

**Saturday 1 January 2022**

# The naming and circumcision of Jesus



The Church has observed this scriptural festival since at least the sixth century. It has three strands:

- The naming of the Jesus as a baby.
- Jesus keeps the Law (It obeys the covenant between God and Abraham 'and his children for ever').
- Traditionally the first shedding of the Christ's blood.

The most significant of these in the gospels is the name itself, which means 'God saves' which points toward the question asked by Moses of God, 'What is your name?' God's reply was, 'I am who I am' which lends more significance to Jesus' words: 'Before Abraham was, *I am.*'

**Sermon** © Revd Jane Hyde.

**Liturgy and prayers of intercession** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes this service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1** [How sweet the name of Jesus sounds](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

### The Welcome

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

**All Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

### The Preparation

**All 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.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

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.

**All** Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name.  
**Amen.**

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 Gloria**

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

**All** Glory be to God in Heaven,  
Songs of joy and peace we bring,  
Thankful hearts and voices raising,  
To creation's Lord we sing.  
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,  
Glory be to God our King:  
Glory be to God our King.  
  
Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,  
Bore the load of this world's sin;  
Only Son of God the Father,  
You have brought us peace within.  
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,

**Now your glorious reign begin:  
Now your glorious reign begin.**

**You O Son of God are Holy,  
You we praise with one accord.  
None in heav'n or earth is like you,  
Only you are Christ the Lord.  
With the Father and the Spirit,  
Ever worshipped and adored:  
Ever worshipped and adored.**

### **The Collect for the naming and circumcision of Jesus**

God in Trinity,  
eternal unity of perfect love:  
gather the nations to be one family,  
and draw us into your holy life  
through the birth of Emmanuel,  
our Lord Jesus Christ.

**All Amen.**

### **First reading**

A reading from the Book of Numbers

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to Aaron and his offspring, saying, "Thus you shall bless the Israelites: You shall say to them, "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace." So they shall put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.' *Numbers 6:22-27*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

### **Second reading**

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Galatians

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. *Galatians 4:4-7*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 Jesus, name above all names** [\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

## **Gospel reading**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

*Luke 2:15-21*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## **Sermon**

How do you name the Son of God? The answer, it seems, is with a very common name so that there is nothing to make him stand out from other Jewish boys. 'Jesus' is a shortened form of 'Joshua', or 'Yeshua' (in Hebrew). It was a common name for pious Jews to give their sons. The meaning of names was important and Yeshua meant 'Yahweh, God, is salvation'.

Naming, in the biblical stories, is both a divine and a human activity. In the creation stories, God starts by naming his creation but then, in a delightful twist to the story, waits to see what his own creation, the man, will name the animals. There is a sense of collaborative purpose in naming that continues through the Old Testament as, very occasionally, God intervenes to specify the name of a child for a particular reason.

In his Gospel, Matthew explains that this child is named Jesus because he will save his people from their sins (Matthew 1.21). This extension of the meaning of Yeshua from 'God is salvation' hints at this baby's divinity. The same applies in

Luke's Gospel, although the angel's explanation to Mary is slightly different: this child will be great, the Son of the Most High, will inherit David's throne and reign over the house of Jacob for ever (Luke 1:32–33). This recalls Isaiah's words about a child being born who will inherit David's throne for ever, being called '*Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*' (Isaiah 9:6).

But none of that prophetic weight of meaning would be obvious to look at this child, born in a stable in a strange town ... looking and crying like any other eight-day-old-baby as he was circumcised ... with a name that did nothing to draw attention to his future. Jesus would not stand out because of his name. Only Mary and Joseph knew the particular reason for it and, unlike the naming of John by his father Zechariah, no one thought it odd.

Both the Gospel and the Epistle assert that this baby was born of a woman who gave him his Jewishness, born under the law, a child of the covenant, circumcised on the eighth day. Today's observance of the naming of Jesus reminds us of Jesus' full humanity and, in his first 30 years of life, his un-remarkable-ness as he lived and worked with his family.

We, who confess that Jesus is Lord, can find ourselves reading back into this story (with the wisdom of hindsight) what we know about his death, resurrection and ascension. But Luke, who has been quite free with his stories of angelic messengers in the events leading up to, and at, his birth, suddenly goes silent on divine interventions and instead tells us of a routine circumcision ... as far as the people around Mary and Joseph were concerned.

Luke is setting up the story of Jesus' ministry by telling us that although a few people had special insight into who Jesus was, most people thought he was just an ordinary good Jewish boy. As the Gospel unfolds, people will have to respond to Jesus' actions and his words in order to understand that he is indeed God's salvation living among them. And those who *do* come to understand, and make the confession that this Jesus is the Christ ... the Messiah ... have the joy of calling his father ... our father ... 'Abba'.

The lovely reading from Numbers, acts as a commentary on what it means that Jesus bears God's name. We know the words of the blessing well, but the frequently overlooked final comment is important, '*So I shall put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.*' God's name imparts God's blessing. We who bear the name of Jesus today ... the Jesus now revealed to be the Son of God, and bearing the Messianic name 'Christ' ... are blessed in him. That is cause for celebration on this feast of the naming of Jesus, when we begin a new calendar year of our Lord.

Amen.

## The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
the source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith.**

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

## Prayers of intercession

In and through the name of Jesus let us pray to the Father.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
in a believer's ear!  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
and drives away his fear.

We give thanks for the name of Jesus ...

We pray for the worship and mission of Christ's Church ...

Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

It makes the wounded spirit whole,  
and calms the troubled breast;  
'tis manna to the hungry soul,  
and to the weary rest.

We pray for the world and for its healing ...

We pray for all who carry heavy loads ...

Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

Weak is the effort of my heart,  
and cold my warmest thought;  
but when I see thee as thou art,  
I'll praise thee as I ought.

We pray at the beginning of this new year

for renewed discipleship and consecration to the way of the Lord ...

Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

Till then I would thy love proclaim  
with every fleeting breath;  
and may the music of thy name  
refresh my soul in death.

We remember with thanksgiving all who have loved the name of Jesus ...

We pray that, surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses,

we may run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

## **The peace**

Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favours.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3 Purify my heart**

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## The Dismissal

The love of the Lord Jesus draw you to himself,  
the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen you in his service,  
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.  
and the blessing of God the Almighty:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be with you now and remain with you always.

**All    Amen.**

**HYMN 4    [What a beautiful name](#)    (please click on this link to hear the hymn)**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All    In the name of Christ. Amen.**

## The Liturgy of the Sacrament

### Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,  
mighty creator, ever-living God,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We praise you that on the eighth day  
he was circumcised in obedience to the law of Moses,  
that he might fulfil the law and reveal to us your grace and truth.

For here is foreshadowed  
his perfect self-offering upon the cross,  
the shedding of his blood to set us free from sin and death.

In baptism we die with him and are raised in him,  
that we might walk in newness of life,  
and proclaim the wonders of his saving name.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven  
we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name  
and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**All 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 praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
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.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

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

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.**

**All Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

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

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.

**All** We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him,  
and he in us.  
**Amen.**

Communion is distributed.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Eternal God,  
whose incarnate Son was given the Name of Saviour:  
grant that we who have shared  
in this sacrament of our salvation  
may live out our years in the power  
of the Name above all other names,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** **Amen**

**All** **Almighty God,**  
**we thank you for feeding us**  
**with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.**  
**Through him we offer you our souls and bodies**  
**to be a living sacrifice.**  
**Send us out in the power of your Spirit**  
**to live and work**  
**to your praise and glory.**  
**Amen.**