

**St John's  
Pevensey Road  
Pews News and Service  
Sheet for Christmas  
Night 2023**



**Welcome to  
St John's  
Christmas  
Midnight Mass**

During the week:  
**NO Midweek Mass**  
**Online Zoom service\*:**  
**Wednesdays at 10am**

Next Sunday 31<sup>st</sup>:  
**10.30am Sung Mass**  
**(NO 8am Mass and NO**  
**Mass on Wed 27<sup>th</sup> Dec.)**



**Our prayers are asked for:** Oliver;  
Tony G; David S; Rachel T;  
**Please also pray** for the souls of the  
recently departed, especially Annora  
Clapp, for those whose Years Mind  
falls at this time, and for all who mourn.

## The St John's Prayer Cross



Miri  
Xander  
Pauline  
Anna  
Maite &  
Chaz  
Janie H-D  
Terry S  
Baby  
Frankie  
Della  
Thomas

Please let us know of those who require this longer-term prayer support. Or pin their names, via the slips of paper provided, on the wooden Prayers Cross at the back of the Church. Thank you.

Parish Office: 07831904321

Email:  
[admstjohns30@gmail.com](mailto:admstjohns30@gmail.com)

Tina is our Administrator.

Please contact her also for  
Church Hall bookings.

Safeguarding Officer can be  
contacted on  
[safestjohn30@gmail.com](mailto:safestjohn30@gmail.com)

\*Please request a link to the Wednesday Zoom service by emailing [pewsnewsstjohns@gmail.com](mailto:pewsnewsstjohns@gmail.com)  
Also to this email address please send any updates for prayer lists or pews news sheet . (The printed sheet will not now be updated until the new year)

## Opening Hymn

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, etc.*

See how the shepherds  
summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks,  
draw nigh with lowly fear;  
we too will thither  
bend our joyful footsteps:  
*O come, let us, etc.*

Child, for us sinners  
poor and in the manger,  
fain we embrace thee  
with awe and love;  
who would not love thee,  
loving us so dearly?  
*O come, let us, etc.*

Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing all ye citizens  
of heaven above:  
"Glory to God  
in the highest:"  
*O come, let us, etc.*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
born this happy morning;

Jesu, to thee be glory given:  
Word of the Father,  
now in flesh appearing:  
*O come, let us, etc.*

*Latin 18<sup>th</sup> century. Tr F Oakeley (1802-80)*  
*et al*

## The Welcoming of the People

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

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

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

*Priest* From eternity to eternity you  
are God

*All* And now we see you as a  
newborn child.

The Lord be with you.

*All* and also with you.



## The White Candle on the Advent Wreath is lit

*Priest* People of God: shout and  
sing! Tell the good news of peace  
on earth. Lord, bring us today into  
Christ's peace.

All God's people shout: **Amen!**

Angels dance and the bright star  
shines. All creation bows to the  
Lord of all. Lord, bring us today  
into Christ's light.

All God's people shout: **Amen!**

One with us, yet born to save,  
he will show us the way to God.  
Lord, bring us today into Christ's  
love.

All God's people shout: **Amen!**

People of God: shout and sing:  
**Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen.**

*The Priest and Altar Party then  
proceed to the crib*

### **Blessing of the Crib**

Dear friends, as we meet to  
celebrate the birth of Christ, let us  
pray that God will bless this crib, <sup>The</sup>  
that all who worship his Son, born  
of the Virgin Mary, may come to  
share his life in glory.

God our Father,  
on this day your Son Jesus Christ  
was born of the Virgin Mary  
for us and for our salvation:  
bless this crib,  
which we have prepared to  
celebrate that holy birth;  
may all who see it be strengthened  
in faith and receive the fullness of  
life he came to bring, who is alive  
and reigns for ever. **All Amen.**

*The figure of the Christ child is placed  
in the manger*

### **Prayers of Penitence**

*Deacon* 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.  
**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.  
**Christ, have mercy.**

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

*Priest* May the God of all healing  
and forgiveness draw you to  
himself and cleanse you from all  
your sins, that you may behold the  
glory of his Son, the Word made  
flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

*The Priest and Altar Party return from  
the crib*

*The Gloria in Excelsis is sung*

**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 for Christmas night**

*Priest* Let us pray in the peace of this Christmas celebration that our joy in the birth of Christ will last for ever.  
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 *all sit***

**A reading from the prophet Isaiah**  
*Isaiah 52.7-10*

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.

For the Word of the Lord.

***All* Thanks be to God.**

### **A Reading from the letter to the Hebrews**

*Hebrews 1.1-4 (5-12)*

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire."

But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." And, "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing;

like a cloak you will roll them up,  
and like clothing they will be  
changed. But you are the same,  
and your years will never end."

For the Word of the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn during which the Gospel is  
brought amongst us.**

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

**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.**

**How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming;  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive  
him, still  
the dear Christ enters in.**

**Where children pure and happy  
pray to the blessed child,  
where misery cries out to thee,  
Son of the mother mild;**

**where charity stands watching  
and faith holds wide the door,  
the dark night wakes, the glory  
breaks,  
and Christmas comes once  
more.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in,  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell:  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.**

*Phillips Brooks (1835-93)*

**Gospel Reading** *When the Gospel is  
announced the Deacon says*

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

**All Alleluia.**

**Deacon** The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

**Dcn** Hear the Gospel of our Lord  
Jesus Christ according to John

**All Glory to you, O Lord.**

*John 1.1-14*

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 in 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 of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Sermon

### The Creed

*Deacon* We proclaim the Church's faith in Jesus Christ.

**All We believe and declare that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both divine and human.**

*Dcn* God, of the being of the Father,  
the only Son from before time began;

human from the being of his mother, born in the world;

**All fully God and fully human; human in both mind and body.**

*Dcn* As God he is equal to the Father,  
as human he is less than the Father.

**All Although he is both divine and human he is not two beings but one Christ.**

*Dcn* One, not by turning God into flesh,

but by taking humanity into God;

**All truly one, not by mixing humanity with Godhead, but by being one person.**

*Dcn* For as mind and body form one human being so the one Christ is both divine and human.

**All The Word became flesh and lived among us; we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

*(from the Athanasian Creed)*

**Prayers of Intercession – led by the intercessor in their own words or...**

Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, come to your people.

**In your mercy set us free.**

Unlooked for, Christ comes.

To shepherds, watching their sheep through the long, dark night, he comes with the glory of the angels' song and in the humility of the manger.

### Silence

Loving God, we pray for our community ...

In the midst of our everyday lives, surprise us with glimpses of your glorious, humble love, at the heart of existence.

Lord, come to your people.

**In your mercy set us free.**

Searched for, Christ comes.

To the wise and powerful,  
star-led to Bethlehem, seeking a  
king, he comes, child of Mary,  
crowned with meekness, worthy of  
every gift.

### Silence

Loving God, we pray for the  
leaders of the world ...  
Guide them with your light to seek  
wisdom, justice and peace.

Lord, come to your people.  
**In your mercy set us free.**

Longed for, Christ comes.

To Anna and Simeon, whose days  
are lived in faithful expectation,  
he comes, a new life to the old, a  
living prophecy of hope.

### Silence

Loving God, we pray for the  
Church in all the world ...  
Unite us by your Spirit, and make  
us faithful witnesses to the hope  
we have in you.

Lord, come to your people.  
**In your mercy set us free.**

Prayed for, Christ comes.

To men and women, girls and  
boys, crying out in darkness, pain  
and loneliness, he comes, at one  
with us, our Saviour, healer and  
friend.

### Silence

Loving God, we pray for those  
whose lives are hard and painful  
or whose existence is sorrowful,  
bitter or empty ...  
In their need, may they know your  
healing touch, reaching out to  
comfort, strengthen and restore.

Lord, come to your people.

**In your mercy set us free.**

Unlooked for and searched for,  
longed for and prayed for, loving  
God, you come to us now as you  
have come to your people in every  
age.

We thank you for all who have  
reflected the light of Christ.  
Help us to follow their example  
and bring us with them to eternal  
life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### The Peace

*Priest* 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.**

*Deacon* Let us offer one another a  
sign of God's peace  
**All may exchange a sign of peace.**

**Offertory hymn** *during which the  
altar is prepared, and bread and wine  
are placed upon it.*

**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, good will  
and peace  
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 the woes of sin and  
strife  
the world has suffered long  
beneath the angel-strain have  
rolled  
two thousand years of wrong:  
the nations, still at war, hear not  
the love-song which they bring:  
O hush the noise and cease the  
strife,  
and hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening  
on,  
by prophets 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 the whole world give back  
the song  
which now the angels sing.

*Edmund Sears (1810-76)*

### **Prayer at the Preparation of the Altar**

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 (B)**

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.**

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 and 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.**

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.

*Deacon* Great is the mystery of  
faith

**All Christ has died:  
Christ is risen:  
Christ will come again.**

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 St John the  
Evangelist, Mary the Mother of  
God, 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**

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

**All 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.*

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.**  
*We sit as Agnus Dei is sung by all.*

**Jesus, Lamb of God:  
have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins:  
have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world:  
give us your peace.**

### **Giving of Communion**

*The priest says the invitation.*  
Christ is the true bread which has  
come down from heaven.

**All Lord give us this bread  
always.**

*Communion is received. Please bow your  
head if you prefer to receive a blessing.*

The Body of Christ. **Amen.**  
The Blood of Christ. **Amen.**

*Anthem: Torches – J. Joubert*

### **Hymn**

**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.**

**Silent night, holy night,  
shepherds quake at the sight:  
glories stream 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.**

*Joseph Mohr (1792-1848) tr J Young*

### **Prayer after Communion**

*Priest* God our Father, in this night you have made known to us again the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him until the day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts. To him be glory both now and for ever. **All Amen.**

**All** Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home.

**Dying and living, he declared  
your love, gave us grace, and  
opened the gate of glory.  
May we who share Christ's body  
live his risen life; we who drink  
his cup bring life to others;  
we whom the Spirit lights  
give light to the world. Keep us  
firm in the hope you have set  
before us, so we and all your  
children shall be free, and the  
whole earth live to praise your  
name; through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

### **Notices**

#### **Blessing of the Congregation**

*Priest* The Lord be with you.

**All** And also with you

*Priest* 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, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **All Amen.**

### **Final hymn**

**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.**

**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.  
*Hark...*

Hail the heaven-born Prince of  
peace!  
Hail the sun 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.  
*Hark...*

Come, Desire of nations, come,  
fix in us thy humble home;  
rise, the woman's conquering  
Seed,  
bruise in us the serpent's head;  
now display thy saving power,  
ruined nature now restore,  
now in mystic union join  
thine to ours, and ours to thine:  
*Hark...*

*Charles Wesley (1707-88) et al*

### **The Dismissal**

*Priest* The Lord be with you.

*All* And also with you

*All* May the grace of our Lord  
Jesus Christ, and love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy  
Spirit, be with us all, evermore.  
**Amen.**

*Priest* May the souls of the faithful  
departed, through the mercy of  
God, rest in peace...

*All* and rise in glory. **Amen.**

*Deacon* Go in peace. Proclaim the  
Word made flesh.

**All** Glory, thanks and praise to  
God.

*Organ voluntary: Toccata from  
Symphony No 5 – C M Widor*



*Flowers in church:*

*With love from  
the Mc Connell family  
in memory of their father Wilfred*

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