Holy Communion
for the Festival of the Baptism of Christ

at Home due to Coronavirus COVID-19



The Benefice of Stoke by Nayland with Polstead and Leavenheath, and Nayland with Wissington

- A short introduction to the Season –

The season of joyful celebration that begins at Christmas now continues through the successive Sundays of Epiphany, and the festal cycle ends only with the Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas).

The child who has been manifested to the magi at his birth is now recognized by Simeon and Anna, when he comes to be presented in the Temple according to the Law of Israel.

He is both 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' and 'the glory of God's people Israel'. But the redemption he will bring must be won through suffering; the Incarnation is directed to the Passion; and Simeon's final words move our attention away from the celebration of Christmas and towards the mysteries of Easter.

Growing in God

Spiritual Communion

The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ.

In joining with Revd Mark today as he celebrates the Eucharist from his own home, you too are able to join with him in communion. The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.

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'.

Welcome and Introduction

Hymn - Brightest and best

sung by St Martin's Voices

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid;
star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining;
low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
odours of Edom, and offerings divine,
gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
vainly with gifts would his favour secure:
richer by far is the heart's adoration,
dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid;
star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

The Gathering

Minister: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

The Greeting

Minister: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe.
All: From the rising of the sun to its setting your name is proclaimed in all the world.

Minister: The Lord of glory be with you.
All: The Lord bless you.

Prayer of Preparation

All: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from who no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Penitence

Minister: 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. *(cf 1 Corinthians 4:5)*

Kyrie Confession

Minister: Heavenly Father, you exalted the humble and meek: give us humble and contrite hearts.
Lord, have mercy.
All: Lord, have mercy.

Minister: Lord Jesus, you grew towards birth in the Virgin's womb: be planted also in our hearts and lives.
Christ, have mercy.
All: Christ, have mercy.

Minister: Holy Spirt, you overshadowed Mary, that she might become the God-bearer: fill us with your heavenly gifts.
Lord, have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution

Minister: Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive you your sins, and open your eyes to God's truth, strengthen you to do God's will and give you the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

The Collect

Minister: Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; 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.**

Old Testament Reading *(Genesis 1:1-5NRSV)*

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Minister: This is the word of the Lord

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading *(Mark 1:4-11 NRSV)*

Minister: Alleluia, alleluia. This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased *(Matthew 3:1)*

All: Alleluia.

Minister: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Minister: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Thanksgiving for Holy Baptism

Minister: God in Christ gives us water welling up for eternal life. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

All: Lord, give us this water and we shall thirst no more.

Minister: Praise God who made heaven and earth,

All: who keeps his promise for ever.

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give thanks and praise.

Minister: Father, we give you thanks and praise for your gift of water in creation; for your Spirit, sweeping over the waters, bringing light and life; for your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, baptized in the river Jordan.
We bless you for your new creation, brought to birth by water and the Spirit, and for your grace bestowed upon us your children, washing away our sins.
May your holy and life-giving Spirit move upon these waters. Restore through them the beauty of your creation, and bring those who are baptized to new birth in the family of your Church. Drown sin in the waters of judgement, anoint your children with power from on high, and make them one with Christ in the freedom of your kingdom. For all might, majesty, dominion and power are yours, now and for ever.

All: Alleluia. Amen.

Minister: I saw water flowing from the threshold of the temple.

All: Wherever the river flows everything will spring to life. Alleluia.

Minister: On the banks of the river grow trees bearing every kind of fruit.

All: Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail.

Minister: Their fruit will serve for food, their leaves for the healing of the nations.

All: For the river of the water of life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Minister: God of truth, you are faithful to the covenant you have made with us; look in mercy on your people.
From all our sins, O Lord:

All: **wash us, and we shall be clean.**

Minister: We have broken the pledges of our baptism, and failed to be your disciples.
From all our sins, O Lord:

All: **wash us, and we shall be clean.**

Minister: Though we are saved by Christ and dead to sin through the deep waters of death, we have not witnessed to his grace by our manner of life.
From all our sins, O Lord:

All: **wash us, and we shall be clean.**

Minister: We have shown indifference to those in need and have been afraid to stand up for justice and truth.
From all our sins, O Lord:

All: **wash us, and we shall be clean.**

Minister: We have been slow to forgive, and have failed to remember your repeated forgiveness of our sins.
From all our sins, O Lord:

All: **wash us, and we shall be clean.**

Minister: Today we rejoice and give thanks because your Son humbled himself to be baptized in the Jordan. Through the waters you have given us the mystery of baptism for the remission of our sins.
From all our sins, O Lord:

All: **wash us, and we shall be clean.**

Minister: Through water and Spirit you give us new life as the people of God, and pour out upon us the gifts of your new covenant.
From all our sins, O Lord:

All: wash us, and we shall be clean.

Minister: Almighty God, in our baptism you have consecrated us to be temples of your Holy Spirit. May we, whom you have counted worthy, nurture your indwelling Spirit with a lively faith, and worship you with upright lives; through Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

Minister: 'Come,' say the Spirit and the Bride. 'Come forward, you who are thirsty, receive the water of life, the free gift to all who desire it.'

May almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Minister: God has made us one in Christ. He has set his seal upon us and, as a pledge of what is to come, has given the Spirit to dwell in our hearts. Alleluia.
(cf 2 Corinthians 1:22)
The peace of the Lord be always with you

All: and also with you.

Preparation of the Altar

Minister: Open the heavens, Lord our God, and send your transforming Spirit on us and on these gifts. May we who are baptized into Christ be ready to share his cup of suffering and strengthened to serve him for ever.

The Eucharistic Prayer

Minister: The Lord is here.
All: His Spirit is with us.

Minister: Lift up your hearts.
All: We lift them to the Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All: it is right to give thanks and praise.

Minister: It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
You celebrated your new gift of baptism in signs and wonders at the Jordan.
Your voice was heard from heaven to awaken faith in the presence among us of your Word made flesh.
Your Spirit was seen as a dove, revealing Jesus as your servant, and anointing him with the oil of gladness to preach the good news to the poor.
Therefore, as we celebrate the union of earth and heaven, we rejoice to echo the song of the angels in heaven for ever praising you and singing:

All: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**
(Sung) **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.**

Minister: 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 weakness.

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

On the night he gave 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 from the tomb, we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming 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; 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.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with 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. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Minister: Believing the promises of God, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

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.

Breaking of the Bread

Minister: We break the bread of life, and that life is the light of the world.

All: **God here among us, light in the midst of us, bring us to light and life.**

The Agnus Dei

(Sung) **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.

Giving of Communion

Minister: God's holy gifts for God's holy people.

All: **Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

All: **We do not presume to come to this your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies.**
We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

The Minister receives communion on behalf of all those in our community who are unable to be present because of the Coronavirus.

Prayer after Communion

Minister: Lord of all time and eternity, you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son: by the power of your Spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All: **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 – Hail to the Lord's Anointed

sung by St Martin's Voices

Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
to set the captive free,
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.

He comes, with succour speedy,
to those who suffer wrong;
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
were precious in his sight.

He shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth;
that love, joy, hope, like flowers,
spring in his path to birth;
before him, on the mountains,
shall peace the herald go;
and righteousness, in fountains,
from hill to valley flow.

Kings shall bow down before him,
and gold and incense bring;
all nations shall adore him,
his praise all people sing;
to him shall prayer unceasing
and daily vows ascend,
his kingdom still increasing,
a kingdom without end.

O'er every foe victorious,
he on his throne shall rest;
from age to age more glorious,
all-blessing and all-blest.
The tide of time shall never
his covenant remove;
his name shall stand for ever,
his changeless name of Love.

James Montgomery (1771-1854)

Acclamation

Minister: The Father's voice bears witness to the Son.
All: **God has revealed himself to us.**

Minister: The Son bows his head beneath the waters of baptism.
All: **God has revealed himself to us.**

Minister: The Spirit as a dove descends from heaven.
All: **God has revealed himself to us.**

Minister: Submitting to John's baptism, Christ delivers us from bondage.
All: God has revealed himself to us.

The Blessing

Minister: May God the Father, who led the wise men by the shining of a star to find the Christ, the Light from Light, lead you also in your pilgrimage to find the Lord.
All: **Amen.**

Minister: May God the Son, who turned water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana, transform your lives and make glad your hearts.
All: **Amen.**

Minister: May God the Holy Spirit, who came upon the beloved Son at his baptism in the river Jordan, pour out his gifts on you who have come to the waters of new birth.

All: Amen.

Minister: And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

The Dismissal

Minister: We have come to Christ, the living water. Stay at home in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: In the name of Christ. Amen.

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