

# St John's, Pevensey Road



## Pews News & Service Sheet for 25th December: Christmas Day

### People for whom our prayers are asked:

Jean & Geoff, Geraldine, Jackie F, Ian M, Brenda R, Jane G, Cynthia H, Jo, Amber, Shirley, and Andrew N.

### Please pray also for...

...the repose of the souls of the recently departed, especially Brian Webb, Peter Turnbull, Jean Broscheit, Pat, and Sara,

... those whose Years Minds fall around this time, especially Helena Quartey, Thelma Riddle, and Tony Levere,

...and all who mourn.

Welcome to our Christmas Mass service today - whether you are here in person, or viewing via the Broadcast Page of our website, or listening via the Media/Audio page. [www.stjohnspevenseyroad.org.uk/broadcast](http://www.stjohnspevenseyroad.org.uk/broadcast)

Beneath the Christmas Tree of civilization, with its many branches of races, may we lay imperishable presents of goodwill, spiritual service, and unconditional love for all. These are the gifts that Christ wants to receive.

*Paramahansa Yogananda*



### Why the world was ready for Christmas

Ever wonder why Jesus was born when He was? The Bible tells us that “when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son...” The Jewish people had been waiting for their Messiah for centuries. Why did God send Him precisely when He did?

Many biblical scholars believe that the ‘time had fully come’ for Jesus because of the politics of the time. The Roman Empire’s sheer size and dominance had achieved something unique in world history: the opportunity for travel from Bethlehem to Berwick-on-Tweed without ever crossing into ‘enemy territory’ or needing a ‘passport’. For the first time ever, it was possible for ‘common’ people to travel wide and far, and quickly spread news and ideas. And all you needed were two languages - Greek to the east of Rome, and Latin to the west and north. You could set sail from Joppa (Tel Aviv) and head for any port on the Med. And the Roman roads ran straight and true throughout the empire.

So the Roman Empire achieved something it never intended: it helped spread news of Christianity far and wide for 400 years. After that, the Empire crumbled, and the borders shut down. Not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century would people again roam so freely. The time for Jesus to be born, and for news of Him to be able to travel, had indeed ‘fully come’

T'was a week before Christmas  
And all through the town,  
People wore masks,  
That covered their frown.  
The frown had begun  
Way back in the Spring,  
When a global pandemic  
Changed everything.  
They called it corona,  
But unlike the beer,  
It didn't bring good times,  
It didn't bring cheer.  
Airplanes were grounded,  
Travel was banned.  
Borders were closed  
Across air, sea and land.  
As the world entered lockdown  
To flatten the curve,  
The economy halted,  
And folks lost their nerve.  
From March to July  
We rode the first wave,  
People stayed home,  
They tried to behave.  
When summer emerged  
The lockdown was lifted.  
But away from caution,  
Many folks drifted.  
Now it's December  
And cases are spiking,  
Wave two has arrived,  
Much to our disliking.  
It's true that this year  
Has had sadness a plenty,  
We'll never forget  
The year 2020.  
And just 'round the corner -  
The holiday season,  
But why be merry?  
Is there even one reason?  
To decorate the house  
And put up the tree,  
Who will see it,  
No one but me.  
But outside my window  
The rain gently falls,  
And I think to myself,  
Let's deck the halls!  
So, I gather the ribbon,  
The garland and bows,  
As I play those old carols,  
My happiness grows.  
Christmas is not cancelled  
And neither is hope.  
Trust in the Lord Jesus,  
I know we can cope. *Anon.*

# Mass for Christmas Day

## Welcome

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

*All* **Amen.**

*Priest* We meet to celebrate the coming  
of Christ into the world.  
The Word was made flesh, and  
dwelt among us

*All* **and we beheld his glory.**

## *The White Candle on the Advent Wreath is lit*

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord,  
King of Peace:  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
The new light of your incarnate Word  
gives gladness in our sorrow,  
and a presence in our isolation.  
Fill our lives with your light,  
until they overflow with gladness and  
praise.

*All* **Blessed be God for ever.**

## *The Priest then proceeds 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, 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 Christ Child is placed in the  
manger.*

## **Prayer of Confession**

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.

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.**

### *The Priest says the Absolution*

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.**

### *Then Gloria in Excelsis is said*

**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 for Christmas Day**

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

### *The Collect:*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
your birth at Bethlehem  
draws us to kneel in wonder  
at heaven touching earth:  
accept our heartfelt praise  
as we worship you,  
our Saviour and our eternal God.

**All Amen.**

### **A reading from the Book of 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 for ever 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**

## Gradual 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...*

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

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...*

Latin, 18th century, tr. Frederick Oakeley  
(1802-80) and others

## Gospel Reading

*Dcn* Alleluia alleluia.

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

*All* Alleluia.

*Dcn* 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

Let us declare our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**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**

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Father, at this holy time,  
your Son our Saviour  
was born in human flesh.  
Renew your Church as the Body of  
Christ.  
Holy God  
**All hear our prayer.**

At this holy time, 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.**

At this holy time, Mary, in the pain of  
labour,  
brought your Son to birth.  
Hold in your hand [...] all who are in  
pain or distress.  
Holy God  
**All hear our prayer.**

At this holy time, your Christ came as a  
light shining in the darkness.  
Bring comfort to all who suffer in the  
sadness of our world.  
Holy God  
**All hear our prayer.**

At this holy time, 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.**

At this holy time, 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.**

At this holy time, 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.**

At this holy time, heaven is come down to  
earth,  
and earth is raised to heaven.  
Hold in your hand [...] all those who  
have passed through death  
in the hope of your coming kingdom.  
Holy God  
**All hear our prayer.**

At this holy time, Christians the world  
over celebrate Christ's birth.  
Open our hearts that he may be born in  
us today.  
Holy God  
**All hear our prayer.**

Father,  
At this holy time,  
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 Peace is introduced**

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

*We may exchange a sign of Peace*

### **Preparation of the Table**

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 president takes the bread and wine.*

### **The Eucharistic Prayer**

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

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**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,  
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.

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 Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Peter, 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**

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.**

### **Agnus Dei is said:**

Jesus, Lamb of God,  
Have mercy on us  
Jesus, bearer of our sins,  
Have mercy on us  
Jesus, redeemer of the world,  
Grant us peace

### **Giving of Communion**

*The priest says the invitation to communion.*

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

*All* Lord, give us this bread always.

*Communion is received*

### **Prayer after Communion**

*The priest prays the Post Communion:*

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.

*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.

### **The Blessing and Dismissal**

*Priest* The Lord be with you

*All* And also with you

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  
*All* Amen.

Go in peace.

Proclaim the Word made flesh.

*All* Glory, thanks and praise to God.

### **Concluding voluntary:**

*Toccata in G major - Dubois*

## Journeys or lockdown this Christmas?

Christmas is usually a busy time for travel, as many of us venture a great distance to see family or friends again. But this year Coronavirus has put an end to all that. Seeing all our loved ones this Christmas will be difficult, if not impossible. We currently can't travel anywhere very much at all...



Have you noticed that the Christmas story is about journeys? It begins with Mary and Joseph travelling from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Then, some shepherds receive news from an angel about a special birth. They travel through the night, across dark fields and down unlit streets to search for the baby Jesus.

After this, in an eastern country some wise men see a new star, one that heralds a new king. They leave home and set out with only the star to guide them, and their faith to reassure them that Someone special is waiting at the end of their journey.

All these travellers must have wondered what really lay ahead. Nothing was fully understood, carefully planned for, or safe. They all travelled with questions and uncertainties. But God had come unexpectedly into their lives, and suddenly they were given new roles to serve Him. Despite worldly circumstances that could have crushed them, they stood firm and trusted God all the way.

These travellers' tales tell us that God may suddenly enter into our familiar, or this year, unfamiliar circumstances. He may come in surprising ways, to prompt us into new avenues of service. At first His call on us may be uncomfortable and challenging.

If our response is anything like Joseph, Mary, the shepherds and wise men – to be obedient to His call in serving, witnessing and worshipping, we shall be greatly blessed and rewarded.

*By Lester Amann*

**The Christmas twins, Ziggy and Robyn**, born very prematurely on Christmas Eve last year, are making great progress. Their parents have sent St John's a Christmas card with a beautiful photo which you can see at the back of church.

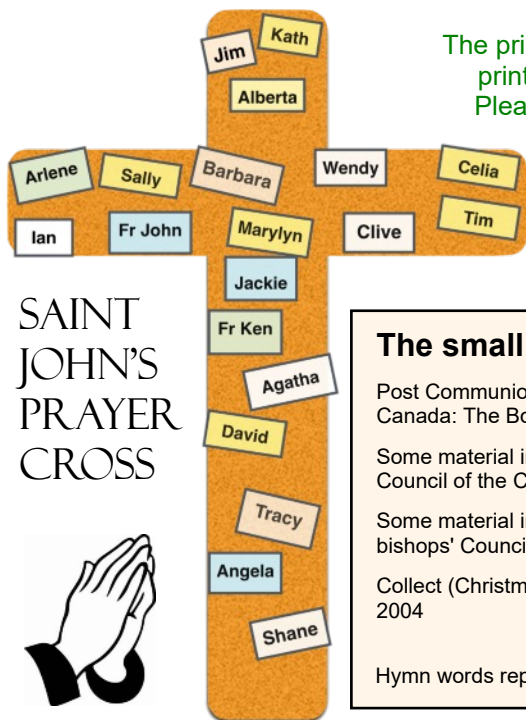
The card says:

*To the congregation of St John's,*

*What a difference a year makes. We wanted to send a card to say thank you for the love and prayers, given by you all for our family in 2020. After a very rocky start, the girls are going from strength to strength, they are really smiley babies! We cannot express fully how much it meant to know you all kept hoping and thinking of us for so long. Thank you. We keep everything crossed that one day soon, we can come visit to say hello in person. Merry Christmas and best wishes to all.*

*Lots of love, Robyn, Ziggy and parents. CC*

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# SAINT JOHN'S PRAYER CROSS



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