



CHESTER  
CATHEDRAL

# **Christmas Day Festival Eucharist**

**25<sup>th</sup> December 2023  
10.30am**

**President:  
The Revd Canon Jane Brooke**

**Preacher:  
The Rt Revd Mark Tanner,  
Bishop of Chester**

# WELCOME

We welcome you to Chester Cathedral!  
It is a place where the mission of the church to proclaim God's love is central, and your welcome presence here for worship helps to strengthen this vital act of witness.

We're a paperless Cathedral and are working environmentally to save paper. The service can be downloaded to your device using the QR code at the back of the nave, or by visiting [Services - Chester Cathedral](#). Hymns, readings and responses will be presented on the screens.

## Music

### *Communion Setting*

*Missa Festiva Flor Peeters 1903-86*

### *Gradual*

*Masters in this Hall arr. Jerrick Cavagnaro b.1996*

### *Communion Motets*

*Sleep my Jesus sleep arr. Philip Rushforth b. 1972*

*Shepherd's Pipe Carol John Rutter b.1945*

### *Voluntary*

*Final (Symphonie No 1, op. 14)*

*Louis Vierne 1870-1937*

Throughout the service, where indicated, please only stand if you feel able to do so.

## **Children's activities**

If you have children with you, they are welcome to take part in the activities on offer in the north aisle.

## **Receiving Communion**

We warmly invite Christians of all denominations to come and receive bread and wine at the distribution of Holy Communion. Gluten-free wafers are available; please indicate to the priest if you require one. If you prefer not to receive you are invited either to come forward for a blessing or to remain in your seat.

We are offering the chalice to every communicant at both communion stations.

**Please do not intinct (dip) the wafer yourself.** If you prefer only to receive the wafer, then please do so.

# COLLECTION

The Cathedral costs around £6000 a day to keep open, and we need your support.

We invite you to generously give to ensure our future:

A collection will be taken during the service; donations can otherwise be left with cash or using the

**Contactless Donation Plates.**

A sidesperson can help you with this.

**Via the Cathedral Website**

[www.chestercathedral.com/donate](http://www.chestercathedral.com/donate)

We need your help to make sure that services like this one can continue and that we can keep the doors open for everyone. Thank you for your generous contributions.

# THE GATHERING

*Please stand, if able, to sing*

## Opening Carol

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:

*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 heaven above;  
glory to God  
in the Highest:

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
born this happy morning,  
Jesu, to thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father,  
now in flesh appearing:

*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

*Frederick Oakeley 1802-80*

*ADESTE FIDELES  
J.F. Wade 1711-86*

## Greeting

*The President says*

Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you  
**and also with you.**

## Opening responses

‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’  
says the Lord.

**Now the Word is made flesh  
and laid in a narrow manger.**

From eternity to eternity you are God,  
**and now we see you  
as a newborn child.**

## Lighting of the Advent wreath

Lord Jesus, Light of light,  
you have come among us.  
Help us who live by your light  
to shine as lights in your world.  
Glory to God in the highest.  
**Amen.**

*The central candle on the Advent wreath is lit.*

## Prayers of Penitence

*Please be seated. The Deacon introduces the Prayers of Penitence.*

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.

*cf Malachi 4:2*

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.**

## **Absolution**

*The President says*

May the God of all healing and forgiveness  
draw you to himself,  
that you may behold the glory of his Son,  
the Word made flesh,  
and be cleansed from all your sins,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**



*Please stand as the choir sings*

## **The Gloria**

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te, gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine Deus, rex coelestis, Deus pater omnipotens, Domine fili unigenite Jesu Christe. Domine Deus, agnus Dei, filius patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe. Cum sancto spiritu, in Gloria Dei patris. Amen.

*Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ: O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us. For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art the Most High, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

# Collect

*We remain standing as the President says*

Let us pray.

Almighty God,  
you have given us your only-begotten Son  
to take our nature upon him  
and as at this time  
to be born of a pure virgin:  
grant that we, who have been born again  
and made your children  
by adoption and grace,  
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
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

*Please be seated.*

## **New Testament reading**

A reading from Paul's Letter to Titus.

But when the goodness and loving-kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

*Titus 3:4-7*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Gradual**

*The choir sings*

Masters in this hall, hear ye news today  
brought from oversea and ever I you pray:

*Nowell! Nowell! Nowell! Nowell, sing we clear!  
Holpen are all folk on earth,  
born is God's son so dear:  
Nowell! Nowell! Nowell! Nowell, sing we loud!  
God today hath poor folk raised  
and cast a-down the proud.*

Going o'er the hills,  
through the milk-white snow,  
heard I ewes bleat while the wind did blow:

Shepherds many an one sat among the sheep,  
no man spake more word  
than they had been asleep:

Quoth I, 'Fellows mine, why this guise sit ye?  
Making but dull cheer,  
shepherds though ye be?

Shepherds should of right  
leap and dance and sing,  
thus to see ye sit is a right strange thing':

Quoth these fellows then,  
'To Bethlem town we go,  
to see a mighty lord lie in manger low':

'How name ye this lord,  
shepherds?' then said I,  
'Very God', they said,  
'come from heaven high'.

This is Christ the Lord, masters be ye glad!  
Christmas is come in,  
and no folk should be sad:

*Nowell! Nowell! Nowell! Nowell, sing we clear!  
Holpen are all folk on earth,  
born is God's son so dear:  
Nowell! Nowell! Nowell! Nowell, sing we loud!  
God today hath poor folk raised  
and cast a-down the proud.*

*William Morris 1834-96    Marin Marais 1656-1728  
arr. Jerrick Cavagnaro b.1996*

*Please stand for the Gospel procession.*

## **Gospel Acclamation**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

The Word became flesh  
and dwelt among us,  
and we have seen his glory.                      *John 1:14*

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

## **Holy Gospel**

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

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

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*

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

*Please be seated.*

## **Sermon**

The Bishop of Chester

*Please stand if you are able.*

# **Nicene Creed**

**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 the Father and the 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.**

*Please be seated.*

# Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray to Jesus our Saviour.

*After each petition, the following response  
may be used*

Jesus, Saviour,  
**hear our prayer.**

*At the end*

Jesus, Saviour, child of Mary,  
you know us and love us,  
you share our lives and hear our prayer.

**Glory to you for ever.**

**Amen.**

# THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

## The Peace

*Please stand. The President says*

Unto us a child is born,  
unto us a son is given,  
and his name shall be called  
the Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 9:6*

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

*The Deacon says*

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.



'All glory be to God on high,  
and on the earth be peace;  
good-will henceforth from heaven to men  
begin and never cease.'

*Nahum Tate 1652-1715*

WINCHESTER OLD

*Thomas Este's Psalter, 1592*

## **Preparation of the Altar**

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

## **Eucharistic Prayer**

*The President says*

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:

*The choir sings*

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.  
Hosanna in excelsis.  
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.  
Hosanna in excelsis.

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

## *The President continues*

Lord, you are holy indeed,  
the source of all holiness;  
grant that by the power  
of your Holy Spirit,  
and according to your holy will,  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us the body and blood  
of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, in the same night  
that he was betrayed,  
took bread and gave you thanks;  
he broke it  
and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take, eat; this is my body  
which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper  
he took the cup and gave you thanks;  
he gave it to them, saying:  
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.

*The Deacon says*

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died:**

**Christ is risen:**

**Christ will come again.**

*The President continues*

And so, Father, calling to mind  
his death on the cross,  
his perfect sacrifice made once  
for the sins of the whole world;  
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection  
and glorious ascension,  
and looking for his coming in glory,  
we celebrate this memorial  
of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice  
of praise and thanksgiving,  
we bring before you this bread  
and this cup  
and we thank you for counting us worthy  
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people  
and gather into one in your kingdom  
all who share this one bread and one cup,  
so that we, in the company of all the saints,  
may praise and glorify you for ever,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord;  
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,



in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory be yours,  
almighty Father, for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

## **The Lord's Prayer**

*This can be offered in your own language.*

Rejoicing in the presence of God here  
among us, as our Saviour taught us,  
so we pray:

**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.**

# Breaking of the Bread

*The President 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.**

# Giving of Communion

*The President says*

Christ is the true bread  
which has come down from heaven.  
**Lord, give us this bread always.**

# Agnus Dei

*The choir sings*

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
dona nobis pacem.

*O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the  
world, have mercy upon us.*

*O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the  
world, grant us thy peace.*

*All Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion or a blessing. Sidespeople will direct and assist the congregation in coming forward. The chalice is now offered at both communion stations – please do not intinct (dip) the wafer.*

## **Choir Carols**

*During communion, the choir sings*

Sleep, my Jesus, sleep,  
Jesus, fall asleep,  
I will rock you all night long,  
I will sing a little song,  
lully, rock-a-bye, lully.

Sleep, my baby, sleep,  
rest your head in sleep,  
in the arms of Mary mild,  
who enfolds her little child,  
lully, rock-a-bye lully.

Sleep, my poor one, sleep,  
fold your arms and sleep,  
here comes Joseph on his feet,  
bringing bread for you to eat,  
lully, rock-a-bye, lully.

Sleep, my darling, sleep,  
close your eyes and sleep,  
do not ask about tomorrow,  
future pain and future sorrow,  
lully, rock-a-bye, lully.

Sleep, my Jesus, sleep,  
take my heart and sleep,  
you bring peace to us on earth,  
and in heaven by your birth,  
lully, rock-a-bye, lully.

*Ukrainian trad. carol*  
*arr. Philip Rushforth b.1972*

Going through the hills on a night all starry,  
on the way to Bethlehem.

Far away I heard a shepherd boy piping,  
on the way to Bethlehem.

*Angels in the sky brought this message nigh; dance  
and sing for joy that Christ the new-born King is  
come to bring us peace on earth and he's lying  
cradled there at Bethlehem.*

'Tell me, shepherd boy piping tunes so  
merrily, on the way to Bethlehem.

Who will hear your tunes on these hills so  
lonely on the way to Bethlehem?'

*Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:  
'Dance and sing for joy that Christ the new-born  
King is come to bring us peace on earth and he's  
lying cradled there at Bethlehem.'*

'None may hear my pipes on these hills so  
lonely on the way to Bethlehem.

But a King will hear me play sweet lullabies  
when I get to Bethlehem'.

*Angels in the sky came down from on high,  
hovered o'er the manger where the babe was  
lying, cradled in the arms of his mother Mary,  
sleeping now at Bethlehem.*

*'Where is this new King, shepherd boy piping  
merrily, is he there at Bethlehem?'*

*'I will find him soon by the star shining brightly  
in the sky o'er Bethlehem'.*

*Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:*

*'Dance and sing for joy that Christ the new-born  
King is come to bring us peace on earth and he's  
lying cradled there at Bethlehem'.*

*'May I come with you, shepherd boy piping  
merrily, come with you to Bethlehem?*

*Pay my homage too at the new King's cradle,  
is it far to Bethlehem?*

*Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:*

*'Dance and sing for joy that Christ the infant King  
is born this night in lowly stable yonder, born for  
you at Bethlehem'.*

*John Rutter b. 1945*

## **Congregational Carol** *(if needed)*

See, amid the winter's snow,  
born for us on earth below,  
see the tender Lamb appears,  
promised from eternal years.

*Hail, thou ever blessed morn!  
Hail, redemption's happy dawn!  
Sing through all Jerusalem,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."*

Lo, within a manger lies  
He who built the starry skies;  
He who, throned in height sublime,  
sits amid the cherubim!

Say, ye holy shepherds, say,  
what's your joyful news today?  
Wherefore have ye left your sheep  
on the lonely mountain steep?

"As we watched at dead of night,  
Lo! we saw a wondrous light;  
angels singing 'Peace on earth'  
told us of the Saviour's birth."

Sacred Infant, all divine,  
what a tender love was Thine,  
thus to come from highest bliss  
down to such a world as this!

Teach, O teach us, Holy Child,  
by Thy face so meek and mild,  
teach us to resemble Thee,  
in Thy sweet humility!

*Edward Caswall 1814-78*

*HUMILITY  
John Goss 1800-80*

# Post Communion Prayer

*The President says*

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 DISMISSAL

## Blessing

*Please stand. The Bishop says*

May the Father,  
who has loved the eternal Son  
from before the foundation of the world,  
shed that love upon you his children.

**Amen.**

May Christ, who by his incarnation  
gathered into one  
things earthly and heavenly,  
fill you with joy and peace.

**Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit,  
by whose overshadowing  
Mary became the God-bearer,  
give you grace  
to carry the good news of Christ.

**Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**



*The Deacon says*

Go in peace.

Proclaim the Word made flesh.

**Glory, thanks and praise to God.**

## **Carol**

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 the angelic host proclaim,  
Christ is born in Bethlehem:

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

Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come  
Offspring of a Virgin's womb!  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail the incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel:

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

Hail the heaven-born Prince of peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
Risen with healing in his wings;  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth:

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

Charles Wesley 1707-88

MENDELSSOHN

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy 1809-47

## **Dismissal of Clergy, Servers and Choir**

*The President says to them*

The Lord be with you,  
*and also with you.*

Let us bless the Lord,  
*thanks be to God.*

## **Voluntary**

Final (Symphonie No 1, op. 14)

Louis Vierne 1870-1937

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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