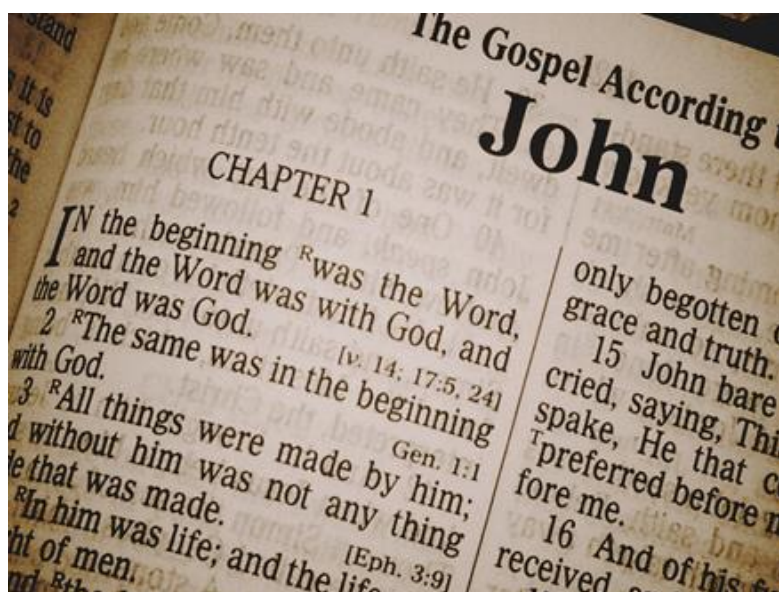


**St Andrew's and St George's West
Order of Service, 3 January 2021**



Introit Jesus Christ the apple tree

The tree of life my soul hath seen,
laden with fruit and always green:
the trees of nature fruitless be
compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel:
by faith I know but ne'er can tell
the glory which I now can see
in Jesus Christ the apple tree.

Words: New Hampshire, 1784; Music: Elizabeth Poston (1905-87)

Welcome and New Year Greetings

Verses from 'Ring out, wild bells' by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Call to Worship

On this new day,
in this new year,
we gather.

On this new day,
in this new year,
we pause.

On this new day
in this new year,
God is.
God was.
God will always be.

Light shines in the darkness:
The new day begins.
And we, God's people,
praise God's new day.

Hymn 317 Before the world began one Word was there

(This hymn has been described as having in it the four most important words in the church hymnary)

Before the world began
one Word was there;
grounded in God he was,
rooted in care;
by him all things were made,
in him was love displayed,
through him God spoke and said
'I am for you'.

Life found in him its source,
death found its end;
light found in him its course,
darkness its friend;
for neither death nor doubt
nor darkness can put out
the glow of God, the shout
'I am for you'.

The Word was in the world
which from him came;
unrecognised he was,
unknown by name;
one with all humankind,
with the unloved aligned,
convincing sight and mind
'I am for you'.

All who received the Word,
by God were blessed,
sisters and brothers they
of earth's fond guest.
So did the Word of grace
proclaim in time and space,
and with a human face,
'I am for you'.

Words: John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (1958 - 2019)
Music: John L. Bell (b. 1949)

Opening Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Step softly into your weeping world, incarnate God;
embrace it in your love.
Bring light into broken lives,
warmth into frozen hearts,
hope to those at war.
May your peace pervade every place.

Help us to approach this new year filled with the joy of your companionship,
as we step out in faith with you,
ready to face the future,
whatever it may hold.

And as we do so let us put down what we need carry no longer,
and loosen our hold on the hurts we have received.
You know well our woundedness;
you understand and accept our regret.
Come close and tend to our pain and heal us,
for we long to be whole.
Extend Your love to those we are finding hard to love,
and set us free to love again.

Eternal God,
Creator, Son and Spirit,
at the start of this new year,
with your help,
we would lay down our failures, guilt and shame,
and lift up our eyes,
and look to the future.

Let the grace of your presence
strengthen our resolve,
enlighten our minds,
clarify our wills,
and inflame our hearts
with love for you
and for all people.

So may we live dedicated lives
in peace, and with courage, faith and cheerfulness,
until the year's end.

Through the grace of our Lord
Jesus Christ who taught us to pray together and say:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us in the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Hymn Like a candle flame (The Candle Song)

Like a candle flame,
flick'ring small in our darkness,
uncreated light shines through infant eyes.
*God is with us, alleluia,
come to save us, alleluia.*

Stars and angels sing,
yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
can this tiny spark set a world on fire?
*God is with us, alleluia,
come to save us, alleluia.*

Yet His light shall shine
from our lives, Spirit blazing,
as we touch the flame of His holy fire.
*God is with us, alleluia,
come to save us, alleluia*

Words and Music: Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Turning the World Upside Down

Telling the Story Again

Last week we heard the Christmas story.

St John's Gospel tells it a different way.

Back in the beginning of time, when the world was new, before we ever saw or knew
Mary's son, he was dancing with the Spirit in the mystery that is God.
God surprises earth with Heaven.

That's poetry – poetry tells it better.

Elizabeth's son, John the Baptist, came to get people ready for God.

'The light of the world is coming,' he said. 'The light and life of God is going to be seen as
a person just like us, the glory of God embodied and real, living among us to turn what was
sad into glad again.'

Mary's son! The one everyone was getting ready for!

Jesus, existing since time began, entering into human history, meeting us in the flesh.

'Let there be light!'

Same story, told in another way.

First as a baby, then as a man.

All the grace of God, all the truth of God for us to recognise and receive, befriending us, inviting us to belong.

Scripture Reading John 1:10-18

Hymn 318 Lord you were rich beyond all splendour

Lord, you were rich beyond all splendour,
yet, for love's sake, became so poor;
leaving your throne 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
heavenwards, 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.

Words: Frank Houghton (1894-1972) *from* 2 Corinthians 8:9

Music: French traditional melody *arr* by Charles Herbert Kitson (1874-1944)

Sermon

Anthem The wise men and the star

Sovereign scholars, weary of waiting,
startled by starlight that kindles the sky.
Eager for answers,
destiny drives them,
watching and waiting,
watching with wonder, they follow the star.

Passing by palaces, greedy and golden,
threading the byways of winter and cold,

come to a doorway, low built and lamplit,
eagerly enter, under the star.

Source of all starlight, simply they see him,
laid in a manger and haloed with hay,
bright in his beauty, shrouded with shadows.
Steady the star shines.
Follow the star.

Words: Lucia Quinault (b. 1969)
Music: Oliver Tarney (2019)

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Lord our God, faithful and kind.
You have always been our help in ages past.
You are our hope for years to come.
Brexit is now a reality and so we pray for those who are happy to have left, and those who wanted to remain.
Give us understanding and patience as we work to develop new ways to live and work together.
You are our hope for years to come.
You are the wind in our sails.
The compass for our walking,
the firelight for our resting.
You never neglect us even when we blame you.
Even when we are too despairing to ask or too weary to find words it is your pleasure to help, and for this we thank you.
So we seek your help again at the start of this New Year.
For people who are worn out, yet have to keep going, for those who suffered loss.
We are glad to see the back of 2020 and ask that you will guide with your wisdom political leaders and their advisers.
We pray for our partners in Malawi.
Give strength and blessing to those we support at the Rock Trust charity for homeless young people.
Help us to trust in what is possible in partnership with you.
In confidence we thank you, gracious God.
Amen.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and the princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flock,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among people,
to make music in the heart.

And may the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, be with you and all whom you love, this day and for evermore. Amen.

Sung Blessing Hymn 786 May the God of peace go with us

May the God of peace go with us
as we travel from this place;
may the love of Jesus keep us
firm in hope and full of grace.

Organ Music

God rest you merry, Gentlemen

Wilbur Held

Worship leaders: Reverend Colin Douglas, Ruth Forrester, Lorna Cammock

Readers: Lorna Cammock, Ruth Forrester, Jamie Crawford

Prayers: Lorna Cammock

Director of Music: Brigitte Harris

Vocal ensemble: Eleanor Cozens, Eleanor Wilson, Caitlin McGillivray, Drew Crichton, Andrew Carvel

Technical team: Alison Bruce, Andrew Carvel, Susan McLarty, Mary Margaret Scott

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Closing prayer: Howard Thurman 'The Work of Christmas'

<https://www.bread.org/sites/default/files/downloads/howard-thurman.pdf>

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