

A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols  
22 December 2024

*Organ: Prelude on 'Irby' – Ian Tracey (born 1955)*

*A warm welcome to all who have come here tonight to rejoice at the Christmas story in Scripture, song, prayer and silence. All the words you need are on this sheet. Please join in the words that are in **bold** type.*

*Shortly before the service begins, all are invited to light their candles from that of their neighbour, starting with those nearest the aisles. Once all are lit, the church lights will be turned off.*

*Please then observe a period of quiet prayer until the choir sing:*

**Carol**

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*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.

*Choir* 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.

*Please stand*

**And through all his wondrous childhood  
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,  
Where like stars his children crowned,  
All in white shall wait around.**

*Words: C. F. Alexander (1818-95) Music: H. J. Gauntlett (1805-76) harmonised A .H. Mann (1850-1929) Final verse arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)*

*The priest gives the bidding and leads us in the Lord's Prayer:*

**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.**

May the Almighty God bless us with his grace: Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all. **Amen**

*Please be seated*

**Choir**

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The Angel Carol

*Words and Music: John Rutter (Born 1945)*

**First Lesson** *(Genesis 3.8-15)*

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God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

**Choir**

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Adam lay ybounden

*Words: 15th Century Music: Boris Ord (1929-57)*

## **Second Lesson** (*Genesis 22.15-18*)

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God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed

### **Carol**

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**God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,  
Remember Christ our Saviour was born on Christmas Day,  
To save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray:  
    O tidings of comfort and joy,  
    Comfort and joy!  
    O tidings of comfort and joy!**

**From God our heavenly Father a blessed angel came,  
And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same,  
How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name:  
    Refrain**

**And when they came to Bethlehem where our dear Saviour lay,  
They found him in a manger, where oxen feed on hay;  
His mother Mary kneeling down, unto the Lord did pray:  
    Refrain**

**Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,  
And with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;  
This holy tide of Christmas all other doth efface:  
    Refrain**

*Words: English Trad. Music:  
Verse 4 arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)*

## **Third Lesson** (*Isaiah 9.2,6-7*)

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Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah

### **Choir**

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There is no Rose of such virtue  
*Words: 15th century Music: John Joubert (1927-2019)*

## **Fourth Lesson** (*Micah 5.2-4*)

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The prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem

### **Carol**

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**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 to-night.**

**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 given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of his heaven.  
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: P. Brooks (1835-93) Music: Trad. English arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams  
(1872-1958) Verse 4 Thomas Armstrong (1898-1994)*

## **Fifth Lesson** (*Luke 1.26-38*)

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The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary

## Choir

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Words: Old English carol Music: Peter Warlock(1894-1930)

## Sixth Lesson (Luke 2.1-7)

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St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus

## Carol

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**While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
And glory shone around.**

**'Fear not,' said he (for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled mind);  
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and all mankind.**

**'To you in David's town this day  
Is born of David's line  
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
And this shall be the sign:**

**'The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
To human view displayed,  
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,  
And in a manger laid.'**

**Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith  
Appeared a shining throng  
Of angels praising God, who thus  
Addressed their joyful song:**

**'All glory be to God on high,  
And on the earth be peace;  
Good-will henceforth from heaven to men  
Begin and never cease.'**

Words: Nahum Tate (1652-1715) Music: Este's Psalter (1592)

## Seventh Lesson (Luke 2.8-16)

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The shepherds go to the manger

## Choir

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Coventry Carol

Words: 15th century English

Music: Traditional

## Eighth Lesson (Matthew 2.1-11)

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The wise men are led by the star to Jesus

## Carol

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**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!  
Word made flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail, the incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel: *Refrain***

**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: *Refrain***

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-88) Music: F Mendelssohn (1809-47)

Verse 3 arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

*Please remain standing for the:*

**Ninth Lesson (John 1.1-14)**

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St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation

**Carol**

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**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: Refrain**

**Child, for us sinners**

**Poor and in the manger,**

**Fain we embrace thee, with awe and love;**

**Who would not love thee,**

**Loving us so dearly? Refrain**

**Sing, choirs of Angels,**

**Sing in exultation,**

**Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;**

**Glory to God,**

**In the Highest: Refrain**

*Words: Latin, 18th century*

*Music: J.F. Wade (c1711-86) Verse 4 arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)*

*Please remain standing:*

Almighty God, you make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with peace and goodwill and make you partakers of the divine nature; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

*Organ: Festival Toccata – Percy Eastman Fletcher (1879-1932)*

*Our thanks to the St Nicholas Singers directed by Stuart Keen,  
and to all who have helped with the preparations for this service.*

*If you are interested in exploring the Christian faith in greater depth,  
Please speak to one of the clergy.*

**Christmas Services:**

**24th December: Christmas Eve 11.00pm Midnight Mass**

**25th December: Christmas Day 10.00am Christmas Day Eucharist**

**29th December: 1st Sunday of Christmas 10.00am Parish Eucharist**

**Contact the clergy...**

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