

We go into the world
to walk in God's light,
to rejoice in God's love
and to reflect God's glory.

Go in peace.
Proclaim the Word made flesh.
All: Glory, thanks and praise to God

*We wish EVERYONE
a very happy Christmas
and peaceful New Year!*



Parishes of Elstead, Thursley, Shackleford and Peper Harow

Midnight in Bethlehem



December 24th
9.30 pm

PARISHES
OF
ELSTEAD.
THURSLEY.



SHACKLEFORD.
PEPER HAROW

Welcome

We come together to celebrate the First Communion of Christmas, at a time which will be midnight in Bethlehem.

All over the world, millions will be gathering to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Here in St Nicholas Peper Harow we hope that this service will be a wonder filled start to your Christmas celebrations. Whether you are a regular worshipper with us, or someone who comes to church only once a year, whether you are a local inhabitant or a visitor from far away, we are very pleased that you have chosen to begin your Christmas Day by joining us in this service, and we hope that you will feel welcome and comfortable here.

During the service all are welcome to receive the bread of Christ's Body if they feel moved so to do. But if you do not feel that you are ready to do that, then please indicate that you would like to receive a blessing from God by standing holding your service booklet. The Child of Bethlehem did not come into the world to heal and save humanity; he came to heal and save individuals – and that means *each of us*.

The Child whose birth we celebrate today is there for you not just tonight, nor just in the celebrations of the Christmas season, but always. Remember that as you go from here after tonight's service.

May the joy and peace of the Christ-child remain with you wherever you go and whatever you do in the coming year.

Due to Covid we will only be receiving the bread for Communion which will be brought to you in your pew.

A retiring Collection will be taken for the life and work of the Parish.

Carol (please stand)

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
let earth receive her king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and heaven and nature sing.**

**Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns;
Your sweetest songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.**

Isaac Watts (167-1748) based on Psalm 98, alt.

Blessing

Out of silence, praise lifts its song.
Out of darkness, light bursts forth.
Out of waiting, the answer comes,
go in faith that God brings us what we most deeply desire.
Amen.

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ Child
be yours this Christmas.
And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

We break the bread of life
and that life is the light of the world.

**All: God here among us,
light in the mist of us,
bring us to light and life.**

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

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Giving of Communion

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven.

All: Lord, give us this bread always.

*If you would like to receive communion please stand. If you would
like to receive a blessing, please stand holding your service booklet.*

Prayer after Communion (please remain seated or kneeling)

The Word became flesh;
we have seen His glory, full of grace and truth.

Let us pray:

**All: 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 Gathering

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

All: and also with you.

Words of welcome or introduction may be said.

Carol (please stand)

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:

O come, let us adore Him,

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God
In the highest:

O come, let us adore Him,

The Greeting

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light:
those who dwell in the land of deep darkness, on them has the
light shone.

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

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

From eternity you are God,

All: and now we see you as a newborn child.

Prayers of Penitence (please sit or kneel)

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our
hearts. In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

Silence is kept

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

All: 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.

All: Christ, have mercy.

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

All: Lord, have mercy.

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.

we remember his dying and rising in glory,
and we rejoice that he intercedes for us at your right hand.
Pour out your Holy Spirit as we bring before you
these gifts of your creation;
may they be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

As we eat and drink these holy things in your presence,
form us in the likeness of Christ,
and build us into a living temple to your glory.

Bring us at the last with all the saints
to the vision of that eternal splendour
for which you have created us;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
by whom, with whom, and in whom,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

**All: Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever.**

Amen.

The Lord's prayer (please sit)

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**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.**

You give us breath and speech, that with angels and archangels and all the powers of heaven we may find a voice to sing your 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.**

How wonderful the work of your hands, O Lord.
As a mother tenderly gathers her children,
you embraced a people as your own.
When they turned away and rebelled your love remained steadfast.

From them you raised up Jesus our Saviour, born of Mary,
to be the living bread, in whom all our hungers are satisfied.
He offered his life for sinners, and with a love stronger than death
he opened wide his arms on the cross.

On the night before he died, he came to supper with his friends
and, taking bread he gave you thanks.
He broke it and gave it to them, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,
he gave you thanks, 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.

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

Father, we plead with confidence
his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross;

The Collect

Let us pray in the peace of this Christmas celebration that our joy in the birth of Christ will last forever.

Silence is kept.

The Collect (the prayer for the day) is said

Eternal God,
in the stillness of this night you sent your almighty Word
to pierce the world's darkness with the light of salvation:
give to the earth the peace that we long for and fill our hearts with
the joy of heaven through our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

The Liturgy of the word

Reading

A reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'
Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion.
Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem,
for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Isaiah 52.7-10

This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Carol (please stand)

IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR,

That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, goodwill to men
From heaven's all gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

Yet with woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long,
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And all the world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

E. H. Sears.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
glory streams from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing alleluia:
Christ, the Saviour is born'.
Christ, the Saviour is born'

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,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

*During this carol the bread and wine are laid on the altar .
After the carol these words are used at the altar .*

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

All: Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer

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.

Blessed are you, Lord God,
our light and our salvation;
to you be glory and praise for ever.

From the beginning you have created all things
and all your works echo the silent music of your praise.
In the fullness of time you made us in your image,
the crown of all creation.

Father,
in this Holy Night angels and shepherds worshipped at
the manger throne.
Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary,
Joseph and the saints,
through him who is your Word made flesh,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
All: Amen.

The Advent Candles—*The central candle is lit*

Jesus is the light of the world
A light no darkness can ever put out.
Lord Jesus, Light of light,
You have come among us.
Help us to live by your light
And shine as lights in your world.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament **The Peace**

This Holy Night the angels sang,
'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to all in whom he delights.'

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

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

*We all share a sign of peace with those around us and saying
'Peace be with you'.*

Carol (remain standing)

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
sleep in heavenly peace.

Gospel Reading (remain standing)

Alleluia! **Alleluia!**
The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
and we have seen his glory. **Alleluia!**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
All: Glory to you, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and
the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things
came into being through him, and without him not one thing came
into being. What has come into being him was life, and the life was
the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the
darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came
as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through
him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.
The true light which enlightens everyone, was coming into the
world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet
the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his
own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who
believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God,
who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of
man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen
his glory, the glory as a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

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

Sermon

(you will be invited to sit after the preacher has said a prayer)

We affirm our faith (please stand)

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All: We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
Who took our human nature,
Died for us and rose again?

All: We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All: We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the church.

All: This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession (sit or kneel)

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Creator God, in this Holy Night your Son our Saviour
was born in human flesh.

Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.

Holy God

All: Hear our prayer.

In this Holy Night there was no room for your Son in the Inn.
Protect with your love those who have no home
and all who live in poverty.

Holy God.

All: Hear our Prayer

In this Holy Night Mary, in the pain of labour,
brought your Son to birth

Hold in your hand [...and] all who are in pain or distress.

Hoy God

All: Hear our Prayer

In this Holy Night your Christ came as a light shining
in the darkness.

Bring comfort to [...and] all who are suffering in the sadness of our
world.

Holy God.

All: Hear our Prayer

In this Holy Night the angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth'
Strengthen those who work for peace and justice

in [...and in] all the world.

Holy God.

All: Hear our Prayer

In this Holy Night shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy.

Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redemption.

Holy God.

All: Hear our Prayer

In this Holy Night strangers found the Holy Family,
and saw the baby lying in the manger.

Bless our homes and all whom we love.

Holy God.

All: Hear our Prayer

In this Holy Night heaven is come down to earth,
and earth is raised to heaven.

Hold in your hand [...and] all those who have passed through death
in the hope of your coming kingdom.

Holy God.

All: Hear our Prayer

In this Holy Night Christians the world over celebrate Christ's birth.

In quiet and stillness we hold our hearts up to you

that Christ may be born in us today.

Holy God.

All: Hear our Prayer