

Opening Hymn: We three kings – see Order of Service.

The Collect

O God,
who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth:
mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith,
may at last behold your glory face to face;
through the same 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.
Amen.

The New Testament Reading

A reading from St Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

This is the word of the Lord.

Ephesians 3: 1–12

Thanks be to God.

Gradual Carol: Come and join the celebration

*Come and join the celebration.
It's a very special day.
Come and share our jubilation;
There's a new King born today!*

See the shepherds
Hurry down to Bethlehem
Gaze in wonder,
At the son of God
who lay before them.

Come and join the celebration ...

Wise men journey,
Led to worship by a star,
Kneel in homage,
Bringing precious gifts
from lands afar. So:

Come and join the celebration ...

'God is with us,'
Round the world the message bring.
He is with us,
'Welcome,' all the
bells on earth are pealing.

Come and join the celebration ...

The Gospel

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." '

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

St Matthew 2: 1-12

Praise to you, O Christ.

Offertory Hymn: Bethlehem of noblest cities

Bethlehem, of noblest cities
none can once with thee compare;
thou alone the Lord from heaven
didst for us incarnate bear.

Fairer than the sun at morning
was the star that told his birth;
to the lands their God announcing,
seen in fleshly form on earth.

By its lambent beauty guided
see the eastern kings appear;
see them bend, their gifts to offer,
gifts of incense, gold and myrrh.

Solemn things of mystic meaning:
incense doth the God disclose,
gold a royal child proclaimeth,
myrrh a future tomb foreshows.

Holy Jesu, in thy brightness
to the Gentile world displayed,
with the Father and the Spirit
endless praise to thee be paid.

Stuttgart 48 NEH

Anthem: Star Carol

Sing this night (for a boy is born in Bethlehem)
Christ our Lord (in a lowly manger lies)
Bring your gifts (come and worship at his cradle)
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary

See his star shining bright

In the sky this Christmas night

Follow me joyfully

Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary

Angels bright (come from heaven's highest glory)
Bear the news (with its message of good cheer)
Sing, rejoice (for a King is come to save us)
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary

See, he lies in his mother's tender keeping
Jesus Christ in her loving arms asleep
Shepherds poor, come to worship and adore him
Offer their humble gifts before the son of Mary

Let us pay our homage at the manger
Sing his praise on this joyful Christmas Night
Christ is come, bringing promises of salvation
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary

John Rutter (b.1945)

Communion Hymn: Meekness and majesty

Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity,
In perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity, dwells in humanity,
Kneels in humility and washes our feet.

*O what a mystery,
Meekness and majesty
Bow down and worship ...
For this is your God...,
This is your God.*

Father's pure radiance, perfect in innocence, Yet learns obedience to death on a cross. Suff'ring to give us life Conqu'ring through sacrifice And as they crucify prays: 'Father forgive.'	Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible, Love indestructible in frailty appears. Lord of infinity, Stooping so tenderly, Lifts our humanity to the heights of his throne.
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O what a mystery ...

O what a mystery ...

Meekness and Majesty 49 BCB

Final Hymn: O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.

Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness:
high on his heart he will bear it for thee,
comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness,
guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth thou wouldst reckon as thine:
truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,
these are the offerings to lay on his shrine.

These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,
he will accept for the name that is dear:
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.

Was lebet 52 NEH