

Carol Service Sunday 21st December 2025
Led by Rev Lesley Moseley

Welcome and Notices

Call to Worship & Lighting of Candles

We light this first candle to remind us of the hope we have in the dark season of winter. We remember the ancient prophets who painted word pictures pointing to the truth.

We look forward with hope to the coming of the light

We light the second candle to remind us of our faith.

We look back to the birth of a vulnerable Saviour 2000 years ago and look forward to the time when his humanity will be fulfilled when he returns.

We look forward in faith.

We light the third candle to remind us of the joy, joy not only of this season but of the time when God will make all things new. We remember Mary and the challenges and joys of the service she freely gave.

We look forward with joy.

We light the fourth candle to remind us of the peace beyond our understanding. We remember John the Baptist, cousin, locust eater, and prophet.

We look forward to a time of peace.

Carol (Carols for Choirs)

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 through all His wondrous childhood
He would honour and obey,
love, and watch the lowly maiden,
in whose gentle arms He lay:
Christian children all must be,
mild, obedient, good as He.

For He is our childhood's pattern:
day by day like us He grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us He knew;
and He feeleth for our sadness,
and He shareth in our gladness.

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;
When like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Reading – Isaiah 9 v 2 – 7

Carol

Come and sing the Christmas story
this holy night!
Christ is born: the hope of glory
dawns on our sight
Alleluia! Earth is ringing
with a thousand angels singing
- hear the message they are bringing
this holy night

Jesus, Saviour, child of Mary
this holy night!
In a world confused and weary
You are our light
God is in a manger lying,
manhood taking, self denying
life embracing, death defying
this holy night

Lord of all! Let us acclaim Him
this holy night!
King of our salvation name Him,
throned in the height.
Son of man, let us adore Him:
all the earth is waiting for Him;
Son of God - we bow before Him
this holy night

Reading Micah 5 v 2 – 4

Video – An unexpected Christmas

Carol

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 wond'ring 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.

Reading Luke 1 v 26 – 38

Choir “Christmas Night” by John Rutter

Reading Luke 2 v 1 – 7

Carol

See Him lying on a bed of straw:
a draughty stable with an open door;
Mary cradling the babe she bore
the Prince of glory is His name.

*O now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord appear to men
just as poor as was the stable then,
the Prince of glory when He came.*

Star of silver, sweep across the skies,
show where Jesus in the manger lies;
shepherds, swiftly from your stupor rise
to see the Saviour of the world!

O now ..

Angels, sing the song that you began,
bring God's glory to the heart of man;
sing that Bethl'em's little baby can
be salvation to the soul.

O now ..

Mine are riches, from Your poverty,
from Your innocence, eternity;
mine forgiveness by Your death for me,
child of sorrow for my joy.

O now ..

Reading Luke 2 v 8 – 16

Carol

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
‘Peace on the earth, goodwill to men
from heaven's all-gracious king!’
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

With sorrow brought by sin and strife
the world has suffered long,
and, since the angels sang, have passed
two thousand years of wrong;
for man at war with man hears not
the love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise, you men of strife,
and hear the angels sing!

And those whose journey now is hard,
whose hope is burning low,
who tread the rocky path of life
with painful steps and slow:
O listen to the news of love
which makes the heavens ring!
O rest beside the weary road
and hear the angels sing!

And still the days are hastening on
by prophets seen of old
towards the fulness of the time
when comes the age foretold:
then earth and heaven renewed shall see
the Prince of Peace, their king;
and all the world repeat the song
which now the angels sing.

Reading Matthew 2 v 1 – 11

Carol

As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold;
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright,
so, most gracious God, may we
led by You for ever be.

As with joyful steps they sped,
Saviour, to Your lowly bed,
there to bend the knee before
You whom heaven and earth adore,
so may we with one accord,
seek forgiveness from our Lord.

As they offered gifts most rare,
gold and frankincense and myrrh,
so may we, cleansed from our sin,
lives of service now begin,
as in love our treasures bring,
Christ, to You our heavenly King.

Holy Jesus, every day
keep us in the narrow way;
and when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds Your glory hide.

In the heavenly country bright
need they no created light;
You its light, its joy, its crown,
You its sun which goes not down.
There for ever may we sing
Hallelujahs to our King.

Choir "The holly and the Ivy" – Gardner

Reading John 1 v 1 – 14

Carol

O come, all you faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come now, O come now 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 Him, ...

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing with the citizens of heaven above,
'Glory to God, in the highest':
O come, let us adore Him, ...

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born that happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be glory given!
Word of the Father, then in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore Him, ...

Prayers of Intercession

Offering – to be given to the Disasters Emergency Committee Appeal

Carol

Hark! the herald-angels sing
`Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.'

Joyful, all you 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 Immanuel.

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!'

The Grace

Exit Music Chorale Prelude 'In dulci jubilo' by J S Bach