

**Holy Communion  
for the Baptism of Christ**  
*(The First Sunday of Epiphany)*



***The Stour Valley Benefice***  
*The Parishes of Cavendish, Clare, Hundon, Poslingford,  
Stoke-by-Clare & Wixoe*

## **- A short introduction to the Season –**

The season of joyful celebration that begins at Christmas now continues through the successive Sundays of Epiphany, and the festal cycle ends only with the Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas).

The child who has been manifested to the magi at his birth is now recognized by Simeon and Anna, when he comes to be presented in the Temple according to the Law of Israel.

He is both 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' and 'the glory of God's people Israel'. But the redemption he will bring must be won through suffering; the Incarnation is directed to the Passion; and Simeon's final words move our attention away from the celebration of Christmas and towards the mysteries of Easter.



### **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 as he celebrates the Eucharist from his own 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'.

## Welcome and Introduction

### Hymn - Crown him with many crowns

- 1      Crown him with many crowns,  
         the Lamb upon his throne;  
         Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns  
         all music but its own:  
         Awake, my soul, and sing  
         of him who died for thee,  
         and hail him as thy matchless King  
         through all eternity.
- 2      Crown him the Lord of Love!  
         Behold his hands and side,  
         those wounds yet visible above  
         in beauty glorified:  
         no angel in the sky  
         can fully bear that sight,  
         but downward bends his burning eye  
         at mysteries so bright.
- 3      Crown him the Lord of peace,  
         whose power a sceptre sways  
         from pole to pole, that wars may cease,  
         and all be prayer and praise:  
         his reign shall know no end,  
         and round his pierced feet  
         fair flowers of Paradise extend  
         their fragrance ever sweet.
- 4      Crown him the Lord of years,  
         the Potentate of time,  
         Creator of the rolling spheres,  
         ineffably sublime.  
         all hail, Redeemer, hail!  
         for thou hast died for me;  
         thy praise shall never, never fail  
         throughout eternity.

*(Matthew Bridges (1800-94))*

## 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.**

## Invitation to Confession

Minister: The grace of God has dawned upon the world  
through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who sacrificed  
himself for us to purify a people as his own.  
Let us confess our sins.

*(cf Titus 2.11-14)*

## Kyrie Confession

Minister: Lord Jesus, illuminate the darkness in our hearts:  
Lord, have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

Minister: Lord Jesus, open our eyes to your saving love:  
Christ, have mercy.

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

Minister: Lord Jesus, unstop our ears to hear your living word:  
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. Amen.

## **Gloria in Excelsis**

**All:** *Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the  
highest.*

**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.**

*Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the  
highest.*

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

*Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the  
highest.*

**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.**

*Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the  
highest.*

## **The Collect**

Minister: Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; 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.

**All: Amen.**

## **The Liturgy of the Word**

### **The Old Testament Lesson (Isaiah 43:1-7 NRSV)**

Thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, 'Give them up', and to the south, 'Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth - everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.'

Minister: This is the word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **The New Testament Lesson (Acts 10:34-43 NRSV)**

Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message

spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

Minister: This is the word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel Reading (Matthew 3:13-end NRSV)**

Minister: Alleluia, alleluia. This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased. Alleluia.

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

**All: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness.' Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'

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 to God who in baptism has called us to be his body on earth.

Send the Holy Spirit upon the Church, that the glory of the Son may be known and proclaimed. Bless all who come for baptism, fill them with grace to walk in the way of Christ whose example they have followed. Bless those who are leading people to know the Lord.

Cleanse with the water of holiness all that is corrupt in the world today. Speak with the voice from heaven to those in authority and lead them into the right way. Teach them that all their power comes from one who is greater than they, the source of all power.

Bless all those who at this time are preparing for baptism, for themselves or for their children. Give them the light of the Holy Spirit, to lead them to new life in Christ. May all that we do in our daily lives be pleasing the sight of God.

Be with those for whom the glory is veiled by suffering and let the light of heaven shine upon them again. As Christ followed the way of human obedience, so may he bring healing to the sick and comfort to the sorrowful.

Let the heavens be opened to those who have passed from this world. Cleansed by baptism and kept faithful by the Holy Spirit, may they find all joy and peace in the glory of the Father.

We pray in the name of Christ, the Son, the Beloved. Amen.

# The Liturgy of the Sacrament

## The Peace

Minister: We are the body of Christ. In the one Spirit we are all baptised into one body. Let us then pursue all that makes for peace and builds up our common life.

**All:** The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

## Preparation of the Altar

Minister: Open the heavens, Holy Spirit, for us to see Jesus interceding for us; may we be willing to share his baptism, ready to share his cup and strengthened to serve him for ever.

**All:** **Amen.**

## The Eucharistic Prayer

Minister: The Lord be with you

**All:** **and also with you.**

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: All honour and praise be yours always and everywhere mighty creator, ever-living God, through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord: for at this time we celebrate your glory made present in our midst.

In the coming of the magi the King of all the world was revealed to the nations.

In the waters of baptism Jesus was revealed as the Christ, the Saviour sent to redeem us.

In the water made wine the new creation was revealed at the wedding feast.

Poverty was turned to riches, sorrow into joy.

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:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.**

Minister: Accept our praises, heavenly Father, through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and as we follow his example and obey his command, grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit these gifts of bread and wine may be to us his body and his blood; 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.

Therefore, heavenly Father, we remember his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross; we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; we look for the coming of your kingdom, and with this bread and this cup we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All: Christ has died:**

**Christ is risen:  
Christ will come again.**

Minister: Accept through him, our great high priest,  
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,  
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts  
in the presence of your divine majesty,  
renew us by your Spirit,  
inspire us with your love  
and unite us in the body of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,  
we worship you, Father almighty,  
in songs of everlasting praise:

**All: Blessing and honour and glory and power  
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Minister: Let us pray with confidence as 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.**

## Prayer after Communion

Minister: Lord of all time and eternity, you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son: by the power of your Spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation; 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

Minister: May God who in Christ gives us a spring of water welling up to eternal life, perfect in you the image of his 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 - Hail to the Lord's Anointed

- 1 Hail to the Lord's Anointed,  
great David's greater Son!  
Hail, in the time appointed,  
his reign on earth begun!  
He comes to break oppression,  
to set the captive free,  
to take away transgression,  
and rule in equity.
- 2 He comes, with succour speedy,  
to those who suffer wrong;

to help the poor and needy,  
and bid the weak be strong;  
to give them songs for sighing,  
their darkness turn to light,  
whose souls, condemned and dying,  
were precious in his sight.

3     He shall come down like showers  
      upon the fruitful earth;  
      that love, joy, hope, like flowers,  
      spring in his path to birth;  
      before him, on the mountains,  
      shall peace the herald go;  
      and righteousness, in fountains,  
      from hill to valley flow.

4     Kings shall bow down before him,  
      and gold and incense bring;  
      all nations shall adore him,  
      his praise all people sing;  
      to him shall prayer unceasing  
      and daily vows ascend,  
      his kingdom still increasing,  
      a kingdom without end.

5     O'er every foe victorious,  
      he on his throne shall rest;  
      from age to age more glorious,  
      all-blessing and all-blest.  
      The tide of time shall never  
      his covenant remove;  
      his name shall stand for ever,  
      his changeless name of Love.

*James Montgomery (1771-1854)*

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Although not all of us are able to meet in church for services every week, it is important to remember that the work of the Church continues, as do many of the ongoing costs in maintaining our historic buildings, as well as supporting the ministry in this benefice and the wider church. If you are able to make a gift please contact your church warden or Revd Mark.

Remember that if you are able, please Gift Aid your donation as it means that we can claim an extra 25p for every £1 you donate from the Government at no extra cost to you – resulting in your £20 donation now being worth £25!

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