

No collections are taken in this church but running costs are high. If you would like to make a donation, please use the contactless card machine or put it into the red box by the door and complete a pink envelope if you are a UK taxpayer. Thank you.

Tomorrow's Mass of Christmass Day is at 9.30

Tuesday	St Stephen – 1st martyr 11.30 Mass (Acts 6v.8-10, 7v.54-59. Matt.10v.17-22) Int: persecuted Christians
Wednesday	St John, Apostle 11.30 Mass (1John1v.1-4. John 20v.2-8) Int: Bible reading societies
Thursday	Holy Innocents 11.30 Mass (1John v.5-2v.2. Matt.2v.13-18) Int: Children at risk
Friday	St. Thomas à Becket 11.30 Mass (Col.1v.24-29. Matt.10v.28-33) Int: The Archbishop of Canterbury
Saturday	Holy Family 10.00 First Mass of Sunday (readings as Sunday) Int: home and family life
Next Sunday -	Holy Family 9.30 Parish Mass & Address & blessing of Children's Toys (Ecc 3 v 2-6, 12-14; Col 3 v 12-21; Matt 2 v 13-15, 19-23)

NOTICES

1. The Crib Appeal is for Christian Aid. You can also donate online at: www.justgiving.com/page/mendleshamcribappeal23 Sockbank for homeless in Norwich, cared for by St Martin's Housing Trust. – collecting socks, hats, scarves, gloves & trainers. Both Appeals close 7 Jan. Please give generously. Carol Singing for St Martin's has so far raised £212. Thank you to all who arranged this and took part last Sunday. You may still make a donation until 7 Jan.
2. Sunday 14th Jan: Plough Sunday. We welcome Bishop Mike to preach and as the E Suffolk Morris Men are no longer able to be with us, our procession around the village this year will include tractors. Shared lunch in church afterwards at approx. 12.30. Please sign the list if you can contribute food or drink.
3. The next Healing Service is on Wed 10th Jan at 2.30 pm

CHRISTMASS EVE: First Mass of Christmass: 5.30 pm

THEME: Tonight we rejoice because a child is born for us, a son is given to us. God who made heaven and earth comes to us not in majesty and power, but as a helpless child born at Bethlehem in a stable. Born in simplicity and in silence, he is open to the needs of the poorest of the world, who need not be afraid to come to him.

ENTRANCE HYMN 360 v 1-4

PENITENTIAL RITE:

Celebrant: Forgive us, Lord, when we betray the friendship God offers us. Lord have mercy. **People:** (sing)**Kyrie Eleison** (*Ukrainian setting*).

Celebrant: Forgive us, Lord, because we have often refused to be reconciled. Christ have mercy. **People: Christe Eleison**

Celebrant: Forgive us, Lord, when we try to save ourselves without your help and do not respond to your grace. Lord have mercy. **People:Kyrie Eleison**

GLORIA to tune 'Infant Holy'

OPENING PRAYER: *Let us pray in the peace of Christmass Eve that our joy in the birth of Christ will last for ever. Father, you make this Holy night radiant with the splendour of Jesus Christ our light. We welcome him as Lord, the true light of the world. Bring us to eternal joy in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.*

LITURGY OF THE WORD OF GOD

First reading – Isaiah 9 v 1-7: The people of Israel rejoice at the ending of a war of oppression and find another source of joy in the birth of a royal child who will be called 'Prince of Peace'. Christmass reminds us of how Jesus fulfilled this prophecy.

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase; they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils. For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of His oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian. For all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt, and consumed by fire. For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.

Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity. From this time onwards and for ever, the jealous love of the Lord of Hosts will do this.

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 95

Ⓜ Today a saviour has been born to us: he is Christ the Lord.

O sing a new song to the Lord,

Sing to the Lord all the earth. O sing to the Lord bless his name. Ⓜ

Proclaim his help day by day, Tell among the nations his glory

And his wonders among all the peoples. Ⓜ

Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
Let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
Let the land and all it bears rejoice, all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord, for He comes, He comes, He comes to rule the earth.

Ⓜ **Today a saviour has been born to us: he is Christ the Lord.**

With justice he will rule the world, he will judge the peoples with his truth. Ⓜ

Second reading – Titus 2 v 11-14: In his letter to Titus, Paul explains how Jesus is the complete revelation of God. In him all mankind is saved. Paul tells us what we must do to accept that salvation.

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

GOSPEL HYMN 360 v 5&6

ALL: Alleluia, alleluia! I bring you news of great joy: today a saviour has been born to us, Christ the Lord, Alleluia!

The Gospel – Luke 2 v 1-14:

The Gospel is Luke's description of the birth of Jesus. Luke stresses that Christ is the Son of God, even as a new born baby. To accept this truth we must have the simplicity and trust of the shepherds.

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

Lighting of Christmass candle Hymn 536 v 4

Creed. Nicene Creed. Kneel in Creed at Incarnatus as an act of humility that God becomes Man for us on this night. (*after: "...He came down from Heaven .. (to)..and was made Man".*)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Jesus is Emmanuel: God with us. Let us pray to him for the world in which he came to live.

Let us pray that the blessings of Christmass may be with all our families and friends tonight.

The Christmass song is one of peace. Let us pray for those places on earth that are torn apart by war, violence and oppression, especially Gaza, Israel and Ukraine.

Let us pray for all those who are suffering tonight. Father, be the eyes of the blind, the strength of the hopeless and the comfort of the dying.

Let us pray that the good news of Christ's coming may inspire the lives of all Christians, so that they may follow Christ in deed as well as word, showing him in the quality of their lives.

Let us pray for our parish and our families who welcome Christ into our lives, that they may all learn to welcome him in the poor and the suffering of our world.

Let us pray for those who no longer have the support of a family about them, and for those who have never known the warmth of family affection and those who are spending Christmass alone.

Let us pray at this family time for all our departed relatives and friends.

With Mary the Mother of our Lord let us rejoice together as we say – **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**

SILENCE

All: God our Father, as we joyfully celebrate the birth of your Son, give us the grace to proclaim by the way we live the good news that we celebrate today. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Offertory Hymn: 277 v 1 Offertory prayers Hymn 277 v 2&3

Mass continues page 9 of the hymn book

SANCTUS – Tune Iris (Angels from the Realms)

Communicants of other denominations are welcome to receive Holy Communion. If you are not a Communicant and/or would like a blessing, come to the altar holding a hymn book.

AGNUS DEI – Tune Rocking Hymn at Ablutions: 174

Post Communion Prayer Notices BLESSING

Recessional Hymn: 30

Happy Christmass everyone!