

# **Holy Communion for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**



## ***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 – A great and mighty wonder

A great and mighty wonder,  
a full and holy cure,  
the Virgin bears the Infant  
with virgin-honour pure.

*Repeat the hymn again!*

*'To God on high be glory,  
and peace on earth to men!'*

The Word becomes incarnate  
and yet remains on high.  
And Cherubim sing anthems  
to shepherds from the sky.

*Repeat the hymn again!*

*'To God on high be glory,  
and peace on earth to men!'*

Since all he comes to ransom,  
by all be he adored,  
the Infant born in Beth'lem,  
the Saviour and the Lord.

*Repeat the hymn again!*

*'To God on high be glory,  
and peace on earth to men!'*

And idol forms shall perish,  
and error shall decay,  
and Christ shall wield his sceptre,  
our Lord and God for ay.

*Repeat the hymn again!*

*'To God on high be glory,  
and peace on earth to men!'*

*Mega Kai paradoxon thauma Germanus (c.634-c.732)  
Translated John Mason Neale (1818-1866)*

## 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 second candle at this point.

## **Advent Wreath Prayer – Advent 2 (The Prophets)**

Minister: God our Father, you spoke to the prophets of old of a Saviour who would bring peace. You helped them to spread the joyful message of his coming kingdom. Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, to share with those around us the good news of your power and love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. Amen.  
**All: Blessed be God for ever.**

## **The Collect**

Minister: O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness we are grievously hindered in running the race that is set before us, your bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and for ever.  
**All: Amen.**

## **Old Testament Reading (*Isaiah 11:1-10 NRSV*)**

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Minister:        This is the word of the Lord

**All:                Thanks be to God.**

## **New Testament Reading (*Romans 15:4-13 NRSV*)**

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, 'Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name'; and again he says, 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people'; and again, 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him'; and again Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.' May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Minister: This is the word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel Reading (*Matthew 3:1-12 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.**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." ' Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

'I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

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 that God who receives all who come to him in love and humility.

Renew the life of the Church, that her people shall hear the call of the future and not rest in the comfort of the past. May those whom the Lord has called be confident in his mercy but not forgetful of his judgement.

Grant repentance to the nations of this world, for the cleansing of what is false and evil, and the building of what is true and good. Root out the complacency that will not confess error and the indifference that tolerates injustice.

Trusting in no achievements of our own, claiming no privilege in the values of this world, may we and those with whom we live and work, and all who share our community, come to walk in the path of peace. Help us to remember that we shall fulfil the will of God by waiting upon his word.

Have mercy on all who think that their position sets them above error and beyond judgement. Have mercy also on

those who are afraid to turn back to the right way and are without hope.

May the departed find mercy at the heart of judgement and be cleansed from all their sins so that they may stand perfect before the eternal majesty of God. Give us grace at this time to recollect that we too must die.

May Christ who knows the secrets of all hearts mercifully hear our prayers.

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.  
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:

**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:**     Father in heaven, who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge: give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that, when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; 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 – Hills of the North, rejoice**

Hills of the North, rejoice,  
echoing songs arise,  
hail with united voice  
him who made earth and skies;  
he comes in righteousness and love,  
he brings salvation from above.

Isles of the Southern seas,  
sing to the listening earth,  
carry on every breeze  
hope of a world's new birth:  
in Christ shall all be made anew,  
his word is sure, his promise true.

Lands of the East, arise,  
he is your brightest morn,  
greet him with joyous eyes,

praise shall his path adorn:  
the God whom you have longed to know  
in Christ draws near, and calls you now.

Shores of the utmost West,  
lands of the setting sun,  
welcome the heavenly guest  
in whom the dawn has come:  
he brings a never-ending light  
who triumphed o'er our darkest night.

Shout, as you journey on,  
songs be in every mouth,  
lo, from the North they come,  
from East and West and South:  
in Jesus all shall find their rest,  
in him the sons of earth be blest.

*Editors of English Praise (1975) based on Charles E Oakley (1832-1865)*  
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**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](http://www.stourvalley.org.uk)**

(December 2025)