

**ST CUTHBERT'S  
SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
COLINTON**

**First Sunday After Christmas  
Sunday 27 December 2020**

**(On our YouTube Channel)**



**COVID-19**

*Welcome to this service, where we are pleased to be able to gather together to worship God. We are only allowed to do this because precautions have been put into place to protect each other as sisters and brothers in Christ during the current pandemic. Please follow the precautions given on the order of service and verbally by the worship leader or welcomers. Face coverings must be worn throughout the service.*

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

THE PEACE

We meet in Christ's name.

**Let us share his peace.**

*We offer one another a sign of God's peace with a smile, bow or wave.*

HYMN 784 – Virgin-born, we bow before thee

Virgin-born, we bow before thee:  
blessed was the womb that bore thee;  
Mary, maid and mother mild,  
blessed was she in her child.

Blessed was the breast that fed thee;  
blessed was the hand that led thee;  
blessed was the parent's eye  
that watched thy slumb'ring infancy.

Blessed she by all creation,  
who brought forth the world's salvation,  
blessed they, for ever blest,  
who love thee most and serve thee best.

Virgin-born, we bow before thee:  
blessed was the womb that bore thee;  
Mary, maid and mother mild,  
blessed was she in her child.

*Reginald Heber (1783-1826)*

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## COLLECT FOR PURITY

**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.**

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

We come before God who knows our secret, our thoughts  
and our hearts to ask for forgiveness and peace.

**Most loving God we confess that we have not loved in thought, word or deed. We have not loved you or our neighbours, or ourselves. We are sorry, and repent our hardness of heart. Forgive us, heal us and help us to abide in your love.**

May Almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, restore us in faith, and bring us to eternal life, through Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Amen.**

GLORIA (*Said*)

**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.**

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you have shed upon us the new light of your incarnate Word. May this light, enkindled in our hearts, shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## FIRST READING: Galatians 4.4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## GRADUAL HYMN 71 – Behold, the great Creator makes

Behold, the great Creator  
makes himself a house of clay,  
a robe of virgin flesh he takes  
which he will wear for aye.

Hark, hark! the wise eternal Word  
like a weak infant cries;  
in form of servant is the Lord,  
and God in cradle lies.

This wonder struck the world amazed,  
it shook the starry frame;  
squadrons of spirits stood and gazed,  
then down in troops they came.

Glad shepherds ran to view this sight;  
a choir of angels sings,  
and eastern sages with delight  
adore this King of kings.

Join then, all hearts that are not stone,  
and all our voices prove,  
to celebrate this Holy One,  
the God of peace and love.

*Thomas Pestel (1585-1659)*

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**GOSPEL: Luke 2.22-40**

Hear the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**Glory to Christ our Saviour.**

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.' Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he

would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.' And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

## SERMON

Today's Gospel reading is one that we will hear again in a month's time, when we celebrate the Presentation of the Lord at the Temple but this year in the lectionary we also get it today, the first Sunday after Christmas. This story of Simeon and Anna is a story of patience and faith, which I think fits in well with our experiences of 2020.

This has been a year where we have had to stay at home and we have not been able to visit friends and relatives as we would wish. We have seen people struggling with isolation, depression and worse. People living with dementia not understanding why they cannot be touched or hugged by those who love them.

Young adults working from home wondering what their futures will be – will they ever be able to socialise normally again, meet a partner and fall in love. Older students at high school and university, worrying about what the changes in studies and exams will mean for their futures. So much wondering and worrying and being forced to wait. If people in Scotland are feeling anxious about the whole situation, can you imagine what people are feeling without the health facilities we have?

On the whole, we are not patient and don't like waiting for things but in today's Gospel we heard about two people who teach us a lot about waiting. What happens at the Temple is nothing short of miraculous. Two prophets encounter Jesus and understand there is something special

about him. First, there's Simeon. Simeon, we are told, was righteous and devout. And he had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Messiah.

You can imagine his plight. The older he got, the more likely he asked, "Is this the one?" of every person he encountered. "Is today the day?" And the answer must have been "No, not today" a thousand times over. But on this day, he takes the infant Jesus into his arms and praised God with a text well known to those of us who have enjoyed Evensong, as one of the usual two canticles. Simeon basically says: "Today I have seen my salvation, my Lord, my Saviour. And this God has made this revelation for the glory of his people".

We are told that Mary and Joseph were amazed. Jesus was not yet 6 weeks old. They had survived encounters with angels, shepherds praising God, wise ones from the east bearing gifts, and dreams that caused them to escape into Egypt.

And yet they must have wondered. Could they have said to themselves, "Do they really mean our child?" or even "Do these people really mean any child can be the saviour?"

And then there's another prophet, Anna. We are told she had lived 84 years – no easy feat in first-century Palestine, especially for a woman! She prayed and fasted in the Temple night and day. But on this day, she noticed that

something was different. She finds Mary and Joseph and the baby and begins to tell them about him.

So we have a story about waiting, a story about watching, and a story about discovery. Waiting for the day to come, for the saviour to appear, for all things to be put right. Watching to see that the day has come, that this child is destined for the falling and rising of many. And the discovery that God has revealed all this to us: this light that lightens all the world, this child who redeems all people, this saviour who is Christ the Lord.

Like the prophet Simeon, I would imagine that we all yearn for the coming of the Messiah, for all in this world to be put right: for the COVID vaccine to be a success and shared equally throughout the world.

Like the prophet Anna, we hope that our prayer and faithfulness will be fulfilled: that equality will come for all God's people, that peace will prevail over the whole earth, that justice will conquer all oppression.

And so, we believe. We believe even if we are tired of waiting. We believe even if we are weary of watching. And we believe because we have discovered the truth.

The hard truth of Christmas, the hard truth of the Incarnation is, in the words of a poem by Howard Thurman, simply this:

“After the prophets have spoken,  
When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and 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.”

As we end 2020, a year where so much and so many have been lost, let us live our faith and believe in the hope it offers. Let us celebrate the birth of our king in a stable, born to refugee parents and pray to God that all God’s children will have a better year in 2021. Amen.

## PROFESSION OF FAITH

**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

Living God, we continue to celebrate your love coming amongst us as a child, a liberating living presence.

In the silence we listen to your voice as it speaks in the heart of each one of us, ... and in the quietness and warmth of one another we feel the presence of you who made us, who loves us and sustains us.

Loving God, who walked, talked, ate, wept, and laughed with us fill us with courage as we look to our future as a living church community in which we all have a part to play; a part that might be inspired as much by our weakness as by our strength as we seek a flourishing ministry to one another and outwards to our wider community.

Lord hear us - **Lord graciously hear us.**

You tell us to love one another as kindred and to welcome strangers for we never know when we are entertaining angels ... guide us in the ways that we can fulfil your will for your body where it is neglected, powerless and broken and to trust that your kingdom will come if we respond to your call.

Lord hear us – **Lord graciously hear us.**

We offer our prayers for those who are in positions of great responsibility, support them in their judgements and in their decision making ...

Lord hear us – **Lord graciously hear us.**

God of humanity, we pray especially for those who live with the exhaustion of war, conflict and want ... .. we know that you are present in the mess, the chaos, and the pain ... .. give us courage to join you and to serve you there; to give freely without resistance or resentment but with your abundance. We ask for your wisdom in the world, to transform the lust for power into a desire for peace.

Lord hear us – **Lord graciously hear us.**

God of compassion, we thank you for your presence with those who cannot be here today, hold in your loving arms those wearied by hurt, illness or despair ... we know you are by our sides always. We pray for those who mourn ... by your grace console them. In a time of silence, we offer our own prayers to you ...

Lord hear us – **Lord graciously hear us.**

Your constancy is our sanctuary, and when we falter, we trust that your unfailing love will be with us, a home to dwell in for ever.

Accept these and all our prayers for the sake of your son Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

*Margaret Temple*

## OFFERTORY HYMN 409 – Joy to the world

Joy to the world! The Lord is come;  
let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns;  
let us our songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, and wonders of his love.

*Isaac Watts (1674-1748), based on Psalm 98, alt.  
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Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;  
through your goodness we have this bread to offer,  
which earth has given and human hands have made;  
it will become for us the bread of life.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;  
Through your goodness we have this wine to offer,  
fruit of the vine and work of human hands;  
it will become the cup of our salvation.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

## EUCCHARISTIC 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 God thanks and praise.**

Worship and praise belong to you, Father, in every place and at all times. You made us, all the people of the world, and everything that is. You give us the daylight. Your Word lights up our minds. Jesus was born among us to be light in our darkness. Your Spirit lives in us so that we can look at the world with your eyes.

One day we will be with you in heaven, but already we laugh with the saints and angels, and sing their joyful song:

**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.**

Father, you never forget us or turn away from us, even when we fail you. You sent your Son Jesus who gave his life for us. He healed those who were sick, cared for those who were poor, and cried with those who were sad. He forgave sinners and taught us to forgive. For all your love we give you thanks in the way that Jesus showed us.

On the night before he died, while he was having supper with his friends, he took bread and offered you thanks. He broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying:

"Take, eat. This is my Body: it is broken for you."

After supper, he took the cup, he offered you thanks, and gave it to them saying:

"Drink this, all of you. This is my Blood of the new covenant; it is poured out for you, and for all, that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me."

**So, as we do what he told us, we open our hearts to him; we remember how he died and rose again to live now in us. Together with him we offer you these gifts: in them we give you ourselves.**

Send your Holy Spirit on us and on this bread and this wine, that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ, and that, sharing your life, we may travel in your company to our journey's end.

**With all your people we give you thanks and praise through the Son and in the Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.**

## BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The living bread is broken for the life of the world.

**Lord, unite us in this sign.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour Christ has commanded and taught us, we are bold to say:

**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.**

## COMMUNION

**Lamb of God; you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God; you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God; you take away the sins of the world:  
grant us peace.**

## A PRAYER FOR US TO PRAY AT HOME:

**God of infinite mercy, we thank you for Jesus our Saviour, who feeds his people and gives them eternal life.**

**Though we cannot consume the gifts of bread and wine, we thank you that we do receive Christ's saving presence, the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of his passion. Grant that we may continue for ever in the Risen Life of our Saviour. Amen.**

## POST COMMUNION

**Source of truth and joy, may we who have received the gift of divine life always follow the way of your Son. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.**

## BLESSING

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one all things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Go now, and live as Christ in the world. **Amen.**

## VOLUNTARY

*Thank you for joining us today and we look forward to the next time.*

*Keep safe and God bless.*

## **St Cuthbert's Notes**

### **27 December 2020**

#### **Update on Services in Church:**

Following the First Minister's decision to place the whole of mainland Scotland into Level 4 from Boxing Day, the Vestry and I have made the decision to close the church during the same period. Services will continue on YouTube and the order of service will be sent out to those who do not have access to technology, as we have been doing throughout the pandemic.

Revd Nicki McNelly

#### **YouTube:**

Join the full service each week online, including readings, intercessions, and the hymns played by Philip using this link to our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3iPQOkQiVERjeHZbj2OnBQ>

#### **Website News:**

We have 2 new pages on our website –  
'Families' and 'Watch Our Space'.

'Families' is a page of information put together by Caroline Daye, for young people (and their families) – together with photos and activity ideas. This month, over 200 people have 'scanned' the code which has accompanied our knitted Angels around Colinton – the code has taken them directly to this page.

'Watch Our Space' – this page will be updated with details and photographs of what is going on inside and outside St Cuthbert's – take a look at the photos of the trees, the lights, the flowers and the Nativity Scene.

Thank you to Susan for assisting us with the set up of these pages.

[www.stcuthbertscolinton.org.uk](http://www.stcuthbertscolinton.org.uk)

## **St Cuthbert's Postal Service!:**

Thank you to everyone who used the "in house" Christmas postal service. A total of 290 cards were posted and delivered by 8 new, but enthusiastic recruits. In appreciation, if you would like to make a donation to one of the two chosen charities, Wester Hailes Food Bank or the Aberlour Children's Trust, please put your gift in an envelope indicating your choice and bring your envelope to church when we are next able to attend.

With many thanks, Margaret

## **Weekly Prayer:**

Let Your goodness Lord appear to us, that we made in your image, conform ourselves to it. In our own strength we cannot imitate Your majesty, power, and wonder nor is it fitting for us to try. But Your mercy reaches from the heavens through the clouds to the earth below. You have come to us as a small child, but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts, the gift of eternal love Caress us with Your tiny hands, embrace us with Your tiny arms and pierce our hearts with Your soft, sweet cries.

(St. Bernard of Clairvaux -1090-1153)

