



*St Thomas of  
Canterbury, the  
Parish Church for  
Brentwood*

# The Order of Mass

Midnight Mass of the  
Nativity of Our Lord  
Jesus Christ

*These prayers are suitable as preparation for Mass*

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom 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

*From the Book of Common Prayer*

Almighty and ever-living God, I approach the sacrament of Your only-begotten Son Our Lord Jesus Christ, I come sick to the doctor of life, unclean to the fountain of mercy, blind to the radiance of eternal light, and poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth. Lord, in your great generosity, heal my sickness, wash away my defilement, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty, and clothe my nakedness. May I receive the bread of angels, the King of kings and Lord of lords, with humble reverence, with the purity and faith, the repentance and love, and the determined purpose that will help to bring me to salvation. May I receive the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, and its reality and power.

Kind God, may I receive the Body of Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, born from the womb of the Virgin Mary, and so be received into His mystical body and numbered among His members. Loving Father, as on my earthly pilgrimage I now receive Your beloved Son under the veil of a sacrament, may I one day see him face to face in glory, who lives and reigns with You for ever. Amen

*St Thomas Aquinas*

*It is our custom to keep a prayerful silence before Mass*

*We STAND when the bell rings, we sing the entrance hymn as the sacred ministers enter, the image of the infant Jesus is added to the crib and the altar is censed.*

O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep And dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee to-night.

O morning stars, together  
Proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God the king,  
And peace to men on earth;  
For Christ is born of Mary;  
And, gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love.

How silently, how silently,  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming;  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him ,still  
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell:  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel.

*Phillips Brooks, 1835-93*

### The Gathering

✠ 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.

*Words of welcome or introduction may be said before the fifth candle on the Advent Wreath is lit.*

### Advent Wreath

God our Father, today the Saviour is born and those who live in darkness are seeing a great light. Help us, who greet the birth of Christ with joy, to live in the light of your Son and to share the good news of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who has come into the world. Amen.

Lord Jesus, Light of light, you have come among us. Help us who live by your light to shine as lights in your world. Glory to God in the highest.  
Amen.

### Prayers of Penitence

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name.

Amen

### Absolution

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.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy

Kyrie eleison

Kyrie eleison

Christe eleison

Christe eleison

Kyrie eleison

Kyrie eleison

### Gloria in Excelsis

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.

Lord, Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, receive our prayer.

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.

Amen.

## The Collect

*The Celebrant introduces a period of silent prayer with the words 'Let us pray':*

Eternal God, who made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of your one true light: bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth, to see the radiance of your heavenly glory; 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.

Amen

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

*SIT*

*Isaiah 9:2–7*

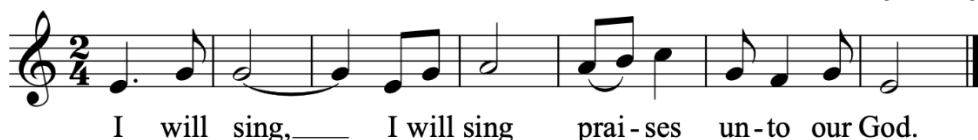
A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*The choir sing the verses of the Psalm. We join in with the response.*



R I will sing, I will sing praises unto our God.

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the whole earth. Sing to the Lord and bless his name; proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations and his wonders among all peoples. R

For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; he is more to be feared than all gods. As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; but it is the Lord who made the heavens. O the majesty and magnificence of his presence! O the power and the splendour of his sanctuary! R

Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; ascribe to the Lord honour and power. Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name; bring offerings and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth tremble before him. R

Tell it out among the nations: 'The Lord is king! he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.' Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein. R

Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord when he comes, when he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with his truth. R

*Titus 2:11–14*

A reading from the letter of Paul to Titus.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed

hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

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

## Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.



To-day a Sa-viour has been born to us, he is Christ the Lord.

Today a Saviour has been born to us, he is Christ the Lord  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The Lord be with you  
And also with you.

✠ Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Luke.  
Glory to you, O Lord.

## Luke 2:1–14

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of



the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

*We SIT for the sermon.*

The Sermon

*A sermon will be preached*

The Creed

*We STAND to proclaim the Creed.*

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, *(Pause)*

*We KNEEL as we proclaim the Mystery of the Incarnation.*

WAS INCARNATE FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT  
AND THE VIRGIN MARY AND WAS MADE MAN.

*We STAND again before continuing.*

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 – Universal Prayers

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Father, in this holy night your Son our Saviour was born in human flesh.  
Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.

Holy God - hear our prayer.

In this holy night there was no room for your Son in the inn. Protect with your love those who have no home and all who live in poverty.

Holy God - hear our prayer.

In this holy night Mary, in the pain of labour, brought your Son to birth.  
Hold in your hand [...and] all who are in pain or distress.

Holy God - hear our prayer.

In this holy night your Christ came as a light shining in the darkness. Bring comfort to [...and] all who suffer in the sadness of our world.

Holy God - hear our prayer.

In this holy night the angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.'  
Strengthen those who work for peace and justice  
in [...and in] all the world.

Holy God - hear our prayer.

In this holy night shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy. Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redemption.

Holy God - hear our prayer.

In this holy night strangers found the Holy Family, and saw the baby lying in the manger. Bless our homes and all whom we love.

Holy God - hear our prayer.

In this holy night heaven is come down to earth, and earth is raised to heaven. Hold in your hand [...and] all those who have passed through death in the hope of your coming kingdom.

Holy God - hear our prayer.

In this holy night Christians the world over celebrate Christ's birth. Open our hearts that he may be born in us today.

Holy God - hear our prayer.

Father, in this holy night angels and shepherds worshipped at the manger throne. Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary, Joseph and the saints through him who is your Word made flesh, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

## The Peace

*The Celebrant introduces the Peace:*

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

And also with you.

Let us offer one another the sign of peace.

## THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

### The Offertory

*A collection is taken at this celebration. If you don't have cash or are not part of our planned giving scheme and would like to support the ministry costs of St Thomas' please scan the QR code on the back of the chair in front of you, to be*

*taken to the online donations page where you can easily donate to support the work of St Thomas' and complete the details allowing the reclamation of Gift Aid on your donation.*

*We sing this hymn while the altar is prepared.*

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
And glory shone around.

'Fear not,' said he (for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled mind);  
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and all mankind.

'To you in David's town this day  
Is born of David's line  
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
And this shall be the sign:

The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
To human view displayed,  
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,  
And in a manger laid.'

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith  
Appeared a shining throng  
Of angels praising God, who thus  
Addressed their joyful song:

'All glory be to God on high,  
And on the earth be peace;  
Good-will henceforth from heaven to men  
Begin and never cease.'

*Nahum Tate, 1652-1715*

The Choir sing – 'The Sussex Carol' – *arr. Wilcocks*

## The Preparation of the Altar

*After all, have been censed the Priest says;*

Pray, my brothers and sisters, that this my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.

Make acceptable, O Lord, our oblation on this solemn day, when you manifested the reconciliation that makes us wholly pleasing in your sight and inaugurated for us the fullness of divine worship. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## The Preface

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 him thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,  
mighty creator, ever-living God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who for love of our fallen race humbled himself,  
and [on this night] was born of the Virgin Mary  
by the power of your Spirit, and lived as one of us.

In this mystery of the Word made flesh  
you have caused his light to shine in our hearts,  
to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

In him we see our God made visible  
and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.

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:

*We remain STANDING as we say/sing the Sanctus and the Benedictus:*

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 KNEEL after the Sanctus and Benedictus.*

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness; grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit, and according to your holy will, these gifts of bread and wine may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed, 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. ✠

*After the consecration, the following acclamation is said/sung:*

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross, his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world; rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming in glory, we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, we bring before you this bread and this cup and we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people and gather into one in your kingdom all who share this one bread and one cup, so that we, in the company of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Joseph her spouse, St Thomas of Canterbury and all the saints, may praise and glorify you for ever, through 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

## COMMUNION RITE

As our Saviour taught and commanded us we are bold to say:

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.

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.

*We sing the Agnus Dei:*

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,  
grant us peace.

*The Celebrant invites the people to communion.*

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.

*Please follow the direction of the celebrant and sidespersons to come forward and receive communion. Those who are confirmed are welcome to make their communion at our celebration today. Otherwise, please come forward for a blessing with your hands crossed across your chest. The response after receiving a blessing is Amen.*

Anthem

The Choir sing – ‘What sweeter music’ – by Rutter

Communion Hymn

*We SIT or KNEEL to sing the following hymn.*

Silent night! Holy night!  
Heaven is near, earth is bright,  
Angel songs are heard above  
As the Child of peace and love  
Sleeps in Mary's arms,  
Sleeps in Mary's arms.

Silent night! Holy night!  
Skies are clear, stars are bright,  
Now the shepherds wend their way,  
Homage to this Child to pay:  
He is Christ the Lord,  
He is Christ the Lord.

Silent night! Holy night!  
Christ is here, all is light,  
Shadows of the past are gone  
With the advent of the Son,  
Born to save us all,  
Born to save us all.



## Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there, and I unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

*St Alphonsus Liguori*

## Post Communion

*We STAND as the priest sings the post-communion prayer:*

God our Father, in this night you have made known to us again the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him until the day dawns and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts. To him be glory both now and for ever. 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

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing

May the Father, who has loved the eternal Son from before the foundation of the world, shed that love upon you his children. Amen.

May Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with joy and peace. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit, by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer, give you grace to carry the good news of Christ. Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, ✠ the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

The Mass is ended, go in the peace of Christ,  
Thanks be to God.

## Recessional Hymn

*The sacred ministers leave as we sing the following carol.*

O come, all ye faithful,  
Joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him  
Born the King of Angels:  
    *Refrain:*  
    *O come, let us adore him,*  
    *O come, let us adore him,*  
    *O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!*

God of God, Light of Light,  
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Very God,  
Begotten, not created: [Refrain]

Sing, choirs of Angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
Glory to God  
In the Highest: [Refrain]

\*Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
Born this happy morning,  
Jesu, to thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father,  
Now in flesh appearing: [Refrain]

*The service concludes with the organ voluntary.*

## Private Devotions during Communion or after Mass

We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy 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.

*From the Book of Common Prayer*

Soul of Christ, sanctify me  
body of Christ, save me  
blood of Christ, inebriate me  
water from Christ's side, wash me  
passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me  
within thy wounds hide me.

Suffer me not to be separated from thee.

From the malicious enemy defend me.

In the hour of my death call me  
and bid me come unto thee that I may  
praise thee with thy saints and with thy angels  
forever and ever. Amen.

Hail holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,  
our life, our sweetness and our hope!  
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve;  
to thee do we send up our sighs,  
mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.  
Turn then, O most gracious advocate,  
thine eyes of mercy towards us,  
and after this our exile,  
show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb,  
Jesus. O clement, O loving,  
O sweet Virgin Mary.

The Salve Regina

## Staying in Touch

### Website and Social Media

If you have been touched by today's service and would like to find out more about what happens at St Thomas, or are interested in finding out how to arrange a baptism, wedding, or are curious about attending Alpha, this and plenty of other information can be found on our website.

[www.st-thomas.org.uk](http://www.st-thomas.org.uk)

Pictures and updates are shared via our Facebook page, and it is here that you can find the live stream of our worship.

[www.facebook.com/StThomasBrentwood](https://www.facebook.com/StThomasBrentwood)

### Online Shop

Can be found at <https://pcc-of-brentwood.sumup.link/> and is where you can buy tickets, products, and make a donation to support the work of St Thomas.

### Contact Us

The Parish Office

Via email [brentwood.st.thomas.martyr@gmail.com](mailto:brentwood.st.thomas.martyr@gmail.com)

Phone 01277 201094

Fr Mark North – Vicar

Email [frmarknorth@btinternet.com](mailto:frmarknorth@btinternet.com)

Phone 07508 604115

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