

WORSHIP - 1st SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS, STEPHEN, DEACON, 1ST MARTYR - 26 DECEMBER 2021

Today we have a service in St Matthew's at 10 am. Julie is leading the Zoom service, and Clive is preaching.

Hymn - Hark the herald angels sing - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fe6X7PyCKDY>

The grace of God has dawned upon the world through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own. Let us confess our sins.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you
in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

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. Amen.

Gloria - Mass of St Thomas, David Thorne - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHEm0Dbzizs>

The Collect for Christmas 1

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity;
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Collect for the Feast of Stephen

Gracious Father, who gave the first martyr Stephen
grace to pray for those who took up stones against him:
grant that in all our sufferings for the truth we may learn to love even our enemies
and to seek forgiveness for those who desire our hurt,
looking up to heaven to him who was crucified for us, Jesus Christ, our mediator and advocate,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

New Testament lesson - Acts 7.51-end - *this is printed on 'notice' side of the blue noticesheet*

Hymn - Good King Wenceslas - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQVUMG6LZGM>

Gospel - Luke 2:41-end

Address - *a sermon from Clive is on the website*

The Nicene Creed

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.

Angel Carol - Have you heard the sound of the angel voices? John Rutter - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l75pvTImjjo>

Prayers of Intercession

Lord God, we give thanks for the miracle of Christmas. For your love, your preparations, and your timing. For the gift of your Son, the Messiah. We give thanks for your plan, your action among us, the knowledge of your love. In all the stress and strain of our lives in this last year – and, no doubt, in the year to come – may we always know you are our Lord and our Saviour. Help us to hold Christmas in our hearts, and celebrate your love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You know, Lord, that once again this has not been the Christmas we expected or hoped for. Some of us are unable to see our families and friends, some of us are lonely and – if we're honest – rather scared by all that is going on around us. We pray for our leaders and decision makers that may find your spirit within their hearts and listen to Your guidance. May they consider the courses of action and decisions that will be of greatest benefit to as many of their people as possible. We pray for our NHS, for those who are working so hard, with so little reward – those who are tired, disillusioned, worn out. We pray for the business and economic life of our country, for those who wonder if their business, their job, will survive into the new year. For so many who are worried today. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Across our world we pray for our brothers in sisters in Christ who celebrate Christmas in very different circumstances to us. For those who will worship in fear, those who cannot meet together, and those who constantly live in danger. There will be those who, like Stephen, are martyred for their faith this Christmas. For those who will share the little they have with their families, their neighbours – perhaps unsure where their next meal will come from. For those whose lives are changed by climate change, war, violence, the economic reality of this world. For the people of Bethlehem and the Middle East – a place where there is still injustice and hatred. Forgive us, Lord, that faith and politics have become so intertwined that we cannot share your love and glory. Here, in our communities, we pray for the life of our churches. It has not been the Christmas we wanted, we have not been able to offer people the worship they want – and often Lord, it feels as if so few want us at all. Help us to remain faithful to Lord, and serve your people.

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

We pray, Lord, that all our family members might stay safe and well at this time and that they may grow in the knowledge of Your love. We pray for older members of our families who are worried and frightened about falling ill, for the children who have had to endure such disruption to their education and the, vital, social and sporting activities they usually enjoy. We pray for those who have been forced to change their working habits and, more especially, for those who no longer have the security of a regular income. Whatever the situation, help them, Lord, to accept the Spirit of Your Son into their hearts so that they we may all rejoice in Your promise of freedom and eternal life. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray, Lord, for ourselves. Whatever our situation at this time, help us to be guided by Your Spirit and find strength in Your presence in our hearts. Thank you, Lord, for our faith.

We bring our prayers together as we pray the prayer that Jesus 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.

Hymn - It came upon a midnight clear - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= U_Dzovu1XA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_Dzovu1XA)

The Blessing

May God the Father Almighty pour upon us the story of his abundant kindness.

May God the Son, after the example of his holy nativity, lift up those who are bowed down.

May God the Holy Spirit scatter the mercies and peace of God over all his creatures.

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

be upon us and remain with us, at this holy season and for evermore. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Final music - David plays "Winter wonderland" etc - <https://youtu.be/QKp3FYC7Vmc>

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24 December 2021
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