

HOLY INNOCENTS FALLOWFIELD



Neither darkness nor shadow
can overcome the light of Christ

Wednesday 24th December 2025 **The First Eucharist of Christmas**

This leaflet contains all you need in order to join in the service. Please take it home with you afterwards. Please be still and quiet before the service as we prepare together to celebrate the Eucharist. The choir sings a setting of 'Personent Hodie'.

The president tonight is the Revd Jane Walker.

When the bell rings please STAND and turn to face the back of the church.

The hymn begins:

**It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
of angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold.
"Peace on the earth! Goodwill to all!" from heav'n's all-gracious king.
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.**

The ministers assemble in front of the gallery.

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

The introductory dialogue to tonight's service is taken from a medieval Office for the day of the Nativity of the Lord. The president begins the celebration.

Dear friends in Christ, all who wait in hope
and watch for the morning, tell us, who do you seek?

The Saviour Christ the Lord, the new-born child, as the angel told us.

He is here with Mary his mother, about whom the prophet Isaiah foretold:

Behold a virgin shall conceive and give birth to a son.

Let the angels sing out because he is born.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

For at last we know that Christ is born on earth,

let all rejoice, crying out with the prophet:

- a child is born!

The hymn continues and the image of the infant Jesus is carried in procession to the crib:

**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;
where noise of warfare sounds above the love song which they bring –
O still the noise and cease the strife, to hear the angels sing!**



**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 world its timeless splendours fling -
and the whole world give back the song, which now the angels sing.**



The president places the image in the crib and then blesses 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 the 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.

Amen.

After the prayer all sing together:



**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: the prayer for tonight

Let us pray.

After a moment of silent prayer the president says the Collect. At the end: Amen.

PLEASE SIT for the Ministry of the Word.

FIRST READING Isaiah 52: 7-10

At the end: This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The choir sings a setting of 'Little Jesus, sweetly sleep'.

Little Jesus, sweetly sleep, do not stir –

We will lend a coat of fur

We will rock you, rock you, rock you

We will rock you, rock you, rock you

See the fur to keep you warm snugly round your tiny form.

Mary's little baby, sleep, sweetly sleep –

sleep in comfort, slumber deep

We will rock you, rock you, rock you, we will rock you, rock you, rock you -

We will serve you all we can - darling, darling little man.



SECOND READING Hebrews 1. 1-4 is read in Farsi.

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

At the end:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand to join in the Gospel Acclamation which is led by the choir.

Alleluia! Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.

Alleluia! Open our hearts to your word. *(repeated by all)*

Today a Saviour is born who is Christ the Lord.

God's Word is with us and lives among us in our world.

Alleluia!..

GOSPEL READING John 1.1-14

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please SIT for the sermon. After the sermon there will be a time of silence. Then all please STAND with the president for the Creed: (an extract from the Athanasian Creed)

We proclaim the Church's faith in Jesus Christ:

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

God, of one being with the Father: the only son from before time began;
human from the being of his mother, born in the world.

Fully God and fully human; one human person with mind and body.

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

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

One, not by turning God into flesh, but by taking humanity into God.

Truly one, not by mixing humanity with Godhead, but by being one person.

For as mind and body form one human being,

so the one Christ is both divine and human.

**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.**

The president introduces THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL:

Dear friends in Christ, as we gather to worship the Christ child,
let us pray with faith and trust to our heavenly Father.

After each section:

Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

After the final section (for the departed) there will be a time of silent prayer. At the end:

Father, in thankfulness we praise you,

and ask you to accept these prayers through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The president introduces the Peace:

To us a child is born, to us a son is given:
and his name is the Prince of Peace.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All exchange a sign of peace, then please join in:

**Of the Father's heart begotten, ere the world from chaos rose,
He is Alpha, from that Fountain all that is and has been flows;
He is Omega, of all things yet to come the distant close,
evermore and evermore.**

**By His word was all created - he commanded and 'twas done;
Earth and sky and boundless ocean, universe of three in one,
All that sees the moon's soft radiance, all that breathes beneath the sun,
Evermore and evermore.**

**This is he, whom seer and sibyl sang in ages long gone by;;
This is he of old revealed in the page of prophecy;
Lo! he comes the promised Saviour; let the world his praises cry,
evermore and evermore.**

**Let the storm and summer sunshine, gliding stream and sounding shore,
Sea and forest, frost and zephyr, day and night their Lord alone;
Let creation join to laud thee through the ages evermore –
evermore and evermore.**

**Christ, to Thee with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to Thee,
Hymn and chant with high thanksgiving, and unwearied praises be:
Honour, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory,
evermore and evermore!**

The offerings of the people are collected and the bread and wine are brought to the altar.

The President says a prayer over the gifts to which we all respond:

Blessed be God for ever.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER follows.

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.

The president continues the prayer, thanking God for his saving works, and then invites the people to join their praises with the whole company of heaven:

..... singing our joyful hymn of praise:

**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.**

The president asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit to sanctify the bread and wine, and then repeats the Lord's own words over the bread and cup.

Great is the mystery of faith:

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

The president continues, joining our offering with Christ's sacrifice of himself. At the end of the prayer the president says:

...all honour and glory be yours, Almighty Father, for ever and ever.

Amen.

The president introduces the Lord's Prayer and all say together:

**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.**

We SIT or KNEEL as the president breaks the consecrated bread in pieces for all to share:

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

Though we are many we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

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.

The president addresses those who wish to come to Holy Communion:

Christ is the bread which has come down from heaven:

Lord, give us this bread forever.

Those who wish draw near to the altar. Those who are baptized, whether or not yet confirmed, as well as communicant members of other Christian churches, are invited to receive Holy Communion. (Children may prefer to receive only the consecrated bread.) Others are asked to fold their arms for a blessing.

During communion, we hear:

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!

Once bless our human ears (if ye have power to touch our senses so)

And let your silver chime move in melodious time,

And let the bass of Heav'n's deep organ blow;

And with your ninefold harmony make up full consort to th'angelic symphony.

For if such holy song enwrap our fancy long,

Time will run back and fetch the age of gold,

And speckl'd Vanity will sicken soon and die,

And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould; and Hell itself will pass away,

And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering Day.

Yea, Truth and Justice then will down return to men,

Orb'd in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,

Mercy will sit between, thron'd in celestial sheen,

With radiant feet the tissu'd clouds down steering; And Heav'n, as at some festival,

will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

John Milton

When all have received communion, there is a time of stillness and quiet.

Then all please STAND with the President.

Let us pray.

After a moment of silent prayer. ..

God our Father, *tonight you have made known to us again*

the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;

may our Christmas celebration 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, now and for ever. Amen.

Please join in:

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 adore him.....*

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing all ye citizens of heaven above;

glory to God, in the highest: *O come let us adore him.....*

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 adore him.....*



Please remain standing for the blessing and dismissal:

The Lord be with you:

And also with you.

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 Godbearer,
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

Amen.

The blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Tomorrow: CHRISTMAS DAY:

1000 Solemn Eucharist for the Nativity of the Lord

Sunday December 28th: The Holy Innocents

1000 Patronal Festival Sung Eucharist

عید میلاد مسیح آرام و فرخنده را به همه تبریک می گوئیم.

A peaceful and blessed Christmas to everyone.

RECTOR: The Revd. Richard Young
ASSOCIATE PRIEST: The Revd Jane Walker