

Church at Home

The Fourth Sunday of Advent



GABRIEL (to Mary):

To-day the Unknown seeks the known;
What I am willed to ask, your own
Will has to answer; child, it lies
Within your power of choosing to
Conceive the Child who chooses you.

For The Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio by W. H. Auden

In the fourth and final Sunday of the season of Advent, the Church turns her attention to Mary: the God-bearer. She is the only person in Scripture who is called the “servant of the Lord”. Mary has become caught up in many controversies and disagreements in the church of the centuries, raising questions of theology, worship, and prayer. However, Mary is an inspirational figure of holiness, obedience, and charisma whose example continues to guide Christians worldwide.

In that spirit, we are grateful to have represented in our service a member of the Community of Mary the Virgin, Wantage, reading the Gospel. Likewise, our intercessions are led by Fr Richard Peers, who in addition to his role as Sub Dean at Christ Church Cathedral is the Superior of the Sodality of Mary Mother of Priests, a worldwide Marian community of clergy who look to Mary for inspiration and intercession.

In our worship service today, we are inspired by Mary’s own worship in the words of the Magnificat adapted into the well-known hymn “Tell Out My Soul”, the song “Let it be to me” and the Angelus at the end of the service: words of Mary’s commitment to the Lord our God, that also reflect hunger for justice in our world.

Mary’s “Yes” to the angel Gabriel changes the narrative of the world, and that cannot be undervalued or overlooked. Our worship opens with *Annunciation* by Denise Levertov. In this poem, Levertov explores that moment in the Gospel, slowing it down and delving into the depths of the character of Mary in that moment between Gabriel’s offer and her response. We return to this theme in the song *Mary Did You Know* which invites us to wonder upon the scope and significance of her Yes, and in the worship song *Yes and Amen* we are reminded that Mary’s faithfulness is a reflection of God’s own faithfulness. She says Yes and Amen, because God says it too.

Thank you to everyone who has made this service a special one, especially to our presider Bishop Alan and to our preacher the Revd Becky Bevan.

As Advent draws to a close, may God bless all that this season has held for you and meant to you and may God bless your Christmastide.

Before the service

Annunciation Denise Levertov (1923–1997)

*read by the Revd April Beckerleg,
Vicar of St Nicholas Earley*

President In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

President The Lord be with you

All **and also with you.**

The President welcomes the congregation.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

*The wreath is lit by Flo and Elsa,
choristers from Frideswide Voices of Christ Church*

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, merciful and gentle:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
Your light has shone in our darkened world
through the child-bearing of blessed Mary;
grant that we who have seen your glory
may daily be renewed in your image
and prepared like her for the coming of your Son,
who is the Lord and Saviour of all.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

Hymn

*sung by the Revd Hannah Cartwright,
Curate, St Mary and St Nicholas, Littlemore*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
who mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God draws near:

Rejoice, rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Dayspring come and cheer
our spirits by your advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice, rejoice!...

O come, thou Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high
and close the path to misery.

Rejoice, rejoice!...

Confession

*You may like to adopt a prayer posture such as sitting with your head bowed,
as we remember our brokenness and call to mind our sins.*

President Hear the words of the angel to Joseph:
You shall call his name Jesus,
for he will save his people from their sins.
Therefore let us seek the forgiveness of God
through Jesus, the Saviour of the world.

Mary heard the voice of the angel;
but we have not listened to your call.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Mary said: Here am I, the servant of the Lord;
but we have not served you as we should.
Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Mary was eager to do your will;
but we have not been willing to be your people.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison

Lord, have mercy

Christe eleison

Christ, have mercy

Kyrie eleison

Lord, have mercy

Absolution

President Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Collect

President Let us pray.

Silence is kept.

President God our redeemer,
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of your Son:
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour,
so we may be ready to greet him
when he comes again as our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

2 Samuel 7. 1–11, 16

read by young people from St Leonard Eynsham

A reading from the Second Book of Samuel.

Now when King David was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, ‘See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.’ Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.’

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’ Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

Reader This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn

*sung by the Revd Drew Tweedy,
Vicar of St John the Evangelist, Carterton*

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of his word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy name, the Lord, the mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and forever more!

Words: Timothy Dudley-Smith (b. 1926)

Music: Woodlands, Walter Greatorex (1877–1949)

New Testament Reading

Romans 16. 25–end

read by Mark Robinson,

Church at Home video editor

A reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Romans.

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

Reader This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading

Luke 1. 26-38

read by Novice Sister Lizzie Ruth,

Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage

Reader Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.

He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Reader This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

The Revd Becky Bevan

Vicar of the Benefice of Newbury St George and St John

Sung Reflection

sung by Isis Southey, Batt School Witney

Let it be to me according to Your word
I am Your servant, no rights shall I demand
Let it be to me
Let it be to me
Let it be to me according to Your word.

Words and Music: Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

The Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

*led by the Revd Canon Richard Peers,
Subdean of Christ Church Cathedral
and Superior of the Sodality of Mary, Mother of Priests*

During the prayers, please join in with the response 'Hear our prayer' at the end of each petition.

The Peace

President Jesus will be called the Son of God
and of his kingdom of peace there will be no end.

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

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

We know that Christians have shared a sign of peace since the very earliest days of the Church. As once again we are separated from one another, we remember that peace is from the heart and from God. God's peace in the Spirit moves among us to unite us with one another and with all who have served God in every age, distant in time and space yet one in the Body of Christ.

Offertory Hymn
sung by St Martin's Voices

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
With wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.
“All hail,” said he, “O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favoured lady.” Gloria!

“For known as blessed Mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honour thee.
Your Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favoured lady.” Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head.
“To me be as it pleases God,” she said.
“My soul shall laud and magnify God’s 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!

Words: Sabine Baring-Gould (1834–1924)

Music: Gabriel’s Message, arr. Edgar Pettman (1886–1943)

Preparation of the Table

President God our Father,
your handmaid Mary offered her body and soul
to join with you in the work of salvation.
Come to meet us in promise and challenge,
nourish us with the bread of heaven
and receive the offering we bring before you
of our selves, a living sacrifice in your service.

The Eucharistic Prayer

President The Lord be with you
All **and also with you.**

President Lift up your hearts.
All **We lift them to the Lord.**

President Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

President It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.
He is the one foretold by all the prophets,
whom the Virgin Mother bore with love beyond all telling.
John the Baptist was his herald
and made him known when at last he came.
In his love Christ fills us with joy
as we prepare to celebrate his birth,
so that when he comes again
he may find us watching in prayer,
our hearts filled with wonder and praise.
And so, with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your glory,
and join in their unending hymn of praise:

*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus
Domine Deus Sabaoth.*

*Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God of hosts...*

President Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will,
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;
who in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.
In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

All Great is the mystery of faith.
Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

President And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice
made once for the sins of the whole world;
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming in glory,
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
we bring before you this bread and this cup
and we thank you for counting us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people
and gather into one in your kingdom
all who share this one bread and one cup,
so that we, in the company of Mary and all the saints,
may praise and glorify you for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord;
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

All

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

*led by Poppy and Ellie Walker,
St Kenelm's School Minster Lovell*

President

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All

**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

The President breaks the consecrated bread.

President We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Have mercy upon us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Have mercy upon us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Grant us peace.

President God's holy gifts for God's holy people.

All **Jesus Christ is holy,
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

We pause together to rest in the presence of Christ in us and all around us; trusting that wherever we are, however we are, whoever we are with, Jesus comes to meet us as he has promised. Jesus invites us to receive him in our hearts by faith; to unite our prayers and our wills with his; and to rest in his perfect and eternal love.

There are no special words or prayers for this. All the Church has ever thought necessary is true desire, lively faith and genuine love. So you are invited to come honestly before God the way you know how. You may like to close your eyes, or to look at a picture; to pause the recording, or to listen to the music; to keep silence, or to pray one of the following prayers:

In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of thy Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer thee praise and thanksgiving. I present to thee my soul and body with the earnest wish that they may always be united to thee. And since I can not now receive thee sacramentally, I beseech thee to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to thee, and embrace thee with all the affections of my soul. Let nothing ever separate thee from me. May I live and die in thy love. Amen.

Lord, you stand at the door of my heart and knock. You wait for me and only I can let you in. I believe and trust in you and ask you now to fill me with your presence. Feed me with your body and unite me in your blood, that I may be your blessing to a world in need. Amen.

Hymn

recorded by Liam Cartwright and Nick Gallant

Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know
That your Baby Boy has come to make you new?
This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you?

Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy will give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy will calm the storm with His hand?
Did you know
That your Baby Boy has walked where angels trod?
When you kiss your little Baby you kissed the face of God?

The blind will see
The deaf will hear
The dead will live again
The lame will leap
The dumb will speak
The praises of the Lamb

Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy is Lord of all creation?
Mary, did you know
That your Baby Boy would one day rule the nations?
Did you know
That your Baby Boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?
The sleeping Child you're holding is the great "I am"?

Words: Mark Lowry (b. 1948)
Music: Buddy Greene (b. 1953)

Prayer after Communion

President Let us pray.

All **Heavenly Father,
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of the promised saviour:
fill us your servants with your grace,
that in all things we may embrace your holy will
and with her rejoice in your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Final Song

recorded by Lauren Harris
from St Aldate's Church Oxford

Father of kindness, you have poured out grace
Brought me out of darkness, you have filled me with peace.
Giver of mercy, you're my help in time.
Lord, I can't help but sing.

Faithful you are
Faithful forever you will be
Faithful you are
All your promises are Yes and Amen.

Beautiful Saviour, you have brought me near
You pulled me from the ashes, you have broken every curse
Blessed Redeemer, you have set this captive free
Lord, I can't help but sing.

I will rest in your promises.
My confidence is your faithfulness.
Yes I will rest in your promises.

Words and Music: Chris McClarney, Nate Moore, Tony Brown

Blessing

President May Christ our Lord, promised to Mary,
promised to all the nations,
bring in the kingdom of peace
and make his home in our hearts;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ.

All **Thanks be to God.**

The Angelus

*prayed by Dr Jonathan Roberts,
Ordinand at Ripon College Cuddesdon*

The angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary:
and she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

Behold the handmaid of the Lord:
Be it unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary...

And the Word was made flesh: And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary...

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God:
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts;
that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ
by the message of an angel,
so by his Cross and Passion
we may be brought to the glory of his Resurrection;
through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Music after the Service

played by Francis Rumsey, Benefice of Witney

Wachet auf (BWV 140)

JS Bach (1685–1750)

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Church at Home this Christmas

24 December, 11.30pm

**Christmas Midnight service from the
Cathedral**

25 December, 10am

Church at Home with Bishop Steven

27 December, 10am

Church at Home

oxford.anglican.org/livestream