

CAVERSHAM PARK
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Holy Communion Service order
(Sunday 24th December 2023)
Advent 4 - Year B

**Advent 4 Sunday service with Holy Communion
at Caversham Park URC (Forth Order)**

Opening Hymn: Prepare Ye The Way Of The Lord

(On Screen)

Let us worship God.

This is the day which the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord;
for God's love endures for ever.

Our service today looks at stories from the Bible that teach us about Mary and the coming Baby Jesus.

LET US PRAY - God, who are the Most High Lord of all, you have a surprising preference for people who are small and humble, and who expect everything from you. You chose Mary, the unassuming virgin from Nazareth, to become the mother of your Son Jesus.

Through your Holy Spirit, make us aware of the poverty of our hearts, that we may be open to you and welcome you, be ready, like Mary, to serve you and your plans, and expect everything from you. Come to us and give yourself to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 2 – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

The God to whom we make our confession is the God who loved us so much that God took on mortality, choosing to limit the divine, in order to understand us and be with us. Trusting in that love, let us make our confession, first in silent prayer.

Silence

On screen

We confess, Merciful God, that our lives are burdened by the weight of our sinfulness. We are overwhelmed by the things that we cannot accept and by the expectations that others have for us. We have hurt others by what we have said and not said. We have wounded our sisters and brothers with deeds done and left undone. At times, we have been careless, thoughtless and unkind. We are bold to ask you to lift the burdens of our worry and guilt from our shoulders. Love us and forgive us as we stand in your presence. Amen

We are sisters and brothers in Christ, adopted children of the most High God. Our salvation was purchased by the blood of Jesus our Brother on the Cross. In his name, we have forgiveness and reconciliation with God. We are cleansed and purified by the faith that we have in Christ. **Amen.**

On screen

Thanks be to God

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Canticle of Mary

My soul proclaims your greatness, O my God, and my spirit has rejoiced in your my Saviour; For you have regarded me as your holy handmaid; henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; For you who are mighty, have done great things for me, and Holy is your Name; Your mercy is on those who fear you throughout all generations.

You have showed strength with your arm.

You have scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

You have put down the mighty from their seat, and have lifted up the powerless.

You have filled the hungry with good things, and have sent the rich away empty.

Remembering your mercy, You have helped your people Israel -

As you promised Abraham and Sarah.

Mercy to their children forever. **Amen.**

Our advent creed.

We believe in God the Father, creator of heaven and earth.

**The one who is full of patience, who is not afraid of silence,
who does not need to fill each moment with activity and noise.**

The one who is beyond bluster and flurry, and who does not jostle for attention.

We believe in God the Son, Saviour of creation, who slipped into Bethlehem one night, mostly unnoticed, who lived thirty years without headlines or hurry, who frequently took time alone with his patient Father, who waited for the right time to become the suffering servant, who stood quietly before the noise of his accusers, whose silence overpowered their words, who died, then rose again on a quiet Sunday morning.

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens, empowers, renews and refreshes, sometimes arriving with obvious power,
sometimes with the quiet breath of a whisper.**

**We believe in one God who patiently waits for us, and who longs for us to do the same.
Amen.**

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Reading 1 - 2 Samuel 7:1-11,16 (NIV)

Reading 2 – Luke 1:47-55 (NIV)

Hymn 3 – While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks.

Gospel – Luke 1:26-38 (NIV)

Sermon – Mary Said – How can it be?

Hymn 4 - Once In Royal David's City

Intercessions

Gracious words

Hear the gracious words of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. *John 6:35*

Anyone who comes to me, I will never drive away. *John 5:37*

The Peace

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Peace be with you.

Hymn 5 – O Come, All Ye Faithful (vv 1,2,6).

The Narrative of the Institution of the Lord's Supper

Hear the narrative of the institution of the Lord's Supper as it was recorded by the apostle Paul.

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. *1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

The Taking of the Bread and wine

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and following his example, we take this bread and this cup, and give thanks to God.

The Thanksgiving (*On Screen*)

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.

With joy we give you thanks and praise, Almighty God, Source of all life and love, that we live in your world, that you are always creating and sustaining it by your power, and that you have so made us that we can know and love you, trust and serve you. We give you thanks that you loved the world so much that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life.

We praise you that through his coming, your promises given by the prophets were fulfilled, and that the day of our deliverance has dawned; and, as we look for the triumph of his kingdom, we exult with holy joy.

Therefore, with all the company of heaven, and with all your people, of all places and times, we proclaim your greatness and sing your praise.

(On Screen)

**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.

Holy Lord God, by what we do herein remembrance of Christ we celebrate his perfect sacrifice on the Cross and his glorious resurrection and ascension; we declare that he is Lord of all; and we prepare for his coming in his kingdom. We pray that through your Holy Spirit this bread may be for us the body of Christ and this wine the blood of Christ. Accept our sacrifice of praise; and as we eat and drink at his command unite us to Christ as one body in him, and give us strength to serve you in the world. And to you, one holy and eternal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we give praise and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer *(On Screen)*

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**All 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.**

The Breaking of the Bread

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed
took bread and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and said, 'This is my body which is for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way also the cup saying
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.'

If the narrative of the institution has been used earlier in the service, as the bread is broken the minister may say:

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

And as the cup is raised the minister may say:

The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

Distribution of the Bread and Wine then follows with the following hymn:

Hymn 6 – Broken for you

The Acclamation (On Screen)

Let us praise the Lord.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Blessing and honour and glory

and power be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray.

(On Screen)

Most gracious God, we praise you for what you have given and for what you have promised us here. You have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. You have fed us with the bread of life, and renewed us for your service.

Now we give ourselves to you; and we ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your kingdom, and that our love may be your love reaching out into the life of the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Notices

Offerings

O God, by your promise we have received the gifts we now share before you. By your grace we are here to offer them for your work in this world. May all our efforts, supported by all your gifts, help fulfil your will through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Dismissal and Blessing:

In the power of the Holy Spirit, we now go forth into the world, to fulfil our calling as the people of God, the body of Christ.

Go in peace - love and care for one another in the name of Christ, and may the Lord keep you endlessly in his love, may the Spirit of God fill your lives with light and wisdom, and may the faith and the hope and the peace and the joy of God be yours both now. **Amen.**

Hymn 7 – It Came Upon The Midnight Clear