receive him.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Jesus our Saviour,
you were born in poverty and laid in a manger:
forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Spirit of Love,
your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:
forgive the hardness of our hearts.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
Draw you to himself
and cleanse you from all your sins,
that you may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Gloria **L533 Glory be to God in heaven** [t AM453 St Helen]

**Glory be to God in heaven,
peace on earth to humankind.
Father, heaven'ly King, creator,**

**God of power undefined.
Praise and honour, thanks we offer,
worship you with heart and mind.**

**Jesus Christ, our Saviour, only
Son of God by faith we know;
Lamb of God, the world's Redeemer,
love and mercy to us show;
seated at the Father's right hand,
intercede for us below.**

**You alone, O Lord, are holy,
Jesus Christ, you are Most High
with the Father and the Spirit;
Trinity, to you we cry:
'Alleluia, alleluia!' -
you, O God, we glorify!**

(Words: Gloria in excelsis, versified by John Ainslie)

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,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.
For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.
The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

(Isaiah 61.10-62.3)

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

NEH 37 – The Great God of Heaven

**The great God of heaven is come down to earth,
his mother a virgin, and sinless his birth;
the Father eternal his Father alone:
he sleeps in the manger; he reigns on the throne:**

***Then let us adore him, and praise his great love:
to save us poor sinners he came from above.***

**A babe on the breast of a maiden he lies,
yet sits with the Father on high in the skies;
before him their faces the seraphim hide,
while Joseph stands waiting, unscared, by his side:**

**Lo! here is Emmanuel, here is the child,
the Son that was promised to Mary so mild;
whose power and dominion shall ever increase,
the Prince that shall rule o'er a kingdom of peace:**

**O wonder of wonders, which none can unfold:
The Ancient of Days is an hour or two old;
the Maker of all things is made of the earth,
man is worshipped by angels, and God comes to birth:**

A reading from St Paul's letter to the Galatians

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba!^[b] Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

(Galatians 4.4-7)

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Al - le - lu - ia! Your words, O Lord, are spi - rit and life.
Al - le - lu - ia! O - pen our hearts to your word.

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.
Glory to you a Lord.

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.

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

(Luke 2.15-21)

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

The Sermon

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that in the beginning was the Word,
and that the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
Through him all things were made;
without him nothing was made that has been made.
In him is life and that life is the light for us all.**

The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us; we have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Prayers of Intercession

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

The Peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son of given,
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

AMR591 Of the Father's love begotten

**Of the Father's heart begotten,
Ere the world from chaos rose,
he is Alpha from that fountain,
All that is and hath been flows;
He is Omega of all things,
Yet to come the mystic Close,
*Evermore and evermore.***

**O how blest that wondrous birthday,
When the Maid the curse retrieved,
Brought to birth mankind's salvation,
By the Holy Ghost conceived;**

**And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
In her loving arms received,**

**This is he, whom seer and sibyl,
Sang in ages long gone by;
This is he of old revealed
In the page of prophecy;
Lo! He comes the promised Saviour;
Let the world his praises cry!**

**Let the storm and summer sunshine,
Gliding stream and sounding shore.
Sea and forest, frost and zephyr,
Day and night their Lord adore;
Let creation join to laud thee
Through the ages evermore,**

**Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;
Angels and Archangels, sing!
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
Let your joyous anthems ring,
Every tongue his name confessing,
Countless voices answering,**

(Words Prudentius, trans R. F. Davis)

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

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.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,
mighty creator, ever-living God.
We give you thanks and praise for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who for love of our fallen race humbled himself,
and was born of the Virgin Mary
by the power of your Spirit,
and lived as one of us.
In this mystery of the Word made flesh
you have caused his light to shine in our hearts,
to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.
In him we see our God made visible
and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.
Therefore with all the angels of heaven
we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name
and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.
On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of
sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:
Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.
Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with Mary and Joseph, and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.
Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**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.**

We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ.
**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in the one bread.**

Agnus Dei

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
Grant us peace.**

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his Supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

All baptised Christians are welcome to receive communion. We ask that you do not intinct or dip your communion wafer in the chalice. If you are concerned about the spread of Covid-19, it is entirely acceptable to receive the bread only.

NEH31 O Little One Sweet

[t O Jesulein]

**O little one sweet, O little one mild,
thy Father's purpose thou hast fulfilled;
thou cam'st from heav'n to dwell below,
To share the joys and tears we know,
O little one sweet, O little one mild.**

**O little one sweet, O little one mild,
with joy thou hast the whole world filled;
thou camest here from heav'n's domain,
to bring men comfort in our pain,
O little one sweet, O little one mild.**

**O little one sweet, O little one mild.
in thee Love's beauties are all distilled;
then light in us thy love's bright flame,
that we may give thee back the same,
O little one sweet, O little one mild.**

(Words: Scheidt, trans Dearmer)

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly
home:
help your Church to live as one family,
united in love and obedience,
and bring us all at last to our home in heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.**

Notices

Blessing and Dismissal

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with peace and goodwill
and make you partakers of the divine nature;
and the blessing ...

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

CAHON409 Lord, for the years [t Lord for the years]

**Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided,
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.**

**Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us,
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.**

**Lord, for our land, in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care;
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.**

**Lord, for ourselves; in living power remake us,
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne;
past put behind us, for the future take us,
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.**

(Words: Timothy Dudley-Smith)