

**St Andrew's and St George's West
Order of Service, 26th December 2021**

Home from Home



Gathering music

Welcome

Call to worship

How are we to live as God's beloved children?

We are to act with love, compassion and justice.

How are we to live as neighbours with one another?

We are to clothe ourselves with love and peace.

Let us come before the Lord in gratitude for all we have been given.

Lord, thank you for your gifts so freely given.

Hymn God surprises earth with heaven

Who would think that what was needed
to transform and save the earth
might not be a plan or army,
proud in purpose, proved in worth?
Who would think, despite derision,
that a child should lead the way?
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.

Shepherds watch and wise men wonder,
monarchs scorn and angels sing;
such a place as none would reckon
hosts a holy helpless thing.
Stable beasts and by-passed strangers
watch a baby laid in hay:
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.

Centuries of skill and science
span the past from which we move,
yet experience questions whether,
with such progress, we improve.
While the human lot we ponder,
lest our hopes and humour fray,
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.

Opening prayer and Lord's prayer

Loving God,
we remember that from the very start,
the Good News of Jesus was not just for a select few,
but for all.

You were born and grew and lived on this earth.
Help us in the heights and depths of our lives,
to not only know where to look for You,
but to recognise You in our midst.

Help us to look into the difficult places of our lives,
and to know You present with us.

Help us to recognise You in all people,
welcoming, including and caring for all.

Help us to think and act beyond ourselves,
loving Your creation and making choices that are unselfish, generous
and compassionate toward all living things.

In our praying and singing,
speaking and listening,
giving and receiving,
may You be honoured and glorified,
and all people be dignified and acknowledged as Yours.
Join our voices together in an unending hymn of praise to You,
and hear us now as we pray together,
in the words that Jesus taught us
and that have been said by our friends and forebears in faith throughout the ages –

**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.**

Sharing a sign of Christ's peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

Peace be with you
and also with you.

Hymn Love came down at Christmas

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.

Scripture reading Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

'Mind the Gap'

Scripture reading Luke 2:41-52

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

Reflection

Hymn 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.

Prayers of the People

Lord, you are at home in a crib.

You taught us that whoever becomes humble like a child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. We pray for those new-born into the world today. For those whose lives will be blighted by droughts, famines, floods, wars, pollution and pandemics. For those born into a broken family, surrounded by bitterness and recriminations. Shield your little ones from anything or anyone that might cause them to stumble.

God surprises earth with heaven,
Coming here on Christmas Day.

Lord, whose shelter was a stable

We pray for all made homeless or at risk of being made homeless. Those living in run-down B&Bs or more precariously in hostels or sofa-surfing. May they be found more permanent, suitable accommodation and live with dignity. We give thanks for the organisations which act and campaign here in Scotland on homelessness issues; for example, Rock Trust, Bethany, Social Bite, CrossReach, Fresh Start, Shelter.

God surprises earth with heaven,
Coming here on Christmas Day.

Lord, you are at home in a temple

We pray for our temporal and spiritual leaders. Grant them the gift of discernment and measured decision-making.

God surprises earth with heaven,
Coming here on Christmas Day.

Lord, you are at home on a mountain-top

We are constantly aware of the beauty of your creation whether viewing a spectacular sunset, walking or driving through stunning scenery or experiencing vicariously in photos on social media. We pray for those who act and campaign to defend our fragile planet and its climate; for example, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Traidcraft, Christian Aid.

God surprises earth with heaven,
Coming here on Christmas Day.

Lord, you are at home with persecutors and peace-makers

We pray for all the places in the world where conflict currently rages, from outright war to skirmishes. Jesus said "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you". Teach us to be loving and forgiving. Bless the peace-makers and those who place themselves in the front line of conflict; for example, the United Nations, Medecin Sans Frontieres, the Red Cross, Ecumenical Accompaniers.

God surprises earth with heaven,

Coming here on Christmas Day.

Lord, you are at home with the stranger and the outcast

We pray for all refugees, not only for those forced to flee their own countries but also those who are displaced, detained or hounded in their own country for their race, creed or political beliefs. We give thanks for individuals who call out governments for discrimination and organisations who fight for human rights; for example, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Survival International.

God surprises earth with heaven,
Coming here on Christmas Day.

Lord, you are at home with the weary and burdened

We pray for those who are sick in body or mind. In a moment of silence, we bring before you those near to us in need of your healing power and grace.

And we pray for those who mourn the grievous loss of loved ones, particularly at this Christmas-tide. You surprise those departed from this earth with heaven in all its glory.

Amen.

Hymn In the bleak midwinter

In the bleak midwinter
frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow,
snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter,
long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him,
nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away
when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter
stable-place sufficed
the Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Enough for him whom cherubim
worship night and day,
a breastful of milk,
and a mangerful of hay;
enough for him whom angels
fall down before,

the ox and ass and camel
which adore.

Angels and archangels
may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim
thronged the air;
but only his mother,
in her maiden bliss,
worshipped the Beloved
with a kiss.

What can I give him,
poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man,
I would do my part, —
yet what I can I give him,
give my heart.

Sending and blessing

Almighty God, grant that we who are being bathed in the new light of your incarnate Word may reflect the faith that shines in our hearts in all we do; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Sung Blessing (Old 100th)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Sending Music

Worship Leaders: Rev Dr Rosie Magee and Crispin Longden

Organist: James McNeill

Reader: David Brown, Alison Campbell, Bridget Harris

Technical team: Alison Bruce, Amy Marcham, Philippa Burgess, Susan McLarty, Mary Margaret Scott

Sources:

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Call to Worship: Church of Scotland Weekly Worship

'Mind the Gap': Spill the Beans, Issue 41

Reflection Eleazar the Scribe based on *To Nativity and Beyond: Worship Resources for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany* by David Sinclair, published by St Andrew Press 2016

Scripture readings: New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise stated
Hymns from Church Hymnary 4th Edition unless otherwise stated
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