

PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

*Serving St Benedict's, St Mary's & St Oswald's,
Warrington*



Christmas Eve Masses

Saturday 24 December 2022

Introductory Rites

Entrance Procession

Please note: the first verse will be sung as a solo at the 6.30 pm Mass.

- 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.**
- For he is our childhood's pattern,
day by day like us he grew;
he was little, weak and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.**
- And our eyes at last shall see him
through his own redeeming love,
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.**

Cecil Frances Alexander (1848)

Greeting & Introduction

Lighting of the Christmas Candle

Collect

Good and gracious God,
on this holy night you gave us your Son,
the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes,
the Saviour of all, lying in a manger.

On this holy night
draw us into the mystery of your love.
Join our voices with the heavenly host,
that we may sing your glory on high.
Give us a place among the shepherds,
that we may find the one for whom we have waited,
Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

(Isaiah 9: 1-7)

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.

For all the footgear of battle,
every cloak rolled in blood,
is burnt,
and consumed by fire.

For there is a child born for us,
a son given to us
and dominion is laid on his shoulders;
and this is the name they give him:
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God,
Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.
Wide is his dominion
in a peace that has no end,
for the throne of David
and for his royal power,
which he establishes and makes secure
in justice and integrity.
From this time onwards and for ever,
the jealous love of the Lord of Hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Carol

- Angels we have heard on high
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echo still their joyous strains.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

- Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;

come, adore on bended knee
th'infant Christ, the new-born King.

Traditional French Carol (1862)

Gospel

(Luke 2: 1-14)

The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace to all who enjoy his favour.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

Blessing of the Crib

God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have shown your love.

When our need for a Saviour was great
you sent your Son to be born of Mary.

To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy and love.

Bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise up our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Saviour of all,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Carol

1 **Away in a manger,
no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus
laid down his sweet head,**

**the stars in the bright sky
looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus
asleep on the hay.**

2 **The cattle are lowing,
the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus
no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus!
Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side
until morning is nigh.**

3 **Be near me, Lord Jesus;
I ask thee to stay
close by me for ever,
and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children
in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven,
to live with thee there.**

Intercessions

Let us pray that the love God has shown us in the gift of his Son may inspire us to love one another.

R. Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell within us.

For peace in the world, especially in Ukraine and in the land of Christ's birth. In a special way, we remember our sisters and brothers in the parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary and St James the Less in Jordan.

R. Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell within us.

For those who find Christmas difficult because they are lonely or have nowhere to call home, because they are missing someone or struggling with what life has handed them, because they are in prison or in a refugee camp.

R. Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell within us.

For those who are sick, those mourning the loss of a loved one, and for anyone who is far from home, especially those who serve us in the armed forces.

R. Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell within us.

For those who are dear to us; those who have died, especially Lillian Reay and Margaret Merriman; and for those we are remembering this weekend, especially Arthur & Molly Whalley, Matthew Shaw, and all the people of this parish community.

R. Come, Lord Jesus, and dwell within us.

Now let us ask Mary, the mother of the newborn King, to pray for us all: **Hail Mary...**

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

1 **O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet, in the dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years**

are met in thee tonight.

- 2 **O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to all on earth;
for Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.**
- 3 **How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still,
the dear Christ enters in.**

Phillips Brooks (1868)

Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

**R. May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

Prayer over the Offerings

Lord,
accept our gifts on this joyful feast.
By our communion with your Son,
may we become more like him
who joins our lives to yours,
for he is Lord for ever and ever.
R. Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

Mass of Hope – Bernadette Farrell

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,
Holy Lord, Holy Lord, God of hosts.
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed is he
who comes in the name,
who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

The Lord's Prayer

Communion

Music: O Holy Night – Placide Cappeau (1808-1877)

- 1 **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 (x2)**
- 2 **Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing alleluia:
Christ, the Saviour is born (x2)**

- 3 **Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace:
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth (x2)**

Franz Xaver Gruber (1818)

Prayer after Communion

God our Father,
we rejoice in the birth of our Saviour.
May we share his life completely
by living as he has taught.
Through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

Concluding Rite

Blessing & Dismissal

Final Hymn

- 1 **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.***
- 2 **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.**
- 3 **Hail the heaven-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Son 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.**

Charles Wesley, adapted by George Whitefield and others



Acknowledgements

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Christmas in Heaven



In all the joy of Christmas, there can be sadness too – especially if we're missing a loved one who has died. The following poem was penned by a mother, Wanda Bencke, whose young daughter died. She imagines her daughter saying:

**I see the countless Christmas Trees
Around the world below
With tiny lights, like Heavens stars
Reflecting in the snow.
The sight is so spectacular,
Please wipe away a tear
For I am spending Christmas
With Jesus Christ this year.**

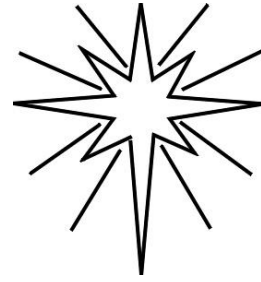
**I hear many Christmas songs
That people hold so dear,
But the sounds of music can't compare
With the Christmas Choir up here.
I have no words to tell you,
The joy their voices bring;
For it's beyond description
To hear an angel sing.**

**I know how much you miss me
For I feel your breaking heart;
But through our memories, oh so dear
We're never far apart.
I can't tell you of the splendour
Or the peace that's in this place,
Can you just imagine Christmas
With our Saviour face to face?**

**I'll ask him to light your spirit
As I tell him of your love;
Then pray for one another
As you lift your eyes above.
So let your heart be joyful
And let your spirit sing
For I am spending Christmas in heaven
And I'm walking with the King.**



A Christmas Table Prayer



**Loving God,
on this Christmas Day
we give thanks that Jesus, your Son,
has come into our world
bringing us gifts of peace and joy.**

**Bless us as we sit down together
for our Christmas meal.**

**Bless the food we share,
and help us to remember those who are hungry.**

**Be with our neighbours and our friends,
all who are lonely, sick
or away from home.**

**We pray that our departed loved ones
may now sit at your table in heaven.**

**May the joy of this feast give us strength and light,
now and in the days ahead.**

Amen.



Prayer for the New Year

**Holy God,
as we enter this new year,
we thank you for your presence with us
in all the years of our lives.**

**We have known joy, and also sorrow,
success and failure,
and through it all, you have been with us
– the companion of all our journeys.**

**Much of life is fleeting
and so we thank you for things that endure:
the love of faithful friends,
wisdom gained from experience,
the reliability of nature,
and your steadfast love.**

**We thank you for this new year which awaits us.
Take us by the hand and lead us on.
Amen.**