

ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH

LOWESTOFT



# Service of Holy Communion



For the Season  
of  
Christmastide & Epiphany

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
Epiphany

**Presiding: Canon Simon**

**Preaching: Rev Pauline**

## **WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER**

(Please remain seated)

### **Opening prayer**

Creator of the heavens,  
who led the Magi by a star  
to worship the Christ-child:  
guide and sustain us,  
that we may find our journey's end  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.



## HYMN 94 - As with gladness men of old

- 1 As with gladness, men of old  
did the guiding star behold;  
as with joy they hailed its light,  
leading onward, beaming bright,  
so, most gracious Lord, may we  
evermore be led to Thee.*
- 2 As with joyful steps they sped,  
Saviour, to thy lowly bed,  
there to bend the knee before  
thee whom Heaven and earth adore;  
so may we with willing feet  
ever seek Thy mercy seat.*
- 3 As they offered gifts most rare  
at thy cradle rude and bare;  
so may we with holy joy,  
pure and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.*
- 4 Holy Jesus, every day  
keep us in the narrow way;  
and, when earthly things are past,  
bring our ransomed souls at last  
where they need no star to guide,  
where no clouds Thy glory hide.*
- 5 In the heavenly country bright,  
need they no created light;  
thou its light, its joy, its crown,  
thou its sun which goes not down;  
there for ever may we sing  
alleluias to our King.*

WILLIAM CHATTERTON DIX (1837 – 1898)

Arise, shine, for the Light of the World has come!  
**Praise to Christ our light**

## INTRODUCTION TO CONFESSION

The grace of God  
has dawned upon the world with healing for all.  
Though we have grieved him,  
yet he will heal us if we confess our sins  
in penitence and faith.

### Confession (please sit or kneel)

A moment of Silence

When we fail to see Christ  
In friend and stranger  
Lord have mercy  
**Lord have mercy**

When we fail to see Christ  
In the miracle of your good earth  
Christ have mercy  
**Christ have mercy**

When we fail to see Christ  
In the secrets of our own hearts  
Lord have mercy  
**Lord have mercy**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon *us*, pardon and deliver us from all *our* sins,  
confirm and strengthen *us* in all goodness,  
and keep *us* in life eternal,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

## THE GLORIA

*(If you are able, please stand to sing the Gloria)*

**Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the highest.  
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.  
Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the highest.**

**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.**

**Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the highest.  
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.  
Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the highest.**

## **THE COLLECT (Prayer of the week – found on the pew sheet)**

Creator of the heavens,  
who led the Magi by a star  
to worship the Christ-child:  
guide and sustain us,  
that we may find our journey's end  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **THE LITURGY OF THE WORD** (please sit)

### **All Age Talk**

## BIBLE READING

### New Testament: Ephesians 3: 1-12 Read by Richard A

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, 9and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; 10so 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.

For the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## HYMN 62 - 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!*

**1** *See the shepherds  
hurry down to Bethlehem;  
gaze in wonder  
at the Son of God who lay before them.*

*Come and join the celebration,  
it's a very special day;  
come and share our jubilation,  
there's a new King born today!*

**2** *Wise men journey,  
led to worship by a star,  
kneel in homage,  
bringing precious gifts from lands afar, so*

*Come and join the celebration,  
it's a very special day;  
come and share our jubilation,  
there's a new King born today!*

**3** *'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,  
it's a very special day;  
come and share our jubilation,  
there's a new King born today!*

VALERIE COLLISON (b. 1933)

## GOSPEL READING

(Please remain standing)

Alleluia, alleluia. Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations and believed in throughout the world.

**Alleluia.**

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.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON Rev Pauline

### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (please stand)

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,**

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION – Led by Helen S (Please sit or kneel)

*These responses may be used:*

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

*at the end*

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

## CALLING OF BANNS OF MARRIAGE, NOTICES AND TIME OF SHARING

### THE PEACE

(If you would like to, please stand)

Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and Prince of Peace. Let him rule our hearts now, as one day he will rule the world.

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

**Deacon:** Let us offer one another a sign of peace

## OFFERTORY HYMN 105 - We three kings of orient are.

(During the offertory hymn the bread and wine and collection are brought to the Altar)

**1 We three kings of Orient are,  
bearing gifts we traverse afar  
field and fountain, moor and mountain  
following yonder star**

*O Star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

**2 Born a King on Bethlehem plain  
gold I bring to crown Him again  
king for ever, ceasing never  
over us all to reign:**

*O Star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

**3 Frankincense to offer have I,  
incense owns a deity nigh;  
prayer and praising, all men raising,  
worship Him, God most high:**

*O Star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

**4 Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume  
breathes a life of gathering gloom:  
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
sealed in the stone-cold tomb:**

***O Star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light.***

**5 Glorious now behold Him arise,  
king and God and sacrifice  
heaven sings, Alleluia!  
Alleluia, the earth replies:**

***O Star of wonder, star of night,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.***

**EDWARD JOHN HOPKINS (1818 – 1901)**

Lord, accept your people's gifts,  
not gold, frankincense or myrrh,  
but hearts and voices raised in praise  
of Jesus Christ, our light and our salvation.

**Amen**

**EUCARISTIC PRAYER (please sit or kneel)**

*The Choir may remain standing*

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 honour and praise be yours ever-living God, for your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of your Spirit and lived as one of us.

We give thanks for your glory made present in our midst.

In the coming of the Magi the King of all the world was revealed to the nations.

In the waters of baptism Jesus was revealed as the Christ, the Saviour sent to redeem us.

In the water made wine the new creation was revealed at the wedding feast.

Poverty was turned to riches, sorrow into joy.

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 praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.



When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:

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.



So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross. Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith.

***Christ has died:***

***Christ is risen:***

***Christ will come again.***

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth. Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with all the saints to feast at your table in heaven.

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**

Believing the promises of God, as our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

## 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**

*The 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.**

This is the table of our Lord, where hurts are healed, and all is made new in the love of God. Come not because it is I who invite you, it is our Lord; It is his will that those who want him should meet him here.

All are welcome to come forward to receive the bread and the wine or a blessing. It is helpful for us if you say your name when you come to the front. The choir will receive Holy Communion first at the High Altar, followed by the rest of the congregation who will receive Holy Communion at the Chancel step.

An anthem is usually sung by the Choir and then a Hymn is also sung during communion (please remain seated).

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance  
that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

**Anthem: Far away, what splendour comes this way? Lully  
(arranged by Bizet)**

Hymn 68 - In the bleak midwinter

*1 In the bleak midwinter,  
frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron,  
water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow  
snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter,  
long ago.*

*2 Our God, heaven cannot hold him,  
nor earth sustain.  
heaven and earth shall flee away  
when he comes to reign:  
in the bleak midwinter  
a stable place sufficed  
the Lord God Almighty,  
Jesus Christ.*

*3 Enough for him, whom cherubim  
worship night and day,  
a breastful of milk  
and a manger full of hay;  
enough for him, whom angels  
fall down before,  
the ox and ass and camel  
which adore.*

*4 Angels and archangels  
may have gathered there  
cherubim and seraphim  
thronged the air;  
but his mother only  
in her maiden bliss,  
worshipped the beloved  
with a kiss.*

*5 What can I give Him,  
poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb.  
if I were a wise man,  
I would do my part,  
yet what I can I give Him -  
Give my heart.*

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI (1830 – 1894)

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Lord God,  
the bright splendour whom the nations seek:  
may we who with the wise men have been drawn by your light  
discern the glory of your presence in your Son,  
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

## THANKSGIVING PRAYER

Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work to your praise and glory.  
Amen.

## HYMN 86 - The first nowell.

*1 The first Nowell the angel did say  
was to Bethlehem's shepherds in fields where they lay;  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep:  
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,  
born is the King of Israel!*

*2 Then wise men from a country far  
looked up and saw a guiding star;  
they travelled on by night and day  
to reach the place where Jesus lay:  
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell  
born is the King of Israel!*

*3 At Bethlehem they entered in,  
on bended knee they worshipped him,  
they offered there in his presence  
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.  
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell  
born is the King of Israel!*

*4 Then let us all with one accord  
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;  
for Christ has our salvation wrought  
and with his blood our life has bought.  
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell  
born is the King of Israel!*

Cornish carol, possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century  
adapted by MICHAEL PERRY (1942 – 1996)

## THE BLESSING

May God the Father, who led the wise men by the shining of a star to find the Christ, the Light from Light, lead us also in our journey to find the Lord. **Amen.**

May God, who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness, give us a place with the saints in light in the kingdom of his beloved Son. **Amen.**

May the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shine in our hearts and fill our lives with his joy and peace. **Amen.**

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

## THE DISMISSAL

Go in the peace of Christ, to love and serve the Lord.  
***In the name of Christ. Amen.***

**Or**

By the power of the Spirit, we take into our community the peace and love of God.

***In the name of Christ. Amen.***