

PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

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



Christmas Midnight Mass

Introductory Rites

Entrance Procession

- 1 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.**
- 2 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.**
- 3 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.**
- 4 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.**

Greeting & Introduction

Gathering Prayer

God of endless ages, Father of all goodness,
we keep vigil for the birth of your Son.
Count us among the people in whom you delight,
and by this night's marriage of heaven and earth
draw all generations into the embrace of your love.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
R. Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

(including Vigil of Carols & Readings)

First Reading

(John 1: 1-5, 9-14)

A reading from St John's Gospel

In the beginning was the Word:
and the Word was with God
and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things came to be,
not one thing had its being but through him.
All that came to be had life in him
and that life was the light of men,
a light that shines in the dark,
a light that darkness could not overpower.

The Word was the true light
that enlightens all men;
and he was coming into the world.
He was in the world
that had its being through him,
and the world did not know him.
He came to his own domain
and his own people did not accept him.
But to all who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God,
to all who believe in the name of him
who was born not out of human stock
or urge of the flesh
or will of man
but of God himself.

The Word was made flesh,
he lived among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Carol

- 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.**

Second 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

- 1 While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the Angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.**
- 2 "Fear not", said he, (for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind)
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind."**
- 3 "To you in David's town this day
is born of David's line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:**
- 4 "The heavenly Babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
and in a manger laid."**

Third Reading

(Luke 1: 26-38)

A reading from St Luke's Gospel

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you." She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the house of Jacob forever and his reign will have no end." Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?" "The Holy Spirit will come upon you", the angel answered, "and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God." "I am the handmaid of the Lord", said Mary, "let what you have said be done to me." And the angel left her.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Procession to the Crib

- 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.

Blessing of the Crib

- 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.

Proclamation of the Birth of Christ

Lighting of the Christmas Candle

Gloria

- 1 **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!

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

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

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.

Epistle (Titus 2: 11-14)

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

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 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

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

All kneel at the following words:

**and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
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.

I 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 adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Bidding Prayers

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

Please join in singing:

- 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 (x3)
Christ the Lord.

- 2 **Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing all ye citizens of heaven above:
glory to God
in the highest:**
- 3 **Yea, Lord we greet thee,
born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory given;
word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:**

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

Holy, Holy – Mass of Christ the Saviour (Dan Schutte)
**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full, are full of your glory.
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes,
who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.**

The Mystery of Faith

**We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.**

The Lord's Prayer

Sign of Peace

Please exchange the Sign of Peace with those around you in whatever way is most comfortable for you.

Communion

- 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)**

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.**



The **Offertory Collection** takes place as you leave church – a basket will be available, or you can use the 'Tap & Go' facility. This collection is the main source of income for the parish. Many thanks for your generosity.

Acknowledgements

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