

The Parish of Louth and Deanery of Louthesk

Weekly notes and information for

20th December 2020: Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmastide



In all we do, we seek to live out Jesus' command to draw close to the love of God in worship, and to share this by loving our neighbour



Collect Prayer at Daily Prayer during the week

O LORD, raise up (we pray thee) thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be honour and glory, world without end.

Amen.

Our churches: opening as places for prayer and reflection in our communities

The Parish Church of Louth St James will be open for private prayer between **10am and 1pm**

This week: Monday to Thursday

Please see pages 2, 3 and 4 for details of other churches that are open for private prayer across the Deanery of Louthesk

DIARY OF PRAYER & WORSHIP THIS WEEK...

Services marked * are broadcast via www.facebook.com/louthchurch

Sunday 20th Fourth Sunday of Advent	9 30am	Holy Communion at Great Carlton
	10am	EUCCHARIST at St James'*
		Psalm 89.1-4,19-26 2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16; Romans 16.25-end; Luke 1.26-38
	10am	Holy Communion at North Thoresby
	10am	Holy Communion at Fulstow
	10am	Holy Communion at Marshchapel
	10 30am	Holy Communion at Grainthorpe
	10 30am	Morning Service at Grimoldby
	11 15am	Eucharist at Legbourne
	3pm	Holy Communion at Grainsby
	3pm	Christmas Service at Fotherby
6pm	CAROLS AND READINGS FOR CHRISTMAS at St James'* Admission by ticket only Psalm 113; Zechariah 2.10-end; Luke 1.39-55	
6pm	Service for Christmastide at Ludborough	
Monday 21st	9 15am	Matins at St James'*
		Psalm 121; Isaiah 52.13-end of 53; 2 Peter 1.1-15
	10am	St James' open for private prayer until 1pm
	12 noon	FUNERAL at St James'
Tuesday 22nd	9 15am	MORNING PRAYER at St James'*
		Psalm 124; Isaiah 54; 2 Peter 1.16-2.3
	10am	St James' open for private prayer until 1pm
	11am	HOLY COMMUNION at St James'*
	11am	Funeral at Louth Cemetery
	11 45am	Praying with the imagination (Ignatian) Go to: www.zoom.us/join or 'phone 0203 481 5240, and enter the Meeting ID: 847 0617 4009 and Password: 562604.
	2pm	Funeral at Swinhope
2pm	Funeral at Fulstow	
Wednesday 23rd	9 15am	MATINS at St James'*
		Psalm 130; Isaiah 55; 2 Peter 2.4-end
	10am	St James' open for private prayer until 1pm
	12 30pm	NO Outreach Post Office at Fotherby Church
	7 30pm	CAROLS AND READINGS FOR CHRISTMAS at St James* Admission by ticket only

Thursday 24th
Christmas Eve

9 15am	MATINS at St James’*
	Psalm 45; Isaiah 56.1-8; 2 Peter 3
10am	St James’ open for private prayer until 1pm
11am	Mass for Christmas Eve at St Michaels
6pm	CAROLS AND READINGS FOR CHRISTMAS at St James* Admission by ticket only
6pm	Christmas Eve Communion at North Thoresby
6pm	Christmas Eve Communion at Marshchapel
6 30pm	Christmas Eve Communion at Utterby
11 30pm	MIDNIGHT EUCHARIST at St James* Admission by ticket only
	Psalm 96; Isaiah 9.2-7; Titus 2.11-14; Luke 2.1-14 [15-20] Order of Service on page 15 onwards
11 30pm	MIDNIGHT EUCHARIST at Legbourne Advanced booking needed for the Midnight Eucharist at Legbourne. For tickets ring Fr James on 01507 603 008

Friday 25th
Christmas Day

10am	COMMUNION FOR CHRISTMAS DAY at St James’* Admission by ticket only
	Psalm 96; Isaiah 9.2-7; Titus 2.11-14; Luke 2.1-14 [15-20] Order of Service on page 15 onwards
10am	Fulstow open for private prayer until 12 noon
10 30am	Communion for Christmas at Belleau Advanced booking needed for the Communion for Christmas service at Belleau. For tickets ring Fr James on 01507 603 008
10 30am	Communion for Christmas at Grimoldby

Saturday 26th
Stephen, Martyr


- - **NO Midday Prayer** at St James’

Sunday 27th
John the Apostle
and Evangelist

10am	EUCHARIST at St James’*
	Psalm 117 Exodus 33.7-11a; 1 John 1; John 21.19b-end
10am	Morning Service at North Thoresby
10am	Holy Communion at South Elkington
11 15am	Matins at Legbourne
3pm	Evensong at Fotherby
6pm	PLAINSONG EVENSONG at St James’* Psalm 97; Isaiah 6.1-8; 1 John 5.1-12

JOINING IN WORSHIP

All our worship is being streamed on the Parish of Louth facebook page. You do not need a Facebook account to view these services – just click on ‘Not now’ when it asks you to sign up. www.facebook.com/louthchurch/live

 Watch Louth CofE Services as live streams (and previously recorded) on Facebook. No account needed

DETAILS OF CHURCHES OPEN

Binbrook: Please 'phone the keyholder on 07778 316486 for access

Covenham: Please 'phone the Churchwarden on 01507 363508 for access.

Fulstow: closed, except for scheduled services and private prayer on December 25th between 10am and 12 noon.

Fotherby: The Outreach Post Office is open on Wednesdays from 12.30pm to 2.30pm

Great Carlton: Please 'phone the Churchwardens on 01507 328369 or 450527 for access

Grimoldby: Please 'phone the churchwarden on 01507 328917

Louth, St James: Monday to Saturday, 10am to 1pm.

Ludborough: Please 'phone the churchwarden on 01472 840505 for access.

Manby: Please 'phone the churchwarden on 01507 327199 for access.

Marshchapel: Open 11am to 12 noon each Saturday throughout November

North Thorseby: Please 'phone a churchwarden on 01472 840698 or 840160 for access.

Utterby: Please 'phone the churchwarden on 07802 182756 for access

WORSHIP RESOURCES FOR USE AT HOME

A range of spiritual resources remain available across the deanery as follows:

- **Parish of Louth on Facebook:**

All services are being streamed on Facebook Live (you do not need to be a registered facebook user):

<https://www.facebook.com/louthchurch>

- **Parish of Louth website:**

Downloadable resources (including this leaflet), an uploaded broadcast of Sunday Eucharist from St James, and regular video meditations:

www.teamparishoflouth.org.uk

- **Deanery of Louthesk: The Confraternity of St Herefrith**

Video and other prayer resources will be available from the confraternity's website, including a regular meditations by members of the clergy serving the Deanery of Louthesk.

<https://herefrith.org/confraternity-resources/video/>

- **'Praying with...'**

Online sessions, available live via Zoom (see Parish Notes for details) or as a video on the Parish of Louth facebook page.

- **St Andrew's Stewton Church Community** welcomes everyone. Since March 2020 we have produced an email 'Post' every Sunday morning to sustain the life of our church community on-line. You can access these Posts via the web site www.standrewsstewton.co.uk or have your email address added to our circulation list on request to windhover22@live.co.uk

An Order of Service for the Eucharist this Sunday

- *We open our hearts to God, that we might be transformed by his love*
- *We listen to God's Word, and seek to find out how we may grow to understand God's will for us more fully*
- *We gather around the table to share a symbolic meal, a meal that joins us with our brothers and sisters throughout the world; the saints who have lived in all times and places*
- *We pray that we go out as lights that shine with God's love wherever we might go*

The Gathering

The GREETING and PREPARATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Together we pray...

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.

As the Ministers enter, organ music may be played or a psalm sung.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

The Lighting of the Advent Ring

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.

The fourth candle is lit.

**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.**

The PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

A Minister introduces the Prayers of Penitence.

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:

Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into the peace of your kingdom:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

You come in word and sacrament to strengthen us in holiness:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

You will come in glory with salvation for your people:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

The Priest pronounces 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.

We say the GLORIA, a Song of Praise written by the early Christians

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 sin 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 prayer

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

Old Testament Reading: 2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16

A reading from the book of Samuel. When the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.' But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

New Testament Reading: Romans 16.25-end

A Reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans. Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading: Luke 1.26-38

Reader: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke. All: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord. All: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

There will be a HOMILY and period for reflection, after which the service continues with the NICENE 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, 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.

The INTERCESSIONS, which may include the following bidding and response:

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

And may end with:

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers,

for the sake of your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

A CHANT may be sung, as the altar is prepared.

PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

The prayer at this point may include the following response:

Blessed be God for ever.

The EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

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 thanks and praise.

The president praises God for his mighty acts, ending with:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

The president recalls the Last Supper, after which the following acclamation may be used:

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

The Prayer continues and leads into the doxology, to which all respond boldly

Amen.

We sit or kneel for the LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

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.

The BREAKING OF THE BREAD

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.

The GIVING OF COMMUNION

God's holy gifts for God's holy people.

Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The AGNUS DEI

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.

Communion is distributed.

The PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION.

The priest leads the congregation in prayer:

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.

Following this prayer, all join in:

We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples.

Amen.

The Dismissal

We stand, and the priest proclaims God's BLESSING and we are sent into His world...

[Christ, whose glory is in the heavens, fill this house and illuminate your hearts;]

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

Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

We stand as the Ministers leave.

Matins and Evensong: An Order of Service

*If used in the context of a family or household the words in **bold** are said by all. If said alone, all words are spoken by the individual praying.*

Along with this order of service you will need a Bible for the psalm and readings. Details of which psalm and readings to use are found on page 2.

If the service forms the only, or the main, act of worship on a Sunday in a parish church, then the Minister calls on everyone to reflect on those things that distance us from God and, after a pause for reflection, we join in the Prayer of Confession, which is followed by a prayer of absolution or forgiveness:

Almighty and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, that confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of thy holy name. Amen.

At other time the service may be begin with the opening responses:

O Lord, open thou our lips.

And our mouths shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Praise ye the Lord.

The Lord's name be praised.

The Word of God

*Say or recite the **Venite, Exultemus Domino** (Psalm 95, at Matins) and the appointed **Psalm(s)**.*

The Psalm(s) end with the 'Gloria patri':

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

*A Reading from **The Old Testament**. (See page 2 for details)*

*Say or sing the **Canticle**; either the Benedictus (at Matins) or Magnificat (at Evening Prayer):*

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for he hath visited and redeemed his people; And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us: in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets: which have been since the world began; That we should be saved from our enemies: and from the hands of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers: and to remember his holy covenant; To perform the oath which he sware to our forefather Abraham: that he would give us; That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies: might serve him without fear; In holiness and righteousness before him: all the days of our life.

And thou child shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people: for the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God: whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us; To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name. And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.-

A Reading from The New Testament. (See page 2 for details)

*At Evening Prayer, we also say the **Nunc Dimittis**:*

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation; Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people; To be a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy people Israel. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

The Creed

You may wish to stand to say the Apostles' Creed:

**I believe in God the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth:
and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead and buried.
He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church;
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

The Prayers

The Lesser Litany, Lord's Prayer and Prayers:

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. Amen.

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the Queen.

And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness.

And make thy chosen people joyful.

O Lord, save thy people.

And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord.

**Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only thou, O God.**

O God, make clean our hearts within us.

And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

These Prayers end with one or more Collects for the Day (see the front over) and the following morning or evening Collects:

O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both, our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that, by thee, we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

A time for Reflection

After any further prayers, there may be a time for reflection including the singing of an anthem. If using this material at home, you may find this a good time to play a piece of recorded music or listen to one of the podcasts/video meditations.

The Conclusion

*The service ends with either a **Blessing**, or by praying the **Grace**:*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us now and evermore. **Amen.**

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An Order of Service for the Midnight Eucharist and Communion for Christmas Day

- *We listen to God's Word, and seek to find out how we may grow to understand God's will for us more fully*
- *We gather around the table to share a symbolic meal, a meal that joins us with our brothers and sisters throughout the world; the saints who have lived in all times and places*
- *We pray that we go out as lights that shine with God's love wherever we might go*

The Gathering

After a brief welcome an INTROIT 'People Look East' is sung by the choir. At the end of this please stand and turn to face the Crib at the back of the church.

The GREETING and BLESSING OF THE CRIB

'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory.'

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

All: and also with you.

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 night you Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary
for us and for our salvation:

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.

All: Amen.

The choir sing the CAROL, 'The Angel Gabriel' during which time the ministers process.

The Lighting of the Advent Ring

God our Father,

today the Saviour is born

and those who live in darkness are seeing a great light.

Help us, who greet the birth of Christ with joy,

to live in the light of your Son

and to share the good news of your love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,

the light who has come into the world.

All: Amen.

The fifth candle is lit.

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

The PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

A Minister introduces the Prayers of Penitence.

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts.
Let us turn to the light and confess our sins:

All: **Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.**

The Priest pronounces Absolution.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw you to himself
and cleanse you from all your sins, that you may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

The Choir sing the GLORIA, a Song of Praise written by the early Christians

All: **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 sin 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.**

'Gloria' from Messe de Minuit de Noël, Charpentier

The COLLECT prayer

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.

All: **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 9.2-7

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

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

New Testament Reading: Titus 2.11-14

A Reading from the letter of Paul to Titus. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

The choir sing the CAROL, 'Ding Dong Merrily on High'

Gospel Reading: Luke 2.1-20

Reader: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke. All: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!' When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord. All: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

There will be a HOMILY and period for reflection, after which the service continues with the NICENE 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.

The INTERCESSIONS, which may include the following bidding and response:

Lord, in your mercy

All: **Hear our prayer**

And may end with:

Merciful Father,

All: **accept these prayers,
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The PEACE

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to all in whom he delights.'

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

The CAROL 'Noël Nouvelet' is sung, as the altar is prepared

Prayer at the PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

Word made flesh, life of the world, in your incarnation you embraced our poverty:
by your Spirit may we share in your riches.

All: **Amen.**

The EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

All: **and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Father, we give you thanks and praise
through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, your living Word,
through whom you have created all things;
who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our Saviour.

By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh;
as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin, he lived on earth and went about among us;
he opened wide his arms for us on the cross; he put an end to death by dying for us;
and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life;
so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.

And now we give you thanks because, in the incarnation of the Word,
a new light has dawned upon the world;
you have become one of us
that we might become one with you in your glorious kingdom.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name, 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.**

'Sanctus & Benedictus' from Messe de Minuit de Noël, Charpentier

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.
Great is the mystery of faith:

All: **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 James, Herefrith, the Blessed Virgin Mary 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.

All: **Amen.**

We sit or kneel for the LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

The BREAKING OF THE BREAD

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 GIVING OF COMMUNION

God's holy gifts for God's holy people.

All: **Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

The AGNUS DEI

**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.**

'Agnus Dei' from Messe de Minuit de Noël, Charpentier

Whilst Communion is distributed, the choir sing festive music for the Christmas Season.

The PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION.

The priest leads the congregation in 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.

All: **Amen.**

Following this prayer, all join in:

**We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples.
Amen.**

The Dismissal

The choir sing the final CAROL, 'Angels from the Realms of Glory'.

We stand, and the priest proclaims God's BLESSING and we are sent into His world...

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,
fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will;
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be among you and remain with you always.

All: **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

We stand as the Ministers leave.

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THIS WEEK'S PSALM AND HOMILY

Psalm: 89.1-4, 19-26

MY song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord : with my mouth will I ever be shewing thy truth from one generation to another.

2 For I have said, Mercy shall be set up for ever : thy truth shalt thou stablish in the heavens.

3 I have made a covenant with my chosen : I have sworn unto David my servant;

4 Thy seed will I stablish for ever : and set up thy throne from one generation to another.

19 For the Lord is our defence : the Holy One of Israel is our King.

20 Thou spakest sometime in visions unto thy saints, and saidst : I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.

21 I have found David my servant : with my holy oil have I anointed him.

22 My hand shall hold him fast : and my arm shall strengthen him.

23 The enemy shall not be able to do him violence: the son of wickedness shall not hurt him.

24 I will smite down his foes before his face : and plague them that hate him.

25 My truth also and my mercy shall be with him: and in my Name shall his horn be exalted.

26 I will set his dominion also in the sea : and his right hand in the floods.

Homily

Let me tell you about three chickens, Clary, Henrietta and Petal. Every day, around noon, Clary climbs the stairs of the henhouse, fluffs herself up in the nesting box, and sits. Soft chugging noises can be heard; Henrietta and Petal. Then suddenly the song changes and together, they pile out of the hen house squawking in delight and excitement, announcing their news to the neighbourhood! Their joyous squawks heralding the arrival of something that was hidden - now appearing. And the secret that they leave behind? A beautiful brown, warm egg, ready for somebody's tea.

It's a micro-moment of joy going on unnoticed, the everyday God-given gift of life-sustaining life.

There have been times this year when we've had to look hard to find moments of joy. We've all been affected. Even Clary, Henrietta and Petal and birds like them are now locked up because of an outbreak of avian flu!

In our gospel reading today, we hear of Gabriel's unexpected visit to Mary. Mary, a young girl engaged to be married, had plenty to be perplexed about and real reason to be afraid – it's not every day an angel brings you a message from the Lord.

We too have been facing unexpected situations with fear and anxiety. Many have lost so much this year. We're having to be patient (and not so patient!) and adapt to our new contexts. Many people are missing greeting each other, spending time with each other, sharing news with each other.

Yet as Mary listened to Gabriel's greeting, she heard – 'The Lord is with you'. Then in Gabriel's comfort she heard– 'Do not fear', and in Gabriel's assurance - 'Nothing will be impossible with God'.

Through this encounter with Gabriel, Mary in the face of all that was daunting, was given the confidence to step into her situation, trusting herself to God's promise carried in these words. She came alive to God's grace and gave herself to the gift within her, the child who is the Son of God, Immanuel, God with us.

Today's reading leads us to Elizabeth, who was also unexpectedly pregnant. Mary hurried of to see her. In Elizabeth's greeting, Mary receives words of blessing, freeing her from fear and to delight in the situation God had asked her to step into. As a consequence of Elisabeth's welcome, her heart burst into the Magnificat – Mary's beautiful song of praise, of joy and of justice, recognising the hand of God at work in this situation, not just for then but for generation to generation!

These are moments of meeting, and greeting and welcome when they were most needed, reflecting God's ability to transform fear and anxiety into joy and delight. Meeting, greeting and welcoming a stranger can bring transformation. Think of the difference a welcome can make to a day: busting isolation, affirming humanity, building connection. Think about the difference that comes from someone caring enough to speak your name and believe in you. Is there someone you could offer this kind of welcome to?

Through the God given welcome in Gabriel and Elizabeth's greetings, Mary's fears are turned to joy. Gabriel and Elizabeth's welcomes offer companionship, they are affirming, confidence building, offering a place to belong. A good welcome is a place of possibility, a meeting with someone who believes in you. This is God's welcome too.

Christmas is fast approaching, and we will be greeting loved ones – however we can. Around the corner, the promise of immunisation is bringing a glimpse of renewed freedom to meet and greet and extend our welcomes, greeting each other with joy. Like Gabriel, in our greetings could we comfort the fearful? Like Elizabeth, could we affirm those who have been finding it tough, whose lives have been turned upside down this past year?

As we listen to Mary's story, recognising the mixture of fear and tentative anticipation within ourselves, can we hear God's whisper of greeting waiting for us today, joyfully receiving for ourselves those words brought by Gabriel:

'The Lord is with you' ...

'Do not fear'....

'for nothing is impossible with God....'

As we lean into the welcome embrace of these words of Gabriel, may we come alive to God's grace and give ourselves again to the gift with us, the child who is the Son of God, Immanuel, God with us.

Homily Reflection

1. What has been an unexpected source of joy for you this year?
2. Where have you found the most surprising 'welcomes'?
3. Who most needs to experience God's greeting and welcome and how can we as church in this community help?
4. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
5. What will you do this week, in your daily lives, in response to what you have heard today?

#everydayfaith

NOTES AND NOTICES

- We would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and hope you enjoy all that you are able to across Christmastide.
- An enormous thank you to everyone who has donated food or money to the Community Larder this Christmas. We have been able to make up hampers containing all that is needed to feed families over Christmas and beyond for 50 families. This is a record number, doubling our usual output, and recognises both a time of extraordinary need and one of community spirit and generosity.
- Thanks to the generosity of Strawsons Woodland we have a Community Christmas Tree at the back of St James. This will carry decorations donated by families, businesses, charities and groups across the community. If you would like to give a decoration to represent your household or organisation, please do! Your name will be listed below the tree. A small donation is welcome but not essential, and decorations can be returned after Epiphany if you would like.
- There comes a time when it gets too much dealing with difficult emotional problems by yourself and that's when we are here to help. A new counselling Service is available to provide a non-judgemental, approachable support service to people who are in need of emotional and psychological support during times of difficulty, confusion or hardships to improve their well-being and quality of life. For an appointment please phone the Trinity Centre on 01507 605803 or email greg.gilbert@teamparishoflouth.org.uk

In our prayers this week...

All those affected by the current pandemic

The Sick and those in need: Marguerite Baillie, Peggy Baillie, Anne-Marie Bidwell, Helen Blakey, Paul Clifford, Ed Cox, Hildegard Dettmer-Beecroft, Rosemary Huke, Derwent Levick, Fr James Drayton, Christina Livesey, Roly Livesey, Mal Locking, Anna Mamwell, Mary Oxley, Alan Pounds, Sylvia Pounds, Eileen Robinson, Tracey Russell, Enid Spicer, Joyce Terrett, John Troughton, Charles Wakeley, Pauline Watson, Stuart Watson

Those who have died: Kathleen Humberstone, Reginald Stones, Marjorie Spendlow, Annie Jary, Eileen Potts, Marion Chapman, John Myers, Shirley Ward, Jean Davey, Phyllis Strickland, Barbara Cowper, Jeanne Osborne, Keith Atherton, June Malkinson, Dorothy Odlin.

PARISH AND DEANERY CONTACTS

At this time, if you are aware of anyone in urgent pastoral need please e-mail louthparishpastoral@gmail.com or 'phone 07500 965321 or 07734 871159.

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louthesk@lincoln.anglican.org

For Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals
and other enquiries

Trinity Centre 01507 605803

trinity@teamparishoflouth.org.uk

For matters relating to activities at Trinity Centre

Safeguarding concerns 01507 610752

For information about how to respond to safeguarding concerns,
or for sources of support, please see Safeguarding Notices in church porches

www.teamparishoflouth.org.uk