

Welcome to our service of
Holy Communion at St Mary's, Shirehampton
Sunday 14th December 2025

Call to Worship:

We come together in this place.

To be together and to claim that we are God's people.

We look to ourselves and to each other

To express the love of God as a sign of hope for the world.

We abandon ourselves

To the working of the Holy Spirit, trusting in God's mercy.

Gather us, O God

And we will know Your life that makes us one.

Gather us, O God

And we shall celebrate our variety and our uniqueness.

Gather us, O God

And we will give You the pain of our brokenness.

Gather us, O God

And we will share the gifts of Your Spirit.

Trinity of love, bind us as one.

That our brokenness be healed by You,

that our fear be held by You,

that our gifts be used by You,

that our lives be offered to You,

so may the world believe.

Amen

Hymn:

1 Lo, he comes with clouds
descending,
once for mortal sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia!
Christ appears on earth to reign.

2 Ev'ry eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty;
we who set at naught and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
deeply wailing,
shall the true Messiah see.

3 Those dear tokens of his passion
still his dazzling body bears,
cause of endless exultation
to his ransomed worshippers:
with what rapture, with what rapture,
with what rapture
gaze we on those glorious scars!

4 Yea, amen, let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the pow'r and glory,
claim the kingdom for thine own.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia!
Thou shalt reign, and thou alone.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788), John Cennick
(1718-1755) & Martin Madan (1726-1790) alt.
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We pray for joy...

We light the third Advent Candle:

**Everlasting God,
we rejoice because of your love for us from the beginning. We rejoice
that Your love changes things.**

**We rejoice in the opportunities to serve You and grow in love for one
another.**

**Continue to journey with us as we joyfully anticipate again the coming
of our Saviour and Lord into our lives and our world. AMEN**

Confession:

The gospel calls us to turn away from sin
and be faithful to Christ.

As we offer ourselves to him in penitence and faith,
we renew our confidence and trust in his mercy.

Friend of sinners, you bring hope in our despair.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Healer of the sick, you give strength in our weakness.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Destroyer of evil, you bring life in our dying.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Absolution:

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Collect:

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son:
give us courage to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice,
and to suffer for the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: *Isaiah 35: 1 - 10*

At the end the reader may say:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn:

1 Jesus, Be The Centre
Be My Source, Be My Light, Jesus
Jesus, Be The Centre
Be My Hope, Be My Song, Jesus

2 Be The Fire In My Heart
Be The Wind In These Sails
Be The Reason That I Live
Jesus, Jesus

3 Jesus, Be My Vision
Be My Path, Be My Guide, Jesus

4 Be The Fire In My Heart
Be The Wind In These Sails
Be The Reason That I Live
Jesus, Jesus [2]

*Michael Frye
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Gospel Reading:

Matthew 11: 2 - 11

Alleluia, alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Alleluia.

At the end the reader says,

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon:

Creed:

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Intercessions:

The Peace:

The God of peace makes us holy in all things
that we may be ready at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Hymn:

1 Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred,
let me bring your love.
Where there is injury,
your pardon, Lord,
and where there's doubt,
true faith in you.

2 Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life,
let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness,
only light,
and where there's sadness,
ever joy.

*O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood, as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

3 Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning
that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves
that we receive,
and in dying
that we're born to eternal life.

*Sebastian Temple (b.1928)
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Invitation:

This is the table of Emmanuel –
a place where bread and wine
remind us how to live and love
as those who inhabit God's time,
and work to build His Kingdom.

A place where we recognize
that the one for whom we wait
is also the one who is already, and always,
here with us.

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 our thanks and praise.

God of our salvation,

we do not deserve your love and yet you lavish it upon us.

Not being content to be apart from us,

you came to us in human form,

donning flesh and becoming one of us.

You are not a God that is removed from our reality but is intimately present in our lives and our struggles.

We lift up to you our thanks for your presence among us.

We give thanks for your son, Jesus Christ,

the very incarnation of your being on this earth.

With all of creation,

with all peoples in every time and place

we join the ever lasting chorus:

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.

We remember how you called your servant Mary to bear your son,

how you called your servant Joseph to accompany her,

how you called the wise men to search and the shepherds to ponder,

how you called John to proclaim
and Jesus to be baptized,
how you called Peter and the disciples to follow and serve.

With them, we gather on the night on which Jesus was betrayed,
when, after having dinner with his friends, he took the bread,
blessed it and broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying,
take, eat, do this in remembrance of me.

Likewise, he took the cup and, pouring it, said,
this is cup of the salvation, shed in my blood, for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.

For as long as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the resurrection of our living saviour until he comes again.

we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died;

Christ is risen;

Christ will come again.

We give thanks for your gifts of grace,
and ask that your Holy Spirit would come to bless this sacrament,
that we might preside with you and you in us.

The Lord's Prayer:

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

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.

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.

Giving of Communion

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving

Bread and wine are shared.

Post Communion Prayer:

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face;
who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

Amen.

Blessings:

Notices:

Birthdays:

Hymn:

You are the King of Glory,
you are the Prince of Peace,
you are the Lord of heav'n and earth,
you're the Son of righteousness.
Angels bow down before you,
worship and adore,
for you have the words
of eternal life,
you are Jesus Christ the Lord.
Hosanna to the Son of David!
Hosanna to the King of kings!
Glory in the highest heaven,
for Jesus the Messiah reigns!

[x2]

Sending:

Setting aside our fears and worries, let us go.

**We will go as God's people on this day,
to remind everyone that God is as close
to them as the beats of their hearts.**

Setting aside our prejudices and assumptions, let us go.

**We will go as Jesus' followers this day,
to gather up the forgotten and bring them home,
to embrace the lonely as sisters and brothers.**

Setting aside our expectations and demands, let us go.

**We will go as those graced by the Spirit,
to share with others the waters from grace's deep wells,
to offer that joy which never comes to an end.**

Blessing:

May God the Father, judge all-merciful,
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.

Amen

May God the Son, coming among us in power,
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.

Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope and constant in love.

Amen.