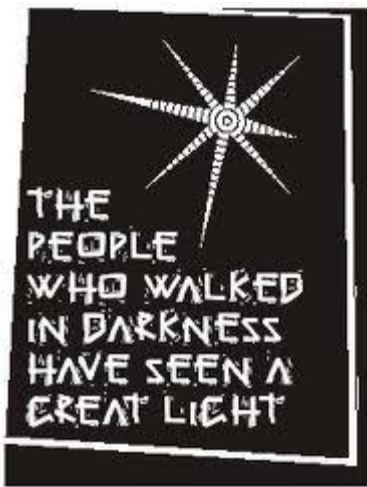


[Please stand if you are able]

Call to Worship

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who lived in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. For the yoke that was weighing upon them, and the burden that was upon their shoulders, you have broken in pieces O God, our Renewer.



Words of Welcome

God of mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent Season for ourselves and our families, and all who live with hurt, grief, sorrow, sickness or painful memories of loss. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow, and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of you Christ, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. **Amen.**



Responses for 4th Sunday in Advent

In Bethlehem will be born a Saviour:
bringing hope to us all.

The God of Hosts will live among us:
bringing his presence to us all.

Love and laughter will leap within us:
changing darkness to light for us all.

Hymn No. 125 (Crüger)

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.

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.

He shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth;
and 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.

Kings shall fall 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.

O'er every foe victorious,
he on his throne shall rest,
from age to age more glorious,
all-blessing and all blessed:
the tide of time shall never
his covenant remove;
his name shall stand for ever;
that name to us is Love.

[Please sit]

The First Reading - Micah 5: 2-5a

The first reading is from the book of the prophet Micah, chapter 5, beginning at verse 2.

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans
of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³Therefore he shall give them up until
the time
when she who is in labour has
brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall

return

to the people of Israel.

⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock
in the strength of the LORD,

in the majesty of the name of the
LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he
shall be great

to the ends of the earth;

⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

If the Assyrians come into our land
and tread upon our soil,

we will raise against them seven
shepherds

and eight installed as rulers.

Don Oíche Úd i mBeithil (Hymn No. 156) - Musical Reflection

Psalm - Song of Isaiah 12: 2 - 6

Surely God is my salvation;

I will trust, and will not be afraid.

***For the Lord God is my strength
and my might;***

he has become my salvation.

***With joy you will draw water from
the wells of salvation.***

And you will say in that day:

***give thanks to the Lord, call on his
name.***

***Make known his deeds among the
nations;***

proclaim that his name is exalted.

***Sing praises to the Lord, for he
had done gloriously;***

*let this be known in all the earth.
Shout aloud and sing for joy, O
royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy
One of Israel.
Glory to the Father, and to the
Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.*

[Please stand if you are able]

Hymn No. 168 (Bergers)

Lord, you were rich beyond all
splendour,
yet, for love's sake, became so poor;
leaving your home in glad surrender,
sapphire-paved courts for stable
floor:

Lord, you were rich beyond all
splendour,
yet, for love's sake, became so poor.

You are our God beyond all praising,
yet, for love's sake, became a man;
stooping so low, but sinners raising
heav'nwards, by your eternal plan:
You are our God beyond all praising,
yet, for love's sake, became a man.

Lord, you are love beyond all telling,
Saviour and King, we worship you;
Emmanuel, within us dwelling,
Make us and keep us pure and true:
Lord, you are love beyond all telling,
Saviour and King, we worship you.

[Please sit]

The Second Reading – from Matthew 1 and 2

Matthew 1: 18 - 25

Matthew 2: 7 - 23

Matthew Chapters One and Two

The story of the first Christmas is not really a happy story but a story about life in the real world. Mary of Nazareth, who is engaged to the carpenter Joseph, discovers she is pregnant. Joseph does not want to embarrass Mary and plans to break the engagement privately.

This was not an easy time for this couple. Their country was under Roman occupation and King Herod who ruled Palestine for the Romans was known for his cruelty. These are not exactly ideal conditions for bringing a child into the world. In the midst of their turmoil, an angel – God's messenger – speaks to Joseph in a dream and tells him to proceed with his marriage to Mary.

Matthew 1. 18 - 25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ^a ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will

save his people from their sins.' ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,' which means, 'God is with us.' ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus. ^b

In the midst of Mary and Joseph's joy over the safe birth of their son Jesus, a new crisis looms. King Herod orders the death of all children under the age of two, and so Joseph, Mary and Jesus have to flee as refugees to Egypt. There they live for several years until King Herod dies and it is safe to return. Mary and Joseph felt God's presence with them through all the hardships they had to face.

Matthew 2.7 - 23

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ^a ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.'

⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ^b ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ^c

¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they

knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

¹³Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' ¹⁴Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ^d ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ^e ^f ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'

¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go

to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.'

²¹Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ⁹ ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.'



[Please stand if you are able]

Hymn No. 121 (Conditor alme)

Creator of the starry height,
thy people's everlasting light,
Jesu, redeemer of us all,
hear thou thy servants when they call.

Thou, grieving at the helpless cry
of all creation doomed to die,
didst come to save our fallen race
by healing gifts of heav'nly grace.

When earth was near its evening hour,
thou didst, in love's redeeming pow'r,

like bridegroom from his chamber,
come
forth from a virgin-mother's womb.

At thy great name, exalted now,
all knees in lowly homage bow;
all things in heav'n and earth adore,
and own thee King for evermore.

To thee, O Holy One, we pray,
our judge in that tremendous day,
ward off, while yet we dwell below,
the weapons of our crafty foe.

To God the Father, God the Son
and God the Spirit, Three in One,
praise, honour, might and glory be
from age to age eternally.

[Please sit]

The Third Reading - from John 1: 1 - 14

Matthew and Luke describe Jesus' birth in Bethlehem with stories of visits from shepherds and Magi. But John's gospel speaks of Jesus as God's word for all humanity; as God's word spoken through this one born into a hurting world, who was rejected by his own. He also describes Jesus' birth as light in the darkness.

St John 1: 1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The

light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ 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.

[Please stand if you are able]

Hymn No. 139 (Gabriel's Message)

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as
flame;

'All hail', said he, 'thou lowly maiden
Mary,
most highly favoured lady'.

Gloria!

'For known a blessed mother thou
shalt be,

all generations laud and honour thee,
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers
foretold;
most highly favoured lady.

Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her
head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God', she said,
'my soul shall laud and magnify his holy
name':

most highly favoured lady.

Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the
world will ever say

'Most highly favoured lady'.

Gloria!



[Please sit]

Reflection

[Please sit or kneel]

A Liturgy of Remembering

(using the Candles on the Advent Wreath)

This first candle we light to
remember those whom we have loved
and lost. We pause to remember
their name, their face, their voice,

the memory that binds them to us in this season.

May God's eternal love surround them.

[Silence]

This second candle we light to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health. We pause to gather up the pain of the past and offer it to God, asking that, from God's hands, we may receive the gift of peace.

Refresh, restore, renew us O God, and lead us into your future.

[Silence]

This third candle we light to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause to remember these past weeks, months, or maybe even years; the deep emotions we have felt, the pain we have suffered, the disbelief we have endured, and all who have stood with us. We give thanks for all the support we have known.

Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.

[Silence]

Our fourth candle is lit to remember our faith and the gift of hope which the Christmas story offers to us. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

Let us remember the one who shows the way, who brings the truth, and who bears the light.

[Silence]



Four Candles (Frère Jacques)

[Repeat each line]

*Four candles
burning slow.*

*Soon it will be Christmas;
not long now.*

*We are waiting
watching too.*

*Soon it will be Christmas
for me and you.*

Greensleeves (Hymn No. 202) - Musical Reflection

[Please sit or kneel]

Prayers of the People

In the spirit of this season let us now confidently ask God for all the things we need;

For ourselves as we participate in whatever way we can this Christmas.

God hear our prayer....

and in your mercy answer.

For our families and friends that they may continue to help and support us.
 God hear our prayer....
and in your mercy answer.

For the person we have loved that has died. For all the losses that we know, that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise.
 God hear our prayer....
and in your mercy answer.

For all our family and friends that they may know love and peace and happiness in you.
 God hear our prayer....
and in your mercy answer.

For the peace proclaimed by the Christmas angels, to come throughout the whole world.
 God hear our prayer....
and in your mercy answer.

God of great compassion and love, listen to the prayers of these your people. Grant to all, especially the bereaved and troubled ones this Christmas, the blessing we ask in the name of Christ who taught us to pray together saying:

*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.*

[Please stand if you are able]

We recognise that many people give online and via Standing Order, and do not put any collection in the basket. If you wish to donate to the church online or electronically, the treasurers would be happy to give you the required details.

Hymn No. 170 (Gartan 1)

Love came down at Christmas,
 love all lovely, Love divine;
 love was born at Christmas,
 star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
 love incarnate, Love divine;
 worship we our Jesus:
 but wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
 love be yours and love be mine,
 love to God and all men,
 love for plea, and gift and sign.

The Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you;
 may the wind be always at your back;

may the sun shine warm upon your face and the rain fall soft upon your fields; and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand.

Let your face shine on us and bless us;
God of Hosts, Maker, Saviour and Holy Spirit,
root your justice in us all our days.
Amen.

The Dismissal

In towns and villages,
in tower blocks and terraces,
Christ is waiting to be born.

In palaces and shanty-towns,
in high streets and back-streets,
Christ is waiting to be born.

In the vastness of the universe,
in the intimacy of our hearts,
Christ is waiting to be born.

Come, Lord Jesus,
**come into our homes,
come into our lives,
come and stay.**

In the interests of trying to keep all who come to our churches safe, please take away this service sheet and any other items that you may have brought with you or used in church this morning. Thank you.

Stay well and stay safe.



*May the hope, the joy, the love
and the peace of Jesus Christ be
with you and all your family this
Christmas-time and always.*



**Tuesday 24th December 2024 -
Christmas Eve**

**22.00 The First Holy Communion
of Christmas in St Thomas' Church**



Wednesday 25th December 2024 – Christmas Day

8.30 Holy Communion in St Philip and St James' Church

9.30 Holy Communion in St Thomas' Church

11.00 Holy Communion in St Philip and St James' Church

Sunday 29th December 2024

NB Times and Venues

8.30 Holy Communion in St Philip and St James' Church

10.30 Service of the Word in St Thomas' Church

Wednesday 1st January 2025

NB No 10.30 Midweek Holy Communion

Sunday 5th January 2025

8.30 Holy Communion in St Thomas' Church

9.30 Holy Communion in St Thomas' Church

11.00 Holy Communion in St Philip and St James' Church

Wednesday 8th January 2025

NB No 10.30 Midweek Holy Communion

Sunday 12th January 2025

8.30 Holy Communion in St Thomas' Church

9.30 Morning Prayer in St Thomas' Church

11.00 Morning Prayer in St Philip and St James' Church

Wednesday 15th January 2025

10.30 Midweek Holy Communion in St Thomas' Church

Sunday 19th January 2025

8.30 Holy Communion in St Thomas' Church

9.30 Holy Communion in St Thomas' Church

11.00 Holy Communion in St Philip and St James' Church

18.30 Sausage Service in St Philip and St James' Church

Wednesday 22nd January 2025

10.30 Midweek Holy Communion in St Thomas' Church

Sunday 26th January 2025

8.30 Holy Communion in St Thomas' Church

10.30 United Service of the Word in St Philip and St James' Church

Special Preacher at the 10.30 – the Rev. Canon Patrick Harvey (Rector of Abbeyleix Union) whose late grandfather, The Very Rev. Thomas Arnold Harvey was Rector of Booterstown, 1916-1933, and who was then elected Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

Wednesday 29th January 2025

10.30 Midweek Holy Communion in St Thomas' Church

Thank You

to those who made Christingles, and to those who decorated our churches so beautifully for Christmas!

And thank you to those who helped make the Christmas Craic-er a most enjoyable morning, and to those who prepared the mulled wine (non-alcoholic) and mince pies for the Carols by Candlelight! It is lovely to gather together and to enjoy each other's company!



The Capuchin Day Centre and The Alice Leahy Trust were thrilled by the toys, food, scarves, hats, gloves, underwear, etc. that you gave this Christmas.

REGISTER OF VESTRYPERSONS

The Register of Vestrypersons is the electoral roll of the Parish and is updated at the January Select Vestry meetings of our respective parishes.

If you are not on the Register, you are not entitled to vote on parish matters and are not able to hold any office in the parish or serve on the Select Vestry. Please contact the Churchwardens to be placed on the Register of Vestrypersons.

It is very simple to do, the churchwardens have forms available, and all you have to do is fill in the short, simple form and give it to a churchwarden.



Healer Prayer Group

Tuesday 14th January 2025

19.30 hours *via Zoom*

*Unto Us
a Child is Born*



Thank you to all who
sang and collected
for

Dublin SIMON

Well done everyone!



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Thank you for your wonderful generosity in helping Santa!