



Worship lies at the heart of the Christian life. It is in worship that we express our theology and define our identity. It is through encountering God within worship that we are formed and transformed as the people of God. One of the glories of the Anglican Church is its liturgical worship. Liturgy refers to the patterns, forms, words and actions through which public worship is conducted.

*The people's responses are in **bold**.*

THE EVE OF CHRISTMAS

A CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

DECEMBER 24, 2020

THE DIOCESE OF NIAGARA
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL, HAMILTON

As sojourners on this land, we acknowledge the heritage and history of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe nations at the time of the creation of the "Dish With One Spoon" wampum agreement. As partners with them and with all of God's Creation, we honour and respect these nations. We walk together with all whom we meet here justly, mercifully and humbly.

The Gathering of the Community

When the service is accompanied by music, it often begins with an instrumental or vocal piece of music during which the congregation can prepare for worship.

GATHERING MUSIC

A Christmas musical bouquet offered by the members of the members of the Cathedral Schola Cantorum.

Virgin's slumber song – Max Reger

O Tannenbaum – German folk song

Jesus, Jesus rest Your Head – American folk song set by John Edmunds

O Holy Night – Adolphe Charles Adams

The Gathering of the Community

Words of welcome and introduction.

Welcome and Territorial Acknowledgement

Bishop: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

All: And also with you.

Bishop: Almighty God,

**All: to you all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from you 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.**

CAROL – O Come all ye Faithful

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!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
All glory in the highest
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
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born for our salvation,
Jesus, to Thee be glory given
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!

BLESSING OF THE CRECHE

One: A hallowed day has dawned upon us.
Come and worship the Lord:

All: For a great light has shone on the earth.

One: Hear the words of the book of Wisdom:

“When peaceful silence lay over all and night was in the middle of her
swift course, from your royal throne, O God, down from the heavens,
leapt your almighty Word.”

Hear the words of St. John:

“God’s love for us was revealed when God sent his only Son into the
world so that we could have life through him.”

All: Thanks be to God.

One: Let us pray that God our Father will bless this crib and that all who worship his Son born of the Virgin Mary may come to share his life in glory.

God our Father, on this night, your Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary for us and for our salvation: bless this crib which we have prepared that holy birth:

May all who see it be strengthened in faith and receive the fulness of life he came to bring, who is alive and reigns for ever.

All: Amen.

The Christmas candle in the Advent Wreath is lit during the following meditation.

MEDITATION – Break forth o Beauteous heavenly Light

Harm. Johann Sebastian Bach

*Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light,
and usher in the morning;
O shepherds, shrink not with affright,
but bear the angel's warning,
This Child, now weak in infancy,
our confidence and joy shall be;
the pow'r of Satan breaking,
our peace eternal making.*

THE COLLECT FOR THE EVE OF CHRISTMAS

Bishop: Let us pray.
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.

MEDITATION – In the bleak midwinter

Harold Darke

*In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.*

2. *Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.*

3. *Enough for Him, whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
And a mangerful of hay;*

*Enough for Him, whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.*

4. *Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air,
But only His mother
In her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.*

5. *What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.*

The Proclamation of the Word

THE FIRST READING

This reading is typically from the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) which Jesus knew and from which he often referred or quoted.

Isaiah 9: 2-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.

Reader: Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

MEDITATION – There is no rose anon 15th c. Adap. Alison Golding. Howard Skempton (b. 1947)

*There is no rose of such virtue
as is the rose that bore Jesu.
Alleluia. Alleluia.*

*For in one little space this rose
could all of heaven and earth enclose.
O great wonder, O great wonder.*

*By that rose we may well see
our only God in persons three.
Now appear. Now appear.*

*Angels sang to shepherds so:
Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Rejoicing well. Rejoicing well.*

*Let us leave this worldly mirth,
remembering this joyful birth.
May we excel. May we excel.*

*Alleluia, O great wonder,
Now appear. Rejoicing well,
May we excel.*

THE SECOND READING

This reading, taken from the New Testament, is typically from a letter (epistle) to the early Church, the Acts of the Apostles, or the Revelation to John.

Titus 2: 11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

All: **Thanks be to God.**

THE GRADUAL

In dulci jubilo

Old German Carol arr. Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

*In dulci jubilo [In quiet joy]
Let us our homage show
Our heart's joy reclineth
In praesepio [in a manger]
And like a bright star shineth
Matris in gremio [in the mother's lap]
Alpha es et O. [Thou art Alpha & Omega]*

*O Jesu parvule [O tiny Jesus]
My heart is sore for thee
Hear me, I beseech thee
O puer optima [O best of boys]
My prayer, let it reach thee
O princeps gloriae, [Prince of glory]
Trabe me post te. [draw me unto thee]*

*O patris caritas [O father's caring]
O nati lenitas [O newborn's mildness]
Deeply were we stained
Per nostra crimina [by our crimes]
But thou hast for us gained
Coelorum gaudia [heavenly joy]
O that we were there.*

*Ubi sunt gaudia [where be joys]
If that they be not there
There are angels singing
Nova cantina [new songs]
There the bells are ringing
In regis curia [at the king's court]
O that we were there.*

THE HOLY GOSPEL

This reading is taken from one of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) which depict the life, teachings, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. We stand for the Gospel reading to show the particular importance placed on Jesus' words and actions.

Luke 2: 1-20

Reader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Reader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader: In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,

‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,

‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place,
which the Lord has made known to us.’

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Reader: The Gospel of Christ.
All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

THE SERMON

The Rt. Rev. Susan Bell
Bishop of Niagara

The sermon directly follows the Gospel because it is to be grounded in the scriptures. It illuminates the scriptural readings and relates them to daily life.

THE CREED

The word "creed" comes from the Latin "credo" for "I believe." First formulated at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD and confirmed in 381 AD, the Nicene Creed is said at the Holy Eucharist, particularly on special feast days, declaring our loving trust in the Triune God and exploring the relationship between the three "persons" of God – the Creator/Father, Jesus the Christ/Son, and the Holy Spirit..

Let us confess our faith, as we say,
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:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from 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.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped
and glorified.
He 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**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We pray for ourselves and particularly on behalf of others. In our prayers we pray for the universal church, the nation and all who govern, the welfare of the world, the concerns of our community of faith, including those who are in need or suffer, and for the departed. We are reminded in prayer that we are a part of a larger fellowship, the Church – the Body of Christ. Please respond as directed by the Intercessor.

Intercessor: God of Love
All: Hear our prayer.

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Confessing our sins, receiving forgiveness (absolution) and showing signs of peace to one another prepare us to receive Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

**God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness
in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our saviour Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love
and service only your will. Amen.**

The presider offers absolution and the people respond

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

THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with you
And also with you.

The Celebration of the Eucharist

THE OFFERTORY

Having listened to the Word of God, affirmed our faith, confessed our sins, received forgiveness and shared in the peace, we are prepared for the drama and miracle of the Holy Communion. At the offertory we gratefully offer back some of what God has given us, symbolically in the elements, and in our contributions towards the work of the church.

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MUSIC AT THE OFFERTORY

Ding Dong Merrily on High

arr. Mack Wilberg (b. 1955)

*1. Ding dong! Merrily on high
In heav'n the bells are ringing;
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with angel-singing.*

*Gloria,
Hosanna in excelsis!*

*2. E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And io, io, io,
By priest and people sungen:*

*Gloria,
Hosanna in excelsis!*

*3. Hosanna in excelsis!
Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rhyme
Your e'entime song, ye singers.*

*Gloria,
Hosanna in excelsis!*

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Source of light and gladness,
accept all we offer on this joyful feast.
May we grow up in him who unites our lives to yours;
for he is Lord now and for ever.

Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

In the Great Thanksgiving, we do what Jesus himself asked us to do: thank God and recall all that God has done for us in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. The Great Thanksgiving, or Eucharistic Prayer, is a long prayer with four parts. Each of these four parts corresponds to a different action of Jesus at the Last Supper, where he took, blessed, broke, and gave bread and wine as sacraments of his body and blood. We begin the Great Thanksgiving with the Sursum corda, meaning "Lift up your hearts."

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Lift up your hearts in adoration
We lift them up to God

Let us give thanks to the Living God
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth,
because in the mystery of the Word made flesh you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts,
to give knowledge of salvation in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now with angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven, we lift our voices to proclaim
the glory of your name

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, ho - ly Lord.
 God of pow'r and might, Heav'n and earth are
 full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
 Bles - sed is the One who
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high - est.

We give thanks to you, Lord our God,
 for the goodness and love you have made known to us in creation;
 in calling Israel to be your people;
 in your Word spoken through the prophets;
 and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus your Son.
 For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
 to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.
 In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you.
 In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness,
 out of death into life.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death,
 a death he freely accepted, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread;
 and when he had given thanks to you,
 he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said,
 "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine;
 and when he had given thanks, he 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.
 Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, Father, according to his command,

**we remember his death,
 we proclaim his resurrection,
 we await his coming in glory;**

and we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you,
 Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.
 We pray you, gracious God,
 to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts,
 that they may be the sacrament of the body of Christ
 and his blood of the new covenant.

Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice,
 that we, made acceptable in him,
 may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time,
reconcile all things in Christ, and make them new,
and bring us to that city of light where you dwell with all your sons and daughters;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
the firstborn of all creation,
the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation;
by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, almighty Father, now and for ever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We pray together the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray. The link between our daily bread and the spiritual food we receive in the Eucharist is an ancient connection.

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray,

**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.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

Bishop: 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.**

Bishop: The gifts of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Invitation to Spiritual Communion

Bishop: Dear friends, I invite you in this moment, wherever you may be,
to receive Christ, in communion with the saints,
and the gathering of God's people,
unseen and yet present with us now.
Many are made one.

Bishop: We receive you Lord Jesus Christ,
**All: we welcome your presence in us,
and together proclaim our love for you;
with our hearts, minds, our souls and our strength,
with the saints we worship you,
with the angels we adore you,
with your whole Church we proclaim your reign.
Come to us, though many,
and make us one in you. Amen.**

Bishop: I invite you in the silence of your own hearts
or using one or more of the prayers in the service sheet
to make your own act of Communion with Christ.

MUSIC AT COMMUNION

Blest Mary wanders through the thorn

*Blest Mary wanders through the thorn,
Kyrie eleison!
Blest Mary wanders through the thorn,
That seven long years no bloom hath borne.
Jesu et Maria!*

*What clasps she to her breast so close?
Kyrie eleison!
An innocent child doth there repose,
Which to her breast she clasped close.
Jesu et Maria!*

*Fair roses bloom on every tree,
Kyrie eleison!*

Trad. German arr. Stephen Cleobury (1948-2019)

*As through the thorn-wood passeth she
Fair roses bloom on every tree.
Jesu et Maria!*

*What shall this Infant called be?
Kyrie eleison!
The Christ, he shall be called truly,
Which Name he hath borne from eternity.
Jesu et Maria!*

*Who hath the world from sin set free?
Kyrie eleison!
This Child alone, and only he,
He hath the world from sin set free.
Jesu et Maria!*

CAROL – Silent Night

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 Al-le-lu-ia!
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior 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

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Father of all, tonight you have united earth and heaven
in sending your Son to take our human nature.
May we who have tasted heavenly things
share in the life of his eternal kingdom.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Bishop: Glory to God,
All: **whose power working in us,
can do infinitely more
than we can ask or imagine.
Glory to God from generation to generation,
in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE BLESSING

CAROL – Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With th'angelic host proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

*Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

Christ by highest heav'n 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! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n 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! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

THE DISMISSAL

Having received Christ by faith, let us go to live in that faith,
transformed by hope and proclaiming God's love.

Thanks be to God

POSTLUDE

In dulci jubilo BWV 729

Johann Sebastian Bach

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