**[Your Church Logo]**

**A Service of Lessons and Carols for Christmas**

**XX December 2022**

**XX.XX pm**

**A very warm welcome to our service of Lessons and Carols [by Candlelight].**

Everything you need for the service is found in this booklet.

[We are all invited to stand if we can for the congregational carols and remain seated for the readings and during pieces sung by the Choir alone.]

[A collection will be taken to support XXX]

[Please take care with your candle this evening and blow it out as you wish during the service.]

*A prayer you may wish to make your own this Christmas time:*

Come to us, Christmas God,

Christ-child of Bethlehem,

Spirit of wonder:

be born in us and your world once more

that joy may be shared,

peace proclaimed

and love abound.

now and for ever.

**Amen.**

**Processional Carol (All)**

*[First verse sung as a solo]*

Once in royal David’s city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that Mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and mean and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love,
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God’s right hand on high;
where like stars his children crowned
all in white shall wait around.

*Words: Cecil Frances Alexander (1818–1895)
Music: H. J. Gauntlett (1805–1876)*

**Bidding Prayer**

We have come together as the family of God, in our Father’s presence, to celebrate the great festival of Christmas. In this service we hear and receive the good news of the birth of Christ and we offer to God our thanksgiving in the joyful singing of carols.

As we gather together in the name of Christ, we pray for the world he came to save: for the Church, that it may be enabled in our generation to surrender anew to God’s holy Wisdom, and bear the good news of God’s love to a needy world; for the world, which is already Christ’s, that all its peoples may recognise their responsibility for its future, and may be inspired by the message of Christmas to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace everywhere; for all in special need, the sick, the anxious, the lonely, the fearful and the bereaved, that the peace and light of the Christ-child may bring hope and healing to all who sit in darkness.

We commend all whom we love, or who have asked for our prayers, to the unfailing mercy of our heavenly Father, and say together, as Christ himself taught us:

**Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that 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.**

**First Lesson: Genesis 3.8-15**

‘The Fall’

**Choir Carol** [e.g. O magnum mysterium*Tomás Luis de Victoria (c.1548–1611)*]

**Second Lesson: Genesis 22.15-18**

‘The Promise to Abraham’

**Carol (All)**

Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew,
come to make all things new,
bear his people’s burden,
freely love and pardon.

*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes,
when he comes,
who will make him welcome?*

God in time, God in man,
this is God’s timeless plan:
He will come, as a man,
born himself of woman,
God divinely human:

Journey ends! Where afar
Bethl’em shines, like a star,
stable door stands ajar.
Unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!

*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
Jesus comes!
Jesus comes!
We will make him welcome!*

*Words: Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000)
Music: From Pies Cantiones (1582)*

**Third Lesson: Isaiah 9.2, 6-7**

‘The prophecy of the Messiah’s birth’

**Choir carol** [e.g. Hodie Christus natus est

*Jan Pieterzoon Sweelinck (1562–1621)*]

**Fourth Lesson: Micah 5.2-4**

‘The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem’

**Carol (All)**

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on earth;
for Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv’n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav’n.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.

*Words: Phillips Brooks (1868)
Music: English traditional, arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)*

**Fifth Lesson:****Luke 1.26-38**

‘The Annunciation to Mary’

**Choir Carol** *[e.g. Angels’ Carol John Rutter (b. 1945)]*

**Sixth Lesson: Matthew 1.18-23**

‘The Birth of Emmanuel’

**Carol (All)**

In the bleak mid-winter
frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone:
snow had fallen, snow on snow,
snow on snow,
in the bleak mid-winter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him
nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away
when he comes to reign:
in the bleak mid-winter
a stable-place sufficed
the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

What can I give him,
poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man
I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him – give my heart.

*Words: Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)
Music: Gustav Holst (1874–1934)*

**Seventh Lesson: Luke 2.8-16**

**Choir carol** *[e.g. Coventry Carol Traditional]*

**Eighth Lesson: Matthew 2.1-11**

‘The Magi are led by the star to Jesus’

**Carol (All)**

*[During which a collection will be taken.]*

O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him,
born the King of angels:

*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

God of God,
Light of light,
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin’s womb;
very God,
begotten, not created:

*O come, let us adore …*

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
‘Glory to God
in the highest’:
*O come, let us adore …*

*John Francis Wade (c.1711–1786), tr. Frederick Oakeley (1841)*

**Ninth Lesson**

**John 1.1-14**

‘The Incarnation of the Word of God’

**Choir carol** *[e.g. Ding dong! Merrily on high arr. David Willcocks (1919–2015)]*

**The Blessing**

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ child
be yours this Christmas;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
**Amen.**

**Choir Carol** [e.g. Gaudete!*From Pies Cantiones (1582)*]

**Recessional Carol (All)**

Hark, the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King,
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim,
‘Christ is born in Bethlehem.’
Hark, the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King.

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a Virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail, the incarnate Deity,
pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark, the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King.

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace;
hail, the Sun of Righteousness.
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth.
Hark, the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King.

*Words: Charles Wesley (1707–1788) and others
Music: Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809–1847)*

**[Organ Voluntary]**

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