

The Parish Church
of St. Paul, Wokingham



**Midnight Mass
with the Blessing of the Crib
to Celebrate the Birth of
our Lord Jesus Christ 2020**

***Welcome to this holy place on this most joyful of days
as we gather to greet our new-born King, lying in a manger.***

***Whether you are present in Church
or joining in via the livestream,
it is good to be together after such a challenging year
to wonder again at the power and reach of God's love.***

*Please remember that the current rules do not allow us to sing-
the extracts of carol words are included in the Order of Service
as an aide to devotion.*

*Everyone is welcome to receive Communion-
please come forward up the main aisle
and then return to your seat down the side aisle.
Gluten free wafers are available if asked for.*

We wish you a very Happy Christmas, now it is finally here!

Opening 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...

...Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesu, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing...

The 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 night
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 so receive the fullness of life he came to bring;
who is alive and reigns forever. **Amen.**

The crib is censed and sprinkled with Holy Water.

The Greeting

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

Blessed are you, Sovereign God, our light and our salvation,
to you be glory and praise for ever.

When all in peaceful silence lay then

from your throne on high leapt your almighty Word.

In this mystery of the Word made flesh you sent forth your Son,
the firstborn of all creation, to dispel the darkness of our night.

He is our Christ, the light of the world,

and him we acclaim as all creation sings to you.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God for ever.

Prayers of Penitence

Christ the light of the world has come
to dispel the darkness of our hearts.

In his light let us examine ourselves.

Let us call to mind our sins and our failings,

and let us make our confession to Almighty God.

In silence, we reflect on our failure to love others as God loves us.

The Virgin Mary accepted your call to be the mother of Jesus.
Forgive our disobedience to your will.
We have sinned: **forgive us and heal us.**

Your Son our Saviour was born in poverty in a manger.
Forgive our greed and our rejection of your ways.
We have sinned: **forgive us and heal us.**

The shepherds left their flocks to go to Bethlehem.
Forgive our self-interest and our lack of vision.
We have sinned: **forgive us and heal us.**

The Absolution

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. **Amen.**



Gloria in Excelsis *(We remain standing)*

**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.**

The Collect

The Lord be with you: **and also with you.**

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. **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

(We sit for the reading)

At the end of the reading:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gradual Carol: It came upon the midnight clear

It came upon the midnight clear
that glorious song of old
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold...

...For lo, the days are hastening on
by prophet 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.

Gospel Reading

(Both the Gospel and the crib speak of God in the midst of us.)

Today Christ is born: **Alleluia.**

Today the Saviour has come: **Alleluia.**

Today the angels sing on earth:

Alleluia. Glory to God in the highest.

*As the Gospel is announced: **Glory to you, O Lord.***

*After the Gospel has been read: **Praise to you, O Christ.***

The Sermon

The Nicene Creed

(We stand)

**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,
*he became 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

(We sit or kneel to pray)

Kneeling among the shepherds,
gazing on the face of the newborn
King, let us join our prayers with
those of Mary and Joseph
and the angels who sing
“Glory to God in the highest,
and peace on the earth.”

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

The Lord be with you: **and also with you.**

This most 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: **and also with you.**

*We exchange a socially-distanced greeting of peace
with those around us, with a wave.*

If you're joining in online please type a message in the chat bar.

Offertory Carol: God rest you merry, gentlemen

Now to the Lord sing praises,
all you within this place,
and with true love and brotherhood
each other new embrace;
this holy tide of Christmas
all others doth efface:
*O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy!
O tidings of comfort and joy!*

The Preparation of the Gifts

(We remain standing)

Blessed be God,
by whose grace creation is renewed,
by whose love heaven is opened,
by whose mercy we offer our sacrifice of praise.
Blessed be God for ever.

Pray my brothers and sisters,
that our sacrifice may be acceptable
to God the almighty Father.

**May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands,
for the praise and glory of his holy name,
for our good and the good of all his church.**

Offertory Prayer

Lord, let praise and thanksgiving
be the pure offering of this holy night's feast;
and as your eternal Word takes up our human nature,
so may we be taken up into the divine life of Christ,
who is alive and reigns, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you: **and also with you.**
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....

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:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!

+ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!

We remember the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper:

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!

The Eucharistic Prayer concludes with the doxology:

Through Christ, and with Christ and in Christ,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,

for ever and ever. **AMEN!**

The Lord's Prayer

(We sit or kneel)

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,

let us pray 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.

The Breaking of the Bread

We break the bread of life,

and that life is the light of the world.

God here among us,

light in the midst of us,

bring us to light and life.

Agnus Dei

**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

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

Lord, give us this bread always.

Christ is in our midst.

He is and he always will be.

*The president will say "The Body of Christ, broken for you" at the altar.
Please come forward as you are guided, keeping 2m away from others.*

During communion the Choir sing Christmas anthems.

*The wafer will be placed in your hand in silence and then you are
invited to return to your seat by going along the side aisle.*

*If you are joining in at home
you might find this a helpful prayer to use:*

Thanks be to you, Lord, Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer,
friend and brother, may I know you
more clearly, love you more dearly
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

(We stand)

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. Amen.

**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.**

A Christmas Poem

The Blessing

May the Father,
who has loved the eternal Son
from before the foundation of the world,
shed that love upon you his children. **Amen.**

May Christ,
who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly, fill you with joy and peace. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit,
by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer,
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The Dismissal Gospel

The Lord be with you: **and also with you.**

Hear the good news of the Word made flesh according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end: This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

Glory, thanks and praise to God.

*Please sit and enjoy the organ voluntary,
and the sanctity of this place,
and the holiness of this night.*

*When you leave, please use the handgel
and be careful to give others 2m of space.*

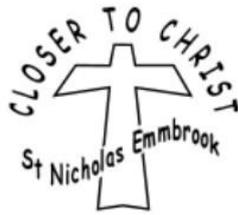
*There will also be a collection plate and debit card machine by the door so you
can make a donation to support the work of the parish.*

*You can text a donation to St Paul's to 70450, texting STPAULS5,
STPAULS10 or STPAULS20 to donate that amount of money.*

You could also make an online donation via BACS:

PCC ST PAULS Sort Code: 20-11-74 Account No: 80683752. Thank you.

We wish you a joyful, and a holy, and a happy Christmas!



The Parish of St Paul, Wokingham

Our services are (virtually) all Livestreamed on our YouTube channel and via our website.

There are a wide range of events in the Parish during the week, as well as on Sundays, for people of all ages- see websites:

www.spauls.org.uk

www.thechurchonwoosehill.org.uk

Fr Richard Lamey (Rector) 0118 327 9116
Louise Cole (Parish Administrator) 0118 979 2122
church.office@spauls.co.uk

The angel said to the shepherds:
“Do not be afraid, for see,
I bring you good news of great joy
for all the people- to you is born
this day a Saviour.” (Luke 2)



And, perhaps less poetic but not less heartfelt...
He (Santa) sprang to his sleigh,
to his team gave a whistle,
and away they all flew like the down of a thistle:
but I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
“Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night.”