

Holy Communion for Advent Sunday



The Stour Valley Benefice

Cavendish, Clare, Hundon, Poslingford, Stoke-by-Clare & Wixoe

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 who will be celebrating the Eucharist from his 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'.



Hymn – Come, thou long-expected Jesus

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us for ever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit,
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

(Charles Wesley 1707-1788)

The Gathering

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

All: Amen.

The Greeting

Minister: The Lord be with you.

All: and also with 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: Turn to us again, O God our Saviour, and let your anger cease from us:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Minister: Show us your compassion, O Lord, and grant us your salvation:
Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Minister: Your salvation is near for those that fear you, that glory may dwell in our land:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

Minister: 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.

All: Amen.

If you have an advent wreath at home or wish to mark the weeks leading up to Christmas, you may like to light your first candle at this point.

Advent Wreath Prayer – Advent 1 (The Patriarchs)

Minister: Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors: to you be praise and glory for ever. You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment. May we be obedient to your call and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ, a lamp to our feet and light to our path; for you are our light and our salvation.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

The Collect

Minister: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him 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 (*Isaiah 2:1-5 NRSV*)

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

Minister: This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading (*Romans 12:11-14 NRSV*)

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Minister: This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading (*Matthew 24:36-44 NRSV*)

Minister: Alleluia, alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. (*cf Isaiah 40:3-5*)

All: Alleluia.

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

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

`But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of

Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Minister: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

The Creed

All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, 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, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again 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.

We 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

**worshipped and glorified, who has spoken
through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic
Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness
of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Minister: Let us pray, as we prepare for the coming of the Lord.

May the Church be faithful and vigilant, ever on guard against evil, and as a good servant ready for the Master's call. At this Advent time, grant to her ministers and all her people the grace to prepare in prayer and meditation for the coming Nativity.

Speak to the heedless world where many have ceased to learn from the past the signs of future danger. Be merciful to those who fail in the duty laid upon them for the guidance of others and open their eyes to follow the right path.

In all we do, in all our work, in our homes, in our times of quiet, let us so live that we are ready without fear for the call of God. Grant to those we love the grace of lives fitly offered.

Have mercy on those who have no future hope, those who value the passing moment beyond its worth, those who through pain and sorrow have ceased to care for what is to come. Give them the assurance that this present world is not the end.

We pray for those who have already been called to the future judgment and the future peace, for those who came with joyful expectation into the divine presence, and for those who came bewildered and unprepared. May the love of God enfold them all.

May our prayers be acceptable through Christ the Lord who has come, is present here, and will come again.

Minister: Merciful Father,
**All: accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Minister: In the tender mercy of our God, the dayspring from on high shall break upon us, to give light to those who dwell in the 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.

All: and also with you.

Preparation of the Altar

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 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.
As 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:

**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.**

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: Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom in the words which 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 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 Agnus Dei

**All: 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: 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.

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.

Prayer after Communion

Minister: O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful
as we await the coming of your Son our Lord;
that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping
in sin but active in his service and joyful in his praise;
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.**

The Dismissal Gospel

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

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." (*Mark 1:14-15*)

Minister: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

The Blessing

Minister: Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

Minister: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn – Lo! he comes with clouds descending

Lo! he comes with clouds descending,
once for favoured sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluya!
God appears, on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at nought and sold him,

pierced and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing
shall the true Messiah see.

Those dear tokens of his passion
still his dazzling body bears,
cause of endless exultation
to his ransomed worshippers:
with what rapture
gaze we on those glorious scars!

Yea, Amen! let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory:
claim the kingdom for thine own:
O come quickly!
Alleluya! come, Lord, come!

(Charles Wesley 1707-1788)



Special Christmas Services in your Parish Church and across the Benefice

Saturday 13th December 2025

6pm in St Peter & St Paul, Clare – Carols by Candlelight

Tuesday 16th December 2025

7pm in St John the Baptist, Stoke by Clare – Carols by Candlelight

Friday 19th December 2025

6pm in St Mary the Virgin, Poslingford – Carols by Candlelight

Sunday 21st December 2025

4pm in All Saints, Hundon – Carols by Candlelight

5pm in St Mary the Virgin, Cavendish – Carols by Candlelight

Wednesday 24th December 2025 (Christmas Eve)

2pm in St Peter & St Paul, Clare – Family Crib Service & Carols

3pm in All Saints, Hundon – Family Crib Service & Carols

4pm in St John the Baptist, Stoke by Clare – Family Crib Service & Carols

5pm in St Mary the Virgin, Cavendish – Family Crib Service & Carols

7pm in St Leonard, Wixoe – Carols by Candlelight

11.30pm in St Peter & St Paul, Clare – Midnight Mass

Thursday 25th December 2025 (Christmas Day)

9am in St John the Baptist, Stoke by Clare – Family Christmas Eucharist

11am in St Peter & St Paul, Clare – Family Christmas Eucharist

For more information visit: www.stourvalley.org.uk

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