



The Stratfield Mortimer Benefice
of

St Saviour
Mortimer West End

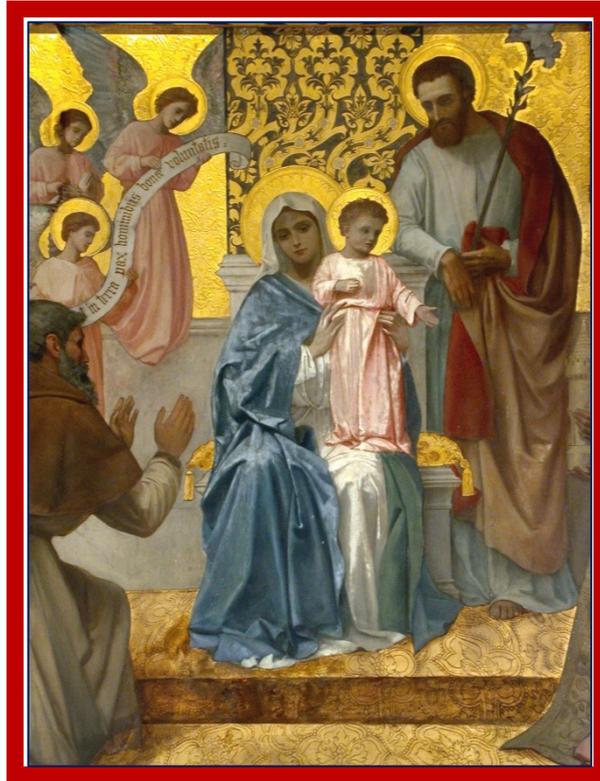
St Mary and St John
Stratfield Mortimer

St John the Baptist
Padworth

St Mary's Church of England School

St John's Church of England School

Diocese of Oxford



The reredos at St John's church, Mortimer.

Christmas Day Eucharist

25th December 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

at St John's Mortimer and online at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>

Prayer Thoughts: *On Christmas Day we come to celebrate the birth of the child who offers the light of God's grace and love to all the world. Today we remember that the 'Word of God' is no longer the 'message' spoken by prophets, but the 'messenger' of God himself in person. The Church calls upon us all to welcome Christ and his message into our hearts and lives; into our relationships and communities; to receive and make our own his message of goodwill towards all; and to allow his joyful spirit of thanksgiving to renew us that we may lift our hearts and voices to join in that age-old jubilant song: 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace to people on earth*

*Happy Christmas.
God bless,*

Christmas Day 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

**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.***

**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,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the 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.

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph:
'You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' *cf Matthew 1.21*

My dear brothers and sisters, as we come together as God's family
and prepare to celebrate the Eucharist, let us call to mind our sins
and seek the forgiveness of God through Jesus our Saviour.

A pause for silent reflection follows.

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 Absolution

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

All Amen.

THE GLORIA

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.
Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

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.
Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.
Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.
Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

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 Almighty God, you have given us your only-begotten Son
to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:
grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace,
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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 – THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS P1: 1 – 6 - Read by Sarah Theaker.

Reader A reading from The Letter to the Hebrews.

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to take his

place in heaven at the right hand of the Divine Majesty. So he is now as far above the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

God has never said to any angel, You are my Son, today I have become your father, or: I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Again, when he brings the First-born into the world, he says, Let all the angels of God worship him.

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.

A hallowed day has dawned upon us.
Come, you peoples, worship the Lord,
for today a great light has shone upon the earth.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL READING - ST JOHN'S GOSPEL 1: 1 - 18.

The Lord be with you.
All **And also with you .**
Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a testimony, to bear testimony to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own, and his own people received him not. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

At the end of the Gospel

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

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 **I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.**

**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,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
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.
I 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 adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
And I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. 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, is announced and consists of a series of intercessions; 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 we 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 in the power of the Holy Spirit of God and in union with Jesus Christ whose birth we celebrate this holy night.

The deacon or minister continues:

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for the Church throughout the world, that with one heart and voice Christians everywhere may rejoice in the Word incarnate. We pray to you for Justin our Archbishop, for Steven our bishop, for Olivia our area bishop, and for all our brothers and sisters in Christ. Bless our benefice, our two Church schools of St Mary's and St John's, and all our missions and ministries...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for the peace of the world and for good will in the hearts of all people; for our Sovereign Lady the Queen; for our Government; for Parliament; for our District and Village Councils; that they may strive for justice and the common good and seek the well-being of all people...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for our families and friends and for all who are dear to us; for this village; and for all the communities to which we belong...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for the poor; for the homeless; for refugees; for the lonely and those who feel unloved; for the bereaved and all who mourn; for all who suffer in body, mind or spirit...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for all who have died recently; for our loved ones gone before us; may we be reunited with them in heaven...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

In a moment of silence let each one of us offer our own prayer.

Rejoicing in our communion with Mary, the Blessed Mother of our Lord, St. Joseph, St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist and all the host of heaven, we offer these our prayers.

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 *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, cf Isaiah 9: 6
and his name shall be called the Prince 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.

Father, the saving work of Christ gives us peace. May we follow the example of your Son who became man and lived among us in great humility.

And may our offering of our gifts this Christmas Day give you praise.

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 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. Today in him a new light has dawned upon the world;

God has become one with man, and man has become one again with God.

Your eternal Word has taken upon himself our human weakness, giving our mortal nature immortal value.

So marvellous is this oneness between God and man

that in Christ man restores to man the gift of everlasting life.

Therefore in our joy we sing to your glory with all the choirs of angels:

**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 Lord God, you are the most holy one, enthroned in splendour and light, yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ you reveal the power of your love made perfect in our human frailty and weakness.

Embracing our broken humanity, Jesus showed us the way, the way of salvation; loving us to the end, he gave himself to death for us; dying for his own, that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption, Father, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the night he gave up himself for us all he took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

+Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying:

+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. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting forth from the tomb, we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory. Form us into the likeness of Christ and make us a perfect offering in your sight. Look with favour on your people and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts.

Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free and fill your Church with power from on high to do your will. Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with Blessed Mary, St. Joseph, St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist and all your Saints at the table in your kingdom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and 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.**

DURING HOLY COMMUNION - The Choir will sing the 'Ave Maria' and Carols.

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 God our Father, whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem:
may the light of faith illumine our hearts and shine in our words and deeds;
through him who is Christ the Lord.

All **Amen.**

CAROL

**Joy to the world, the Lord has come!
let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare Him room
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing!**

**Joy to the earth, the Saviour reigns!
your sweetest songs employ
while fields and streams and hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of His righteousness,
the wonders of His love,
the wonders of His love,
the wonders, wonders of His love.**

THE CONCLUDING RITE

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

THE BLESSING

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

All **Amen.**

Priest May Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace and goodwill towards all people.

All **Amen.**

Priest May the Holy Spirit, by whose overshadowing Blessed Mary became the God-bearer,
give you grace to bear the Gospel of Christ to all the world.

All **Amen.**

Priest +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.

CAROL

**Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King,
peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'**

**Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.**

**Christ by highest heaven 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 new-born King.**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen 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 new-born King.**

CAROL

Gaudete, Christos est natus...

Happy Christmas

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.*

