

St Thomas of Canterbury, the Parish Church for Brentwood

The Order of Mass

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday 21st December 2025

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. At 8 am, the sacred minister gathers before the image of Our Lady for the Angelus.

The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary,

And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

Be it unto me according to thy Word.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

And the Word was made flesh,

And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of an angel, so by his Φ Cross and Passion we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

At 10 am, we sing the entrance hymn.

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 (1707-88)

Advent Wreath

After the hymn, as the procession reaches the dais, the fourth candle is lit on the Advent Wreath.

God our Father, the angel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary that she was to be the mother of your Son. Though Mary was afraid, she responded to your call with joy. Help us, whom you call to serve you, to share like her in your great work of bringing to our world your love and healing. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. **Amen.**

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.

After the candle has been lit, the choir sing verses from the Advent prose as the sacred ministers' reverence and cense the altar.

Please join in with singing the antiphon

Antiphon:

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness.

The Gathering

 $\underline{\mathtt{W}}$ 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.

The priest welcomes us and introduces the service.

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

Christe eleison

Christe eleison

Christe eleison

Christe eleison

Kyrie eleison

Kyrie eleison

Kyrie eleison

Kyrie eleison

The Collect

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

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; 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 7:10-16

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

This is the word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God.

At 8 am, the psalm is said as below, while at 10am, the choir sing the verses. We join in with the appropriate response.

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18



R God of hosts restore us; let your face shine on us, and we shall be saved.

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim. In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us. **R**

O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink. You have made us the derision of our neighbours, and our enemies laugh us to scorn. **R**

Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, the son of man you have made so strong for yourself. And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name. **R**

Romans 1:1-7

A reading from the letter to the Romans.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

We STAND to greet the gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia, (alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.)

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Alleluia, (alleluia, alleluia.)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

➡ Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Matthew 1:18-end

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

(Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.)

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.

We KNEEL as we proclaim the Mystery of the Incarnation.

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 – Universal Prayers

We SIT or KNEEL for the prayers of intercession, after each petition we respond:

Lord in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Or

Lord hear us,

Lord graciously hear us.

The intercessor may conclude the prayer for the faithful departed with;

Rest eternal grant to them O Lord

And let light perpetual shine upon them.

May they rest in peace. Amen.

The prayers may conclude with a collect to which all respond: Amen.

Or, by us saying together.

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

The Peace

We STAND as the Celebrant introduces the Peace:

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.

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.

At 10 am, we STAND to sing this hymn while the altar is prepared.

WHEN came in flesh the incarnate Word, The heedless world slept on, And only simple shepherds heard That God had sent his Son. When comes the Saviour at the last, From east to west shall shine The judgement light, and earth aghast Shall tremble at the sign.

Then shall the pure of heart be blest, As mild he comes to them, As when upon the Virgin's breast He lay at Bethlehem:

As mild to meek-eyed love and faith, Only more strong to save; Strengthened by having bowed to death, By having burst the grave.

Lord, who could dare see thee descend In state, unless he knew Thou art the sorrowing sinner's friend, The gracious and the true?

Dwell in our hearts, O Saviour blest; So shall thine advent's dawn 'Twixt us and thee, our bosom-guest, Be but the veil withdrawn.

Joseph Anstice, 1808-36 (alt.)

The Preparation of the Altar

At 8 am, as the celebrant takes the bread and the wine, we pray;

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation: through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation: through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.

Blessed be God for ever.

At 10 am, we STAND to be censed, at 8 am we STAND as 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.

May the Holy Spirit, O Lord, sanctify these gifts laid upon your altar, just as he filled with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. 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.

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

He is the one foretold by all the prophets,

whom the Virgin Mother bore with love beyond all telling.

John the Baptist was his herald

and made him known when at last he came.

In his love Christ fills us with joy

as we prepare to celebrate his birth,

so that when he comes again he may find us watching in prayer,

our hearts filled with wonder and praise.

And so, with angels and archangels,

and with all the company of heaven,

we proclaim your glory,

and join in their unending 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. Φ .

After the consecration, the following acclimation is said/sung:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus:

Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life: Lord Jesus, come in glory.

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 - 'Ave Maria' - by Bullard

Communion Hymn

We SIT or KNEEL to sing the following hymn.

For Mary, mother of our Lord, God's holy name be praised, who first the Son of God adored, as on her child she gazed.

Brave, holy Virgin, she believed, though hard the task assigned, and by the Holy Ghost conceived the Saviour of mankind.

The busy world had got no space or time for God on earth; a cattle manger was the place where Mary gave him birth.

She gave her body as God's shrine, her heart to piercing pain; she knew the cost of love divine, when Jesus Christ was slain.

Dear Mary, from your lowliness and home in Galilee there comes a joy and holiness to every family. Hail, Mary, you are full of grace, above all women blest; and blest your Son, whom your embrace in birth and death confessed.

J. R. Peacey

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 leads the post-communion prayers:

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.

Banns and Notices

We SIT while any Banns of Marriage are published, and brief notices are given out. At 10 am, the Clubhouse may present their work. We STAND for the final blessing and dismissal.

Blessing and Dismissal

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

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, Φ 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.

The Angelus

At 10 am, the sacred ministers gather before the image of Our Lady for the Angelus.

The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary,

And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

Be it unto me according to thy Word.

Hail Mary, etc...

And the Word was made flesh,

And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, etc...

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of an angel, so by his & Cross and Passion we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Recessional Hymn

The sacred ministers leave during the following hymn.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord! Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice; tender to me the promise of his word; in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name! Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done; his mercy sure, from age to age to same; his holy Name the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might! Powers and dominions lay their glory by. Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight, the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word! Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure. Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord to children's children and for evermore!

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1961)

The service concludes with the organ voluntary.

A warm invitation is extended to all to stay for refreshments after the 10 am Sung Mass. Please make your way through into the hall following the directions of the sidespersons.

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

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ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, BRENTWOOD

SERVICES & EVENTS

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2025

Sat 22nd Nov

Christmas Bazaar 11am - 4pm

Advent Sunday: 30th Nov

8am - Mass 10am - Sung Mass 6pm - Advent Procession & Carols

Wed 3rd Dec

6:30pm - Civic Carol Service

Sat 6th Dec

7pm - A Very Merry Christmas Concert

Sunday 7th Dec

8am - Mass 10am - Sung Mass 6pm - Blue Christmas Evensong

Friday 12th Dec

5:00pm - Carols & Chilli

Sunday 14th Dec

8am - Mass 10am - All Age Sung Mass 6pm - Celebratory Sung Mass for Fr Ossie

Sunday 21st Dec

8am - Mass 10am - Sung Mass 6pm - Nine Lessons & Carols

Christmas Eve: Wed 24th Dec

4pm - Christingle for young children 6pm - Christingle for older children 11:30pm - Midnight Mass

Christmas Day: Thurs 25th Dec

8am - Mass 10am - Sung Mass

Sunday 28th Dec

8am - Mass 10am - Mass (no choir)



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