

The Stratfield Mortimer Benefice of

St Saviour
Mortimer West End

St Mary and St John
Stratfield Mortimer

St John the Baptist
Padworth

St Mary's Church of England School

St John's Church of England School

Diocese of Oxford



The Visitation by Rembrandt

Rembrandt tells the story of the meeting between Mary, who was pregnant with Jesus, and her older cousin Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist (Luke 1:39 - 45). Rembrandt centres the narrative around the two cousins, bathed in a warm supernatural glow, and all the figures in the painting are linked by a series of gestures that stress the joyful intimacy of this celebration, which draws them together.

The Parish Sunday Eucharist

for

The Fourth Sunday of Advent 2021

19th December 2021 at 10.00 a.m. at St. John's, Mortimer

and online at Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>

Prayer thoughts: Today's Gospel reading reminds us how Elizabeth greeted Mary and her unborn child with open-hearted joy. The celebration of the birth of Christ is almost upon us. This Christmastide may we greet Christ with open-hearted joy as we welcome others into our lives, especially those who, like him and his blessed mother, are poor and refugee. God bless, Paul

The Parish Sunday Eucharist

This 'holy memorial' is known by various names: 1) 'The Eucharist' - which means 'Thanksgiving' - because Jesus offered himself in love; 2) 'the Lord's Supper' - or 'Breaking of the Bread' - because we celebrate it as a shared meal; 3) 'Holy Communion,' because we become one with Christ by receiving him; and 4) 'Holy Mass' - holy sending - because it gives us a mission: to go in peace to serve the Lord.

The 'objectives' of the Eucharist: The faith community gathers for the public celebration of the Eucharist in order to worship God; ask his forgiveness for sins; thank him for blessings received; listen to his voice in Scripture; present the needs of the world and our own needs too; offer our lives to him; gain spiritual nourishment and recharge our weakened spiritual batteries by sharing with him in Holy Communion. The simple structure of the Eucharistic celebration is organized to achieve all these goals.

If you are not able to come to St John's please do share in the weekly service online. May God bless us as we join together to worship. The present guidelines about cleaning, attendance, distancing, singing & speaking and receiving Holy Communion in churches will be followed carefully.

THE GATHERING SONG

**Lord Jesus Christ,
you have come to us,
you are one with us,
Mary's Son;
cleansing our souls from all their sin,
pouring your love and goodness in;
Jesus, our love for you we sing,
living Lord.**

**Lord Jesus Christ,
now and every day,
teach us how to pray,
Son of God.
You have commanded us to do
this in remembrance, Lord, of you:
into our lives your power breaks through,
living Lord.**

THE GATHERING

Priest In the name of God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
All Amen.

The priest may introduce the Eucharist.

THE GREETING

The greeting proclaims the presence of the Lord with us.

The Penitential Rite, the Gloria and the Opening Prayer follow. The purpose of these preliminary rites is to help the people, gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist, to join with each other as a worshipping community, and to prepare to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist - the Great Thanksgiving.

All The Lord be with you
And also with you.

THE PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

The Invitation to Confession - we call to mind our sins that we may repent of them / turn from them and ask forgiveness of God and each other.

As we prepare to celebrate the mystery of God's love,
revealed to us in Word and Sacrament,
let us call to mind our sins.

A pause for silent reflection follows.

When the Lord comes he will bring to light
the things now hidden in darkness
and will disclose the true purposes of the heart.

Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins. *cf 1 Corinthians 4:5*

All **I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned through my own fault,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do.**

THE NINE-FOLD KYRIES

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

The Absolution

Priest + Almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All Amen.

THE COLLECT

Priest Let us pray.

Together we spend a few moments in silence, realising, and giving thanks, that we are in the presence of God our Father to whom we make our prayers. The prayer 'collects' our thoughts.

Priest Eternal God,
as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,
so we wait for his coming in glory;
bring us through the birth pangs of this present age
to see, with Blessed Mary, our great salvation
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings from the scriptures; a sermon/homily, which expounds the readings; the Profession of Faith, which is the Creed of God's people; and the Prayer of the Faithful or General Intercessions in which the people of God intercede for all humankind and all creation.

In the Liturgy of the Word God speaks to us of redemption and salvation and nourishes us with his 'word.' We are not only listening to past history. The God who speaks to Israel and to the early Church speaks to us today through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us as we listen to him and as he reveals the pattern for our lives. 'The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double edged sword but more finely...it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts'(The Letter to the Hebrews 4:12).

THE FIRST READING - HEBREWS: 10: 5 - 9. - Read by Elizabeth Porter.

I come to do your will.

Reader A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

This is what Christ said, 'You wanted no sacrifice or cereal offering, but you gave me a body. You took no pleasure in burnt offering or sacrifices; then I said, 'Here I am, I come, as it is written in the scroll of the book of me, to do your will, God. He says, You did not want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the cereal offerings, the burnt offerings and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them. And then he says: Here I am! I am coming to do your will.

At the end of the reading:

Reader This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Now we hear the Gospel (the Good News) and acknowledge that we are his people and called to be part of his mission to the world inasmuch as we share his message and his life with faith, hope and love.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Luke 1:38.

I am the handmaid of the Lord:
let what you have said be done.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL READING - ST LUKE'S GOSPEL 1: 39 - 45.

The Lord be with you.
All **And also with you .**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.
All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

At the end of the Gospel

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

THE SERMON

We are a Eucharistic community - united around word and sacrament. Through the readings God has spoken to his people of his redeeming love and of the nourishment which his Spirit gives. The sermon reflects on our readings and relates them to our Eucharistic celebration and to our ordinary daily life.

After the sermon there may be a short period of silent reflection.

THE PROFESSION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH - THE CREED

We make the profession of faith in response to the word of God written in the Gospels and spoken in the sermon. We testify that God is our Father who gives us new life through his Son and who calls us together in the power of his Spirit to be a Eucharistic people, a 'thanksgiving people', a living community of his abiding self-giving love.

All **We believe and trust in God the Father who made the world.**
We believe and trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, who redeemed the world.
We believe and trust in the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God. Amen

THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL OR GENERAL INTERCESSION

We are invited to pray for all people and for all creation and for the needs of the Church's mission in bringing Christ's Gospel to the world. Through baptism we have been made one with Christ, our great high priest, and we share in his prayer before the Father for the needs of the Church's mission to the world and for of people. Our prayer flows from our listening to the Gospel and sermon by which we have been made more aware of our Christian commitment.

This 'Prayer of the Faithful,' or 'General Intercession,' consists of a series of intercessions wherein we pray for the universal Church and its mission and for our bishop and for our benefice - our parishes and our two Church schools; for the world, for our Queen and country, for our local communities, families and friends; for the sick and suffering and for all in pain; and remember those who have died. And in communion with Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all the Saints of God we entrust one another and all people and all creation to God's saving love.

Priest: Let us pray to our Heavenly Father that we may be found vigilant and ready to usher in his kingdom of justice and peace.

The deacon or minister continues:

Heavenly Father, give grace to us all that we may strive with all our hearts for your kingdom of justice and peace; that we may seek Christ in the Scriptures, recognize Christ in the breaking and sharing of the bread, and find in Christ the courage to live by the light of truth.

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for your blessing upon Justin our Archbishop, Steven our Bishop and Olivia our area Bishop. We pray for the renewal of Christ's mission in our parishes and for your blessing on our schools of St Mary's and St John's.

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, give grace to those in authority that they may govern with justice, wisdom and compassion. Bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen, our government, our members of parliament, and our district and village councillors.

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for your blessing on our families, our friends and all our neighbours. May our love and care for one another bear witness to Christ's self-giving love for all.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit... Give them courage, hope and peace.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we remember before you those who have gone before us... Grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, rejoicing in the fellowship of Mary, John the Evangelist, John the Baptist and all your saints, we commend ourselves, all people and all creation to your unfailing love.

Priest Merciful Father,
**All accept these prayers
 for the sake of your Son,
 our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

At the Last Supper Christ 'took some bread and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying "This is my body which will be given for you; do this in remembrance of me". He did the same with the cup...' (Luke 22:19-20). The Church, joyfully obedient to the Lord's command, celebrates the Eucharist taking care that our 'liturgy' corresponds to the words and actions of Christ: 1) Taking bread and wine - we take our own gifts to the Altar, such as our time and talents and our money for the poor and for ministry. 2) Giving thanks (the meaning of the word Eucharist) - in the Eucharistic Prayer the priest, in the name of us all, says the great hymn of our thanksgiving to God for the whole work of salvation, in which the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ. 3) The breaking of the one bread is a sign of the unity of the faithful – a sign of the unity which comes through sharing in Christ. 4) And in Holy Communion we receive Christ. In this way, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, the Church tries to carry out what the Lord asked his disciples to do in remembrance of him.

THE PEACE

We acknowledge and give thanks for our unity with one another in Jesus Christ our Lord, which his death and resurrection have brought to us. He is the peace between us. The sign of peace echoes Christ's own resurrection greeting to his disciples. Before we share in the same bread we express our love for one another in Christ and pray for peace and unity (cf Luke 1.78,79).

Priest The dayspring from on high shall break upon us, *cf Luke 1: 78,79.*
to give light to those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All And also with you.

THE PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

The peoples' gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. The offerings of money is made and promised to support the wider ministry and work of the Church. Taking the Gifts: We give thanks to God for the gifts in the following words.

Priest **BREAD**
Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer,
which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

All Blessed be God for ever.

WINE

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become for us the cup of salvation.

All Blessed be God for ever.

OUR TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURE/MONEY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have the gifts of our
time, talents and money to offer. May our offerings of our gifts be a sincere sign of our
gratitude and our dedication to your service.

All Blessed be God for ever.

*The priest prays quietly: Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble, contrite and thankful hearts.
The priest washes hands as an expression of the desire for inward purification, praying quietly: Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.*

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Priest Pray my brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father.

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

Priest Amen.

Lord, may the power of your Holy Spirit, which sanctified Mary, sanctify us and give us that same grace that we may give you our hearts and lives.

All Amen.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and high point of the whole Christian celebration. This great prayer of praise and thanksgiving proclaims the wonderful works of God and through it we join ourselves with Christ in praise and thanksgiving to God the Father and in offering ourselves to him in union with Christ's self-offering on the cross. We express our share in the prayer, which is said by the priest on behalf of all the people, by listening inwardly and joining in the acclamations (joyful shouts or songs) and the Sanctus (the Holy, Holy, Holy which concludes the preface), the memorial acclamation and the great 'Amen' which concludes our Eucharistic Prayer.

Priest The Lord be with you.

All And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

In the Preface we give thanks and praise God for his mighty acts:

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.

His future coming was proclaimed by all the prophets.

The Blessed Mother bore him in her womb with love beyond all telling.

John the Baptist was his herald and made him known what at last he came.

In his love Christ has filled us with joy as we prepare to celebrate his birth, so that when he comes he may find us watching in prayer, our hearts filled with wonder, love and praise.

And so, with all the company of heaven we proclaim your glory and join in their unending 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.**

We pray to the Father for the sending down of the Holy Spirit and recall the Lord's Supper.

Priest We thank you, loving Father, because when we turned away you sent to us your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

He gave his life for us upon the cross. He shows us the way to live.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and blood.

On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

'This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this to remember me.'

So, Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.

As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit upon us and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Saviour.

Help us, Father, to love one another as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.

And now with Blessed Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist, and all your saints, we give you glory, through Jesus Christ and in the strength of your Holy Spirit, today and for ever.

All Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

The communion rite lays strong emphasis on peace, unity and our prayer for forgiveness. We come together to the Lord's table in accordance with the Lord's command, 'Take, eat... take, drink', as a community bound together by the love of God manifest in Christ. We can all be confident in Christ's mercy as we respond to his call to come to his table. Our communal recitation of the Lord's Prayer - the prayer he taught us - prepares us for Holy Communion with our Lord.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Priest Looking for the coming of his kingdom, as our Saviour taught us, so let us pray:

**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.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The priest takes the host and breaks it over the cup, praying quietly: 'May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.' 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Corinthians 10:17)

Christ's gesture of breaking bread with his disciples at the Last Supper gave the Eucharist the name of the 'breaking of bread.'. This gesture signifies that we who share one bread and one cup are made one. The breaking of the Eucharistic bread becomes a sign of unity and charity as the one bread is distributed to the family of God's people.

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

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

The priest prepares quietly for Holy Communion. We may all join quietly in this prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you. Amen.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. *cf. John 1: 29*

Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.

The sign of communion is more complete when given under both 'kinds' since then the sign of the eucharistic meal appears more clearly. However, we live in exceptional times when communion can only be given in one 'kind.'

The priest takes the host, raises it a little and shows it saying: The Body of Christ. And the same with the cup saying: The Blood of Christ. When receiving Holy Communion the response and assent to Christ is:

+ Amen.

THE HYMN DURING HOLY COMMUNION

The choir sings:

Ave Maria - Lindley

After Holy Communion we may keep a further period of silence.

PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Let us pray

The priest invites us all to pray that the Holy Eucharist will have its effect in transforming our lives and bring us all to God's kingdom. We pray together silently for a while before the Post Communion prayer.

Priest Heavenly Father,
you chose Blessed Mary
to be the mother of the promised saviour:
fill us with your grace,
that, like Mary, we too may in all things embrace your holy will
and with her rejoice in your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

THE NOTICES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE GIVEN.

THE CONCLUDING RITE

All The Lord be with you.
and also with you.

THE BLESSING

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;
+ and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

All Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

OUR SENDING OUT SONG

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!**

Please donate regularly to support the Church's mission and work. *The church here needs your help in order to serve our villages, our diocese, our nation and our world in the future. Our doors have been closed due to Covid 19 and with no regular Government or Church of England funding we have lost significant income. Please see the website to see how to give efficiently.*

