

Christ Church, New Mill

Service of Readings and Carols



Sunday, December 21st 2003, 4.00pm.

Welcome to Christ Church, New Mill, and especially to this celebration of the Nativity of our Lord in words and music. You are invited to stand and join in the items marked “HYMN”, and sit or kneel as appropriate for the other items. We hope you enjoy the service.

What is a carol? The English carol was once a dance. In fact the word “carol” is derived from the Greek word choros meaning dance, and the early English carols have parallels with the French carole—a dance-song.

Although such dance-songs were associated with pagan festivals, because of their popularity the fourteenth century Franciscan Friars began to write sacred texts to be sung to this dance music, as a means of propagating the Gospel. After 1400, the association with dancing waned, and the emphasis on song grew.

Our first choral carol today, Tomorrow shall be my dancing day, is an example of an early carol which refers to the tradition of dancing. In this arrangement, only the Christmas verses are used; the original told the story of Jesus’ life through to his death and resurrection in eleven verses.

The readings this year are the traditional texts, but we are using the New English Translation of the bible. This is a recent attempt to translate from the original languages into modern idiomatic English, by a team of scholars. The text is available on the internet (it’s the NET bible, www.netbible.org), with numerous footnotes and explanations of the translation. Moreover, the translators are willing to review and re-translate if they receive informed comment on its correctness. In other words, this should be an authoritative translation. Listen carefully: what’s your opinion on the translation?

The service starts with the dimming of the lights.

CAROL: *from The Wexford Carol. (Irish trad., arr. John Rutter)*

Good people all, this Christmas-time,
Consider well and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done,
In sending his beloved Son.
With Mary holy we should pray
To God with love this Christmas Day;
In Bethlehem upon that morn
There was a blessed Messiah born.

READING: Isaiah 11: 1-9

An ideal king establishes a kingdom of peace.

HYMN (BCS 4): Once in Royal David's City.

*(Words by Mrs. C.F. Alexander 1818-95. Music by H.J. Gauntlett 1805-76.
Descant by Philip Ledger, 1975).*

BIDDING PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

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.

READING: Isaiah 9: 2-7

Isaiah prophesies the coming of a king.

CAROL: Tomorrow shall be my dancing day. *(English trad. arr. David Willcocks)*

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day:
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to the dance:

Sing O my love, this have I done for my true love

Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance;
Thus was I knit to man's nature,
To call my true love to the dance.

In a manger laid and wrapped I was,
So very poor, this was my chance,
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass,
To call my true love to the dance.

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day:
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to the dance:

READING: Luke 1: 26-38

The Birth Announcement of Jesus the Messiah

CAROL: A maiden most gentle

(Words and arrangement of French trad. melody by Andrew Carter)

A maiden most gentle and tender we sing:

(copyright)

HYMN: (BCS 3) O little town of Bethlehem. *(Words by Phillips Brooks 1835-93. Music English trad. arr R. Vaughan Williams 1872-1958)*

READING: Luke 2: 1-7

The Census and the birth of Jesus

CAROL: Still, Still, Still (*German carol arr. Philip Ledger b. 1937*)

Still, still, still, weils Kindlein schlafen will!

Maria tut es niedersingen,

Ihre keusche Brust darbringen.

Still, still, still, weils Kindlein schlafen will!

Schlaf, schlaf, schlaf, mein liebes kindlein schlaf!

Die Engel tun schön musizieren,

Vor dem Kindlein jubilieren:

Schlaf, schlaf, schlaf, mein liebes kindlein schlaf!

Gross, gross, gross, die Lieb ist über gross!

Gott hat den Himmelsthron verlassen

Und muss reisen auf der Strassen.

Gross, gross, gross, die Lieb ist über gross!

(Translation by Meg Peacocke:

HYMN: (BCS 15) Silent Night

(Words by J. Mohr 1792-1848; Melody by Franz Grüber 1787-1863)

READING: Luke 2: 8-20

The Shepherds' visit.

CAROL: Nativity Carol (*Words and music by John Rutter*)

Born in a stable so bare, Born so long ago;
(Copyright)

HYMN: (BCS 10) While Shepherds watched their flocks by night
(*Words by N. Tate 1657-1715; Music from Este's Psalms, 1592*)

CAROL: Come, leave your sheep (*French trad. arr. Philip Ledger*)

Come leave your sheep, your ewes with lambs afeeding,
O shepherds, hear our message of good cheer;
No longer weep; the angel tidings heeding,
To Bethlehem haste away! Our Lord is born this happy day.

He lieth there within a lowly manger;
An infant poor, he languisheth full sore.
God's loving care hath saved us all from danger,
And brought us to the fold;
Now own his faithful love revealed of old.

Ye sages three, arrayed in royal splendour,
Your homage pay; A king is born this day.
The star ye see, its radiance must surrender
Before our Sun most bright;
Your gifts are precious in his sight

Come Holy Ghost, of blessings source eternal,
Our souls inspire with thy celestial fire;
The heavenly host praise Christ the Lord supernal
And sing the peace on earth God gives us by his birth.

READING: Matthew 2: 1-16
The visit of the Wise Men

CAROL: Unto us is born a Son (*Words & melody from Piaie Cantiones, 1582. tr. G.R. Woodward, arr. David Willcocks*)

Unto us is born a Son, King of quires supernal:
See on earth his life begun, of lords the Lord eternal.
Christ from heaven descending low, comes on earth a
stranger;
Ox and ass their owner know becradled in the manger.
This did Herod sore affray and grievously bewilder.
So he gave the word to slay, and slew the little childer.
Of his love and mercy mild this the Christmas story;
And O that Mary's gentle child might lead us up to glory!
O and A and A and O, cum cantibus in choro,
Let our merry organ go, benedicamus domino.

READING: John 1: 1-14
The Prologue to the Gospel

CAROL: All this time (*Words 16th Century; music by William Walton*)

All this time this song is best: "Verbum caro factum est"
(*trans. "the word was made flesh"*)
This night there is a child y-born
That sprang out of Jesse's thorn;
We must sing and say therefor:

Jesus is the child's name,
And Mary mild is his dame;
All our sorrow shall turn to game:

It fell upon high midnight:
The stars shone both fair and bright;
The angels sang with all their might,

Now kneel we down on our knee,
And pray to the Trinity
Our help, our succour for to be.

HYMN (OFFERTORY): (BCS 13) O come, all ye faithful
(words & melody by J.F. Wade 1711-86. Descant by Philip Ledger)

PRAYER & COLLECT

HYMN: (BCS 12) Hark! the herald angels sing
(words by C. Wesley 1707-88 et al; music by F. Mendelssohn 1809-47)

After the recession will be played In dulci jubilo by J.S. Bach 1685-1750.