

St Thomas of Canterbury, the Parish Church for Brentwood

The Order of Mass

Mass of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Christmas Day 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

Please STAND when the bell rings. At 8 am, our worship begins with 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, ...

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 as the sacred ministers enter and the altar is censed.

Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that Mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven Who is God and Lord of all, And his shelter was a stable, And his cradle was a stall: With the poor and mean and lowly, Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

Blessing of the Christmas Crib

During the entrance hymn, the procession will pause before the crib so that it can be blessed.

Dear friends, as we meet to celebrate the birth of Christ, let us pray that God will bless this crib, that all who worship his Son, born of the Virgin Mary, may come to share his life in glory.

God our Father, on this day your Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary for us and for our salvation: \(\Pi\) bless this crib, which we have prepared to celebrate that holy birth; may all who see it be strengthened in faith and receive the fullness of life he came to bring, who is alive and reigns for ever. Amen.

The crib is sprinkled with Holy Water and censed with Incense, and then the hymn continues.

And through all his wondrous childhood
Day by day like us he grew,
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us he knew:
And he feeleth for our sadness,
And he shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him Through his own redeeming love, For that Child so dear and gentle, Is our Lord in heaven above:

And he leads his children on To the place where he is gone.

*Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall we see him: but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high,
Where like stars his children crowned,
All in white shall wait around
Mrs. C. F. Alexander, 1818-95

The Gathering

 $\underline{\mathbf{P}}$ 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.

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 you⁴ 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. Kyrie eleison

Lord, have mercy Kyrie eleison

Christ, have mercy. Christe eleison
Christ, have mercy Christe eleison

Lord, have mercy. Kyrie 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':

Almighty God, you have given us your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; 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 52:7-10

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.' Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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

Psalm 98



All the ends of the earth have seen: thesal-va-tion of our God.

R All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things. With his right hand and his holy arm has he won for himself the victory. R

The Lord has made known his victory; his righteousness has he openly shown in the sight of the nations. He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to the house of Israel, and all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. R

Shout with joy to the Lord, all you lands; lift up your voice, rejoice and sing. Sing to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the voice of song. With trumpets and the sound of the horn shout with joy before the King, the Lord. R

Let the sea make a noise and all that is in it, the lands and those who dwell therein. Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills ring out with joy before the Lord, when he comes to judge the earth. In righteousness shall he judge the world, and the peoples with equity. R



Hebrews 1:1-4

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory. Alleluia, (alleluia, alleluia.)

The Lord be with you And also with you.

 \maltese Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St John. Glory to you, O Lord.

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

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,

We BOW 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

Let us pray to our incarnate Lord, who has brought us out of darkness and into his own marvellous light.

Christ born for us, Son of God given for us: help us to know you, to worship and to serve you.

Lord, in your mercy. hear our prayer.

Wonderful counsellor, you order all things with your wisdom: help the Church to reveal the mystery of your love and fill her with the Spirit of truth. Lord, in your mercy. hear our prayer.

Mighty God, the government is on your shoulders: guide the leaders of the nations and bring in your kingdom of justice and righteousness.

Lord, in your mercy. hear our prayer.

Everlasting Father, you call us to live together in unity: protect by your mercy all your children, bless our families and renew our communities. Lord, in your mercy. hear our prayer.

Prince of peace, you bring reconciliation through the cross: by your healing power give to all who suffer ... your gift of wholeness and peace. Lord, in your mercy. hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, full of the Spirit, hear our prayer, receive our praises, fill our lives. 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.

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

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]
S. Scheidt

The Choir sing - 'Carol of the Bells'

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, 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 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. 4.

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

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 you hands crossed across your chest. We have returned to receiving communion in both kinds. The response after receiving a blessing is Amen.

The Choir sing - 'Infant holy'

Communion Hymn

We SIT or KNEEL to sing the following hymn.

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

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, whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem: may the light of faith illumine our hearts and shine in our words and deeds; through him who is Christ the 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. We STAND for the final 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 Godbearer, give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, \blacksquare 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, 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, 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 Φ Cross and Passion we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The sacred ministers leave during the final carol.

Hark! the herald angels sing Glory to the new-born King; Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled: Joyful all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies, With the angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem:

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing Glory to the new-born King.

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord, Late in time behold him come Offspring of a Virgin's womb! Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity! Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel: [Refrain]

Hail the heaven-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth: [Refrain]

Charles Wesley, 1707-88

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

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men; [*particularly to those who desire now to offer up their praises and thanksgivings for thy late mercies vouchsafed unto them.] We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

*This to be said when any that have been prayed for desire to return praise.

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

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

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

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