

St Stephen's Church, Canterbury

Good News for the Poor

A Service of Lessons and
Carols for Christmas



Sunday 19 December 2021

4.00 pm

¶ *Introduction*

Welcome to our Service of Lessons and Carols for Christmas, which this year celebrates the coming of good news especially for the poor. The readings remind us that God's coming into the world brings relief and comfort to those in need and joy to those who are living in fear and despair. There are many people in our world right now who are feeling uncertain about the future and the good news of Scripture offers them hope in the face of that uncertainty. God comes to bring peace to a world in which there is still too much violence and conflict; he comes to bring justice to a world in which there is still too much poverty, oppression and injustice; and he comes to bring love and joy to a world in which so many feel unloved and unhappy. As we hear and sing of God's good news, let us pray that the Christmas message will bring hope and comfort to our world, our community, our families and friends and, above all, to our own souls.

Although we are able to celebrate our Service of Lessons and Carols in Church this year, we will have to limit numbers so that we can safely social distance because of the pandemic. For those not able to join us in Church, we welcome you to our online offering which will continue to be available on our website during the week.

We wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas and the blessing of the Christ-child. Please do join us for our Services at Christmas:

24th December 11.30pm Midnight Mass
25th December 10.30am Christmas Festival Eucharist
*(Please note that our Crib Service on Christmas Eve
has been cancelled for safety reasons)*

It is a legal requirement for face masks to be worn by all those over the age of 11 when attending an act of worship.
Thank you for helping to keep us all a little bit safer.

We gather in silence.

We all STAND as the choir stands to sing

CHOIR

Hodie, Christus natus est

Plainsong – Liber Usualis 413

*Hodie Christus natus est:
Hodie Salvator apparuit:
Hodie in terra canunt Angeli,
laetantur Archangeli
Hodie exsultant iusti, dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Alleluia.*

Today Christ is born:
Today the Saviour appeared:
Today on Earth the Angels sing,
Archangels rejoice:
Today the righteous rejoice, saying:
Glory to God in the highest.
Alleluia.

We remain STANDING and join together to sing the carol

CAROL

Of the Father's heart begotten

OF the Father's heart begotten,
Ere the world from chaos rose,
He is Alpha: from that Fountain
All that is and hath been flows;
He is Omega, of all things
Yet to come the mystic Close,
Evermore and evermore.

2 O how blest that wondrous birthday,
When the Maid the curse retrieved,
Brought to birth mankind's salvation,
By the Holy Ghost conceived;
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
In her loving arms received,

3 This is he, whom seer and sibyl
Sang of ages long gone by;
This is he of old revealéd
In the page of prophecy;
Lo! he comes, the promised Saviour;
Let the world his praises cry!

- 4 Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;
Angels and Archangels, sing!
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
Let your joyous anthems ring,
Every tongue his name confessing,
Countless voices answering,
Evermore and evermore.

Words : Latin, Prudentius (348–413),
Tr. R. F. DAVIS (1866–1937)

Music : '*Divinum Mysterium*', melody from
Piae Cantiones, Theoderici Petri Nylandensis (1582)
descant by DAVID WILLCOCKS (1919–2015)

We remain STANDING

The Bidding Prayer

Beloved in Christ, it is our custom at this season of the year to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and to give thanks for the revealing of God's loving purposes for the world.

As we remember the gift of God's love in the birth of the Christ-child, let us pray for ourselves and for the needs of the world, calling to mind especially those who are less fortunate than ourselves. May the peace of Christ rest upon our troubled world; may the glory announced by the angels fill our world with the light of hope; may the joy that filled the shepherd's hearts fill our hearts with warmth and comfort; and may the love which enabled Mary to bear this great gift and inspired the wise men to make their offerings empower us to bear the Christ-child in our hearts and offer to God the gift of our lives in loving service.

As we join those who, throughout the centuries, have celebrated this story of wonder and grace let us join in praying together the prayer Jesus taught his family of faith to say:

All **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.**

The congregation SITS

CHOIR

Gaudete

Words and Music: Piae Cantiones 1582
English version from the Latin, tr. Michael Perry (1942–1996)

*Gaudete! Gaudete!
Christus est natus
ex Maria virgine, gaudete!*

Rejoice with heart and voice!
Now is our Saviour
of the virgin Mary born — so rejoice!

At this time our God fulfils all our expectation:
Let us offer hearts and wills in rededication.

God of God when time began, Lord of all creation:
We revere the Son of Man at his incarnation.

Alleluia! Let us sing hymns of adoration:
Blessing Christ our worthy King in this celebration!

First Lesson ★ Micah 5: 2–4

The Ruler from Bethlehem

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.
Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labour has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.
And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

CHOIR

Sans Day Carol

Music: Cornish traditional carol arranged by JOHN RUTTER (*b.* 1945)

Words: Collected by Percy Dearmer (1867–1936)

- 1 Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk,
And Mary bore Jesus, who was wrapped up in silk:
*And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!*
- 2 Now the holly bears a berry as green as the grass,
And Mary bore Jesus, who died on the cross:
- 3 Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal,
And Mary bore Jesus, who died for us all:
- 4 Now the holly bears a berry, as blood is it red,
Then trust we our Saviour, who rose from the dead:
*And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!*

Second Lesson * Isaiah 35
The Return of the Redeemed to Zion

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
'Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

CHOIR

Adam lay ybounden

Music: BORIS ORD (1897–1961)

Words: anon. 15th century

- 1 Adam lay ybounden,
Bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter
Thought he not too long.
- 2 And all was for an apple,
An apple that he took,
As clerkes finden
Written in their book.
- 3 Ne had the apple taken been,
The apple taken been,
Ne had never our lady
A been heavené queen.
- 4 Blessed be the time
That apple taken was,
Therefore we moun singen,
Deo gracias!

We all STAND to sing

CAROL

God rest you merry, gentlemen

- 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!*
- 2 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:
 - 3 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:

- 4 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:

Words: Traditional

Music: ‘*God rest you merry*’, London Carol Melody,
harmonised by JOHN STAINER (1840–1901)
descant by DAVID WILLCOCKS (1919–2015)

We SIT for the lesson

Third Lesson ★ Haggai 2: 5b–9

My spirit abides among you; do not fear. For thus says the Lord of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendour, says the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts. The latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the Lord of hosts.

CHOIR

On Christmas Night

Words: traditional

Music: traditional Sussex Carol, arranged by PHILIP LEDGER (1937–2012)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring.
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King’s birth. | 3 When sin departs before His grace,
Then life and health come in its place.
Angels and men with joy may sing
All for to see the new-born King. |
| 2 Then why should men on earth be so sad,
Since our Redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin he set us free,
All for to gain our liberty? | 4 All out of darkness we have light,
Which made the angels sing this night:
“Glory to God and peace to men,
Now and for evermore, Amen!” |

Fourth Lesson ★ Isaiah 52: 7–10

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’
Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see
the return of the Lord to Zion.
Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

CHOIR

Where riches is everlastingly

Words: 16th century

Music: BOB CHILCOTT (*b.* 1955)

- 1 Into this world this day did come
Jesus Christ both God and Man,
Lord and servant in one person,
Born of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
*I pray you be merry and sing with me
In worship of Christ's nativity.*
- 2 He that was rich without a need
Appeared in this world in right poor weed
To make us that were poor indeed,
Rich without any need truly.
- 3 A stable was his Chamber, a crib was his bed,
He had not a pillow under his head;
With maiden's milk that babe was fed,
In poor clothes was wrapped the Lord Almighty.
- 4 A noble lesson here is taught,
To set all worldly riches at naught,
But pray that we may be thither brought
Where riches is everlastingly.

CAROL

It came upon the midnight clear

- 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, good-will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious king!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.
- 2 Still through the cloven skies they come,
with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing;
and ever o'er its Babel-sounds
the blessèd angels sing.
- 3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel-strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and man, at war with man, hears not
the love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing!
- 4 For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophet-bards foretold,
when, with the ever-circling years,
comes round the age of gold;
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

Words: EDMUND SEARS (1810–1876)

Music: 'Noel' Traditional, *arr.* ARTHUR SULLIVAN (1842–1900)

descant by DAVID WILLCOCKS (1919–2015)

Fifth Lesson * Philippians 2: 5–11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

CHOIR

In the bleak mid-winter

Words: CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830–1894)

Music: HAROLD DARKE (1888–1976)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 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. | 3 Enough for him, whom Cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breast full of milk,
And a manger full of hay:
Enough for him, whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore. |
| 2 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. | 4 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. |

CAROL

O little town of Bethlehem

- 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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 (1835–1893)

Music: 'Forest Green', English traditional melody
descant by THOMAS ARMSTRONG (1898–1994)

Sixth Lesson * Luke 1: 26–38

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

CHOIR

Nova! Nova!

Words: 15th century (modernised)

Music: BOB CHILCOTT (*b.* 1955)

Nova! nova! 'Ave' fit ex 'Eva'

tr. News! news! 'Ave' is made from 'Eva'.

Gabriel of high degree,
He came down from Trinity
To Nazareth in Galilee.

Nova! nova!

He met a maiden in a place,
He kneeled down afore her face.
He said: 'Hail, Mary, full of grace!'

Nova! nova!

When the maid heard tell of this
She was full sore abashed I-wys,
And wened that she had done amiss.

Nova! nova!

I-wis = indeed
wened = thought

Then said the angel: 'Dread not you,
You shall conceive in all vertue
A Child whose name shall be Jesu'.

Nova! nova!

'It is not yet six months ago
Since Elizabeth conceived John,
As it was prophesied before.'

Nova! nova!

Then said the maiden verily:
'I am your servant right truly.
Ecce ancilla Domini.'

Nova! nova!

tr. Behold the handmaid of the Lord

We STAND to sing the carol

CAROL

O come all ye faithful

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!

2 God of God,
Light of Light,
lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
very God,
begotten, not created:

3 See how the Shepherds
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps:

4 Lo, star-led chieftains,
magi, Christ adoring,
offer him incense, gold, and myrrh;
we to the Christ-child
bring our hearts' oblations:

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

Words: Latin 18th century, Tr. FREDERICK OAKLEY (1802–80)
Music: ‘*Adeste Fideles*’, J. F. WADE (1711–86)
arranged by DAVID WILLCOCKS (1919–2015)

At the end of the carol, we SIT or KNEEL to pray

Intercessions

CHOIR

Star Carol

Words and Music: JOHN RUTTER (*b.* 1945)

- 1 Sing this night, for a boy is born in Bethlehem,
Christ our Lord in a lowly manger lies;
Bring your gifts, come and worship at his cradle,
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!
*See his star shining bright
In the sky this Christmas Night!
Follow me joyfully;
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!*
- 2 Angels bright, come from heaven’s highest glory,
Bear the news with its message of good cheer:
“Sing, rejoice, for a King is come to save us,
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!”
- 3 See, he lies in his mother’s tender keeping;
Jesus Christ in her loving arms asleep.
Shepherds poor, come to worship and adore him,
Offer their humble gifts before the son of Mary.
- 4 Let us all pay our homage at the manger,
Sing his praise on this joyful Christmas Night;
Christ is come, bringing promise of salvation;
Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!

At the end of the choir carol, we all STAND to sing the final carol

CAROL

Hark! the herald angels sing

- 1 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.*
- 2 Christ, by highest heav'n 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.
- 3 Hail, the heav'n-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.

Words: CHARLES WESLEY (1707–1788)

Music: "Mendelssohn", FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY (1809–1847)

arranged by DAVID WILLCOCKS (1919–2015)

We remain STANDING

Blessing

In dulci júbilo, BWV 729

Organ voluntary
J. S. BACH (1685–1750)

Thank you for joining us for our Carol Service.

You are very welcome to join us at any of our services which are also streamed online so that you can participate where ever you are.

For more details, see our website:
www.ststephenscanterbury.net

or search for St Stephen's Church Canterbury on YouTube.

It costs over £1,700 a week to keep St Stephen's Church open. Please consider making a donation to support your Parish Church as you leave this evening. There is a bowl for cash donations, and a contactless card reader for card donations. You can also make a donation on our website.

Thank you for your support.

