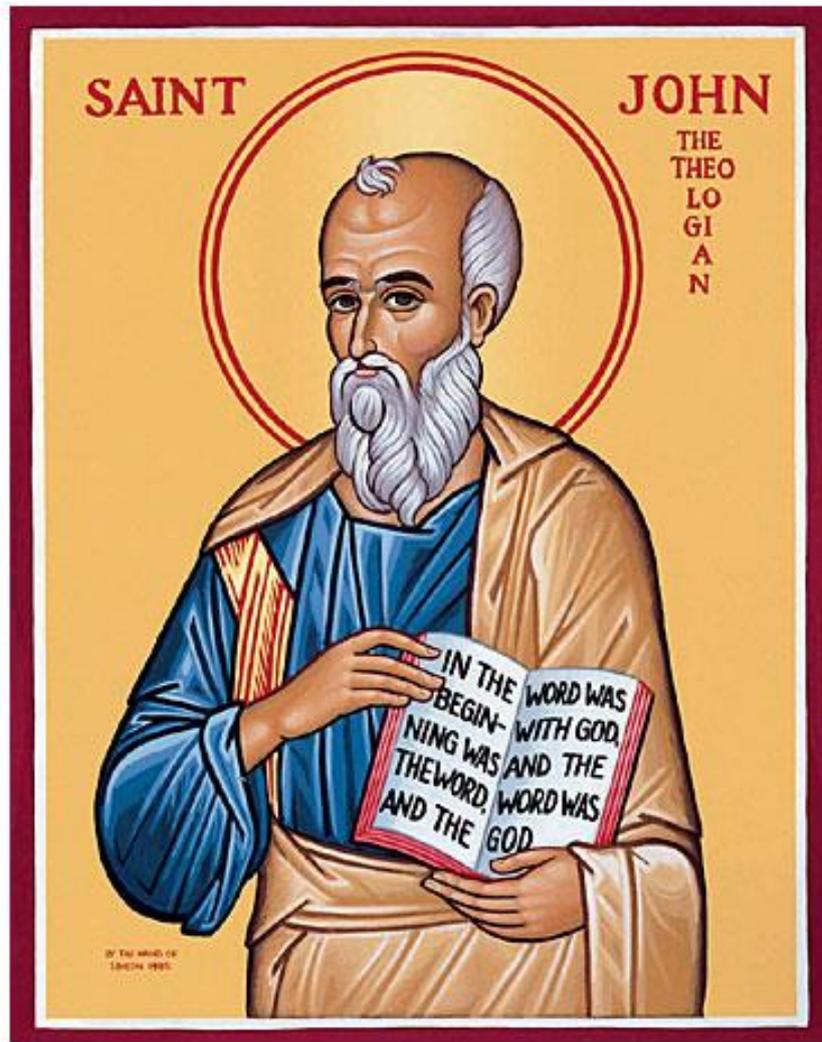


St John the Evangelist

Great Stanmore



Online Service
in the Christmas Season
for the
Feast of St John the Evangelist

The celebration of Christ's incarnation at Christmas is one of the great festivals 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, then, than simply the celebration of Jesus' birth, and neither of the great Christmas morning readings (Hebrews chapter 1 and John chapter 1) is taken from the infancy narratives. 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 Christmas season is often celebrated for twelve days, ending with the Epiphany. Contemporary use has sought to express an alternative tradition, in which Christmas lasts for a full forty days, ending with the Feast of the Presentation on 2 February. The days around 25 December are a principal holiday in the secular calendar of Britain, and commercial pressures have led to much of the Christmas celebration being displaced into Advent. It has become a still greater challenge to celebrate, as they deserve, the saints of the Christmas season: Stephen, who first paid with his life for following the incarnate Lord; John, who was believed to have lived to a 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.

Cover image: *Illuminated capital from a Christmas liturgy.*

ORDER OF SERVICE

The people are welcomed and the first hymn is announced.

Opening Hymn

INTRODUCTION

Priest In the name of the Father
 and of the Son,
 and of the Holy Spirit
All **Amen.**

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

Prayer of Preparation

All **Almighty God,**
 to whom all hearts are open,
 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

Priest Our Lord Jesus Christ said:
The first commandment is this:
'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'
There is no other commandment greater than these.
On these two commandments hang all the law and the
prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Priest 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.

cf Matthew 1:21

Sit or kneel

**All Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly, love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.**

Priest Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Stand

Gloria in Excelsis

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;
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 Priest introduces a period of silent prayer with the words 'Let us pray'.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Old Testament Reading

At the end

Reader
All This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading

At the end

Reader
All This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

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

At the end

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

Sermon

**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
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

Priest In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

The prayers may be introduced with these words

Leader Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you promised through your Son Jesus Christ
to hear us when we pray in faith.

The following responses may be used

Leader Lord, in your mercy
All **hear our prayer.**

(or)

Leader Lord, hear us
All **Lord, graciously hear us.**

The prayers may be concluded with these words

Leader Rejoicing in the fellowship of St John and all your saints,
we commend ourselves and the whole creation
to your unfailing love.

At the end

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

THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

The Peace

Priest 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

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

Priest Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

Preparation of the Table

The altar is prepared and bread and wine placed upon it.

Priest 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

Priest The Lord is here.
All **His Spirit is with us.**

Priest Lift up your hearts.
All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Priest Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Priest 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:

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.

Priest

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.

All

Jesus Christ is Lord:
**Lord, by your cross and resurrection
you have set us free.
You are the Saviour of the world.**

Priest

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 *[N and]* 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.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Priest 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.**

Breaking of the Bread

The priest breaks the consecrated bread.

Priest We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

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

Priest Draw near with faith.
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.
Eat and drink
in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

The priest receives communion.

Prayers after Communion

The priest will say the post communion prayer and then we all say:

All **Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory.
Amen.**

The Blessing

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

All Amen.

Closing Hymn

The Dismissal

Priest Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
All In the name of Christ. Amen

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