



Welcome to St Alban's

4th Sunday of Advent

OPENING HYMN *Tr. John Mason Neale (1818-1866)*

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

*Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

2. O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save
and give them victory o'er the grave.

3. O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

4. O come, thou key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.

5. O come, O come, thou Lord of might
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.

The fourth candle of the Advent Wreath is lit and we all pray...

Lord Jesus, light of the world,
blessed is Gabriel, who brought good news;
blessed is Mary, your mother and ours.
Bless your Church preparing for Christmas;
and bless us your children, who long for your coming. Amen

We are gathered together as one body

† 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.**

When the Lord comes, he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Therefore, in the light of Christ let us confess our sins...

Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into the peace of your kingdom:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

You come in word and sacrament to strengthen us in holiness:

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

You will come in glory with salvation for your people:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

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

THE COLLECT (The special prayer of the day)

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 her, our great salvation
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Romans 16.25-end

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages²⁶ but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷ to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

This is the word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

THE GOSPEL
Luke 1.26-38

Alleluia, Alleluia; Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

Glory to you, O Lord.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

³⁴ Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵ The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.'

³⁸ Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

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

Praise to you, O Christ.

THE SERMON

THE APOSTLES CREED *Please stand if you are able*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Watchful at all times, let us pray for strength to stand with confidence before our Maker and Redeemer.

At the end of the prayers we say together: Merciful Father, accept these prayers, for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

THE PEACE *Please stand*

In the tender mercy of our God, the dayspring from on high shall break upon us, 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.

And also with you.

THE PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

Blessed be God, by whose grace creation is renewed, by whose love heaven is opened, by whose mercy we offer our sacrifice of praise.

Blessed be God for ever.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The president blesses the elements, and the response each time is
Blessed be God for ever.

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.

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.

For when he humbled himself to come among us in human flesh,
he fulfilled the plan you formed before the foundation of the world
to open for us the way of salvation.

Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,
we now watch for the day when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.
And so we join our voices with angels and archangels
and with all the company of heaven to proclaim your glory,
for ever praising you and saying:

**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 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 the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Alban, and 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.**

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.
And 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**

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.**

God's holy gifts, for God's holy people.
Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the
Body of Christ of which we are members.
In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be
nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.*

An Act of Spiritual Communion

**My Jesus, I believe that you are present
in the Holy Sacrament of the altar.
I love you above all things and I passionately desire
to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and for ever. Amen.**

Post communion prayer:

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

**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**

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

May God himself, the God of peace, make you perfect and holy,
and keep you safe and blameless, in spirit, soul and body,
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;
and the blessing ...

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen

HYMN Ascribed to St Bernard of Cluny, 12th century

- 1. Daily, daily sing to Mary,
Sing, my soul, her praises due:
All her feasts, her actions honour
With the heart's devotion true.
Lost in wond'ring contemplation,
Be her majesty confessed:
Call her Mother, call her Virgin,
Happy Mother, Virgin blest.**

- 2. Sing, my tongue, the Virgin's trophies,
who for us her Maker bore;
for the curse of old inflicted,
peace and blessings to restore.
Sing in songs of praise unending,
sing the world's majestic Queen;
weary not nor faint in telling
all the gifts she gives to men.**

- 3. All my senses, heart, affections,
strive to sound her glory forth;
spread abroad the sweet memorials,
of the Virgin's priceless worth,
where the voice of music thrilling,
where the tongues of eloquence,
that can utter hymns beseeming
all her matchless excellence?**

- 4. All our joys do flow from Mary,
all then join her praise to sing;
trembling sing the Virgin Mother,
Mother of our Lord and King,
while we sing her awful glory,
far above our fancy's reach,
let our hearts be quick to offer
love the heart alone can teach.**

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