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The Parish of Church of St John the Baptist Crowthorne

Church @ Home

The Eucharist at Christmas and Epiphanytide

Common Worship Order One

Introduction to the Season

The celebration of Christ's incarnation at Christmas is one of the two poles of the Christian year. The wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, as Emmanuel, foretold by the prophets and born of Mary, provides the material of the feast. Christmas is much more than simply the celebration of Jesus' birth. The task of the Christmas liturgy is to recall us, amid all the joyful customs and celebrations of Christmas, to this central truth of the Word made flesh for our salvation.

The days around 25 December are a principal holiday in the secular calendar of Britain, and commercial pressures have led to much of Christmas celebration being displaced into Advent. It has become a still greater challenge to celebrate as they deserve the saints of the Christmas season: St Stephen, who first paid with his life for following the incarnate Lord; St John, who was believed to have lived to great old age in profound meditation on the Word made flesh; and the Holy Innocents, who draw our attention to the plight of children in a world where the implications of the birth of the Christ-child are not yet manifest.

In the western churches, the Epiphany ('manifestation') became an occasion to celebrate one element in the story of Christ's birth, the visit of the far-travelled magi, understood as the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. Matthew's account speaks simply of "wise men from the east". In this perspective, Epiphanytide is an apt season to pray for the worldwide mission of the Church. The feast of the Conversion of St Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, appropriately falls in the Epiphany season, as does the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The season of joyful celebration which begins at Christmas now continues through the successive Sundays of Epiphany, and the festal cycle ends only with the Feast of the Presentation, or Candlemas. The child who has been manifested to the Magi at his birth is now recognised by Simeon and Anna, when he comes to be presented in the Temple according to the Law of Israel. He is both "a light to lighten the Gentiles," and "the glory of God's people Israel." But the redemption he will bring must be won through suffering; the Incarnation is directed to the Passion; and Simeon's final words move our attention away from the celebration of Christmas and towards the mysteries of Easter.

¶ *The Gathering*

Welcome and Notices

Before worship begins, words of welcome or introduction may be said and any notices are given out.

A hymn may be sung

The president greets the people

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Prayer of Preparation

The president may introduce the liturgy

All Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,

¶ *The Dismissal*

Blessing

Until 5th January:

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;

From 6th January until the Feast of the Presentation:

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory
and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom;

On the Feast of the Presentation:

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,
fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will;

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

All Amen.

A minister says

Go in the light and peace of Christ.

All Thanks be to God.

A hymn may be sung

Thank you for joining us for Church @ Home.

Do join us for coffee and chat on Zoom.

While the president receives the bread and wine on behalf of the people you are invited to a share in a spiritual communion, using one of the following prayers.

**Lord, you stand at the door of my heart and knock.
You wait for me and only I can let you in.**

**I believe and trust in you and ask you now to fill me with
your presence.**

**Feed me with your body and unite me in your blood,
that I may be your blessing to a world in need.**

Amen

Oxford

Diocese

Or,

**O Lord Jesus Christ, since I cannot now receive Thee
sacramentally, I humbly pray Thee that Thou wouldest
come spiritually to my soul.**

**Come, Lord Jesus, come and cleanse me, heal me,
strengthen me, and unite me to Thyself, now and for
evermore. Amen.**

Oxford Movement Centenary Prayer

Book

During the distribution a hymn or anthem may be sung.

Prayer after Communion

The Post Communion prayer printed on the reading sheet may be said.

All Lord Jesus Christ,

**we thank you that we have received the grace
of spiritual communion with you.
Feed us in mind, body and soul,
strengthen us to serve our neighbours in need
and guide us to walk with you
in the Way that leads to new life.
Amen.**

**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.**

Prayers of Penitence

A minister uses one of the following invitations to confession

Until 5th January:

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph:

‘You shall call his name Jesus,

for he will save his people from their sins.’

Therefore let us seek the forgiveness of God
through Jesus the Saviour of the world.

From 6th January until the Feast of the Presentation:

The grace of God has dawned upon the world

through our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own.

Let us confess our sins.

On the Feast of the Presentation:

Hear the words of our Saviour Jesus Christ:

“I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me shall never walk in darkness
but shall have the light of life.”

Let us therefore bring our sins into his light

and confess them in penitence and faith.

Kneel or sit

All Father eternal, giver of light and grace,

we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought, in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love and marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us, forgive us all that is past
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light. Amen.

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.

All Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis

The following ancient hymn may be said or sung.

All Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.
We break the bread of life,
and that life is the light of the world.
All God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.

Agnus Dei

All 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.

Giving of Communion

The president says the invitation to communion
God's holy gifts
for God's holy people.
All Jesus Christ is holy,
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

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.

All 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 [*N 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.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All 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.

**you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

The Collect

The Collect is said.

All Amen.

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

Readings from the Old and New Testaments

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

An acclamation heralds the gospel reading

Alleluia, alleluia.....

Until 5th January:

The word became flesh and dwelt among us,

and we have seen his glory.

From 6th January until the Feast of the Presentation:

Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations

and believed in throughout the world.

On the Feast of the Presentation:

This child is the light to enlighten the nations,
And the glory of your people Israel.

All Alleluia.

When the Gospel is announced the minister says

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

All Glory to you, O Lord.

After the reading of the Gospel

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

The Nicene Creed *is said on Sundays and Holy Days.*

**All 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**

when by his sacrifice he made our peace with you.
And now we rejoice and glorify your name
that we, too, have seen your salvation
and join with angels and archangels
in their unending hymn of praise:

**All 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.**

Sit or kneel

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

From 6th January until the Feast of the Presentation:

All honour and praise be yours always and everywhere,
mighty creator, ever-living God,
through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord:
for at this time we celebrate your glory
made present in our midst.
In the coming of the Magi
the King of all the world was revealed to the nations.
In the waters of baptism
Jesus was revealed as the Christ,
the Saviour sent to redeem us.
In the water made wine
the new creation was revealed at the wedding feast.
Poverty was turned to riches, sorrow into joy.
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:

On the Feast of the Presentation:

It is indeed right and good,
always and everywhere to give you thanks and praise
through Jesus Christ, who is one with you from all eternity.
For on this day he appeared in the temple
in substance of our flesh
To come near to us in judgement.
He searches the hearts of all your people
and brings to light the image of your splendour.
Your servant Simeon acclaimed him as the light to lighten
the nations while Anna spoke of him to all
who looked for your redemption.
Destined for the falling and rising of many,
he was lifted high upon the cross
and a sword of sorrow pierced his mother's heart

**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.**

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers usually include these concerns and may follow this sequence:

- ¶ *The Church of Christ*
- ¶ *Creation, human society, the Sovereign and those in authority*
- ¶ *The local community*
- ¶ *Those who suffer*
- ¶ *The communion of saints*

These responses may be used

Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

And at the end

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

¶ *The Liturgy of the Sacrament*

The Peace

Until 5th January:

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

From 6th January until the Feast of the Presentation:

Our Saviour Christ is the Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and of peace
there shall be no end.

On the Feast of the Presentation:

In the tender mercy of our God
the dayspring from on high has broken upon us,
to give light to those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

A hymn may be sung

Preparation of the Table

Taking of the Bread and Wine

*The table is prepared and bread and wine are placed upon it.
The president takes the bread and wine.*

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

All Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer (E)

The Lord is here.

All His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Until 5th January:

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,
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: