

Christ Church, New Mill

**Service of Readings and Carols
(Full edition)**



Sunday, December 18th 2005, 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.

The service starts with the dimming of the lights.

FANFARE: Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Glory to God in the highest

(Music by Martin Shaw 1875-1958)

HYMN *(verse 1 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 meek and lowly
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

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.

*Words: Cecil F. Alexander(1818-95) Music: H.J. Gauntlett (1805-76). Descant:
Philip Ledger*

Bidding prayer

We are gathered together on this last Sunday before Christmas to proclaim and receive in our hearts the good news of the coming of God's Kingdom, and to remember and celebrate with confidence and joy the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We pray that we may respond in penitence and faith to the glory of his Kingdom, its works of justice and its promise of peace, its blessing and its hope.

Let us then celebrate this coming with our carols and hymns of praise, that our lives may be charged with his life; that we may bear witness to his glory and so bring light to those who sit in darkness. But first we pray for those among whom the Christ was born: the poor and helpless, the aged and young children; the cold, the hungry, and the homeless; the victims of poverty, injustice, and oppression, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved; those in despair or in the shadow of death.

Then, as we hear again the message of peace on earth and goodwill among all his people, we pray for the leaders of the nations, that all may be inspired to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom, and peace the world over.

And that we may bear true witness to this hope in a divided world, we pray for the peace and unity of Christ's body, the Churchuniversal, that the whole earth may live to praise his name.

Finally, as we rejoice with the saints in heaven and on earth, we remember all who have gone before us with the sign of faith, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we offer up our prayers for the coming of his Kingdom, in the traditional words he himself has taught us, saying:

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.

READING: Isaiah 59: 9b-13, 15b-20; 9: 2, 6-7; 2: 2-4.

1st voice

We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows.

Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like men without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead.

We all growl like bears; we moan mournfully like doves. We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away.

For our offences are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offences are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived.

2nd voice

The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation

on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

According to what they have done, so will he repay wrath to his enemies and retribution to his foes; he will repay the islands their due.

From the west, men will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like a pentup flood that the breath of the LORD drives along.

"The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the LORD.

3rd voice

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

4th voice

In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.

Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

CAROL: Longfellow's Carol.

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along the unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound the carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn the households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men."

(Words: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow 1807-1882

[Longfellow wrote this poem after his son returned home from the American civil war, badly injured. Wars have continued to happen since then, and the sentiments remain as true now. We remember Christ's first coming to help give us confidence that he will come again and there will be peace on earth].

Music: Allen Percival b. 1925)

READING: Luke 1: 26-38

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with

you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

CHOIR: Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary.

Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary!

For so when he did meet thee, spake mighty Gabriel,
And thus we greet thee.

Come weal, come woe, our hymn shall never vary,
Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary!

Ave, ave maria!

To gladden priest and people,
The angelus shall ring from every steeple,
To sound his Virgin birth, Alleuia!
Ave, ave Maria!

Archangels chant Osanna, and Holy, Holy, Holy,
Before the Infant born of thee, thou lowly,
Aye maiden child of Joachim and Anna;
Archangels chant Osanna.

{Words: G.R. Woodward 1848-1934; Music: 17th century Italian carol arr. Charles Wood 1866-1926}

READING: Luke 2: 1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

CAROL: Myn Lyking

I saw a fair mayden sytten and sing.

She lulled a lyttel childe, a sweete Lording:

Lullay myn lyking, my dere sonne, my sweeting,

Lullay my dere herte, myn own dere derling.

That same Lord is he that made alle thing;

Of alle lordis he is Lord, of alle kynges Kyng:

There was mickle melody at that chylde's birth.

All that were in heav'nly bliss, they made mickle mirth:

Angels bright sang their song to that child;

Blyssid be thou, and so be she, so meek and so mild:

(Words 15th century. Music: R.R. Terry (1865-1938))

HYMN:

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 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 Immanuel!

(Words P. Brooks 1835-93; Music trad. Arr. R.V Williams, 1872-1958. Descant Thomas Armstrong 1898-)

READING: Luke 2: 8-20

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has

been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

SOLO: The little road to Bethlehem

(Words: Margaret Rose; Music: Michael Head)

READING: A Quaker view; Isaiah 61:1-4,7

1st voice

What does Christmas mean to me? What can I bring to Jesus?
Today Christ is born in me, in each of his people, and in us all together.
The star never leaves the sky, the song of the angels is never stilled,
"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"; shepherds and wise men never cease to adore.

Christ's work in us is the new birth: to preach the good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. This day (and each day!) is the scripture fulfilled.

(Paul Thompson, Scone, Scotland: from <http://www.quakerinfo.com/quakxms1.shtml>)

2nd voice

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind

up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendour. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

Instead of their shame my people will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance; and so they will inherit a double portion in their land, and everlasting joy will be theirs.

CAROL: In the bleak midwinter.

In the bleak midwinter 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 midwinter, 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 midwinter a stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air.
But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the Belovèd with a kiss.

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 1830-91; Music: Harold Darke 1888-1976)

HYMN:

What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Come, greet the infant Lord,
the babe, the Son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate,
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear: for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you:
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the babe, the Son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh,
come rich and poor, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings,
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
the Virgin sings her lullaby:
Joy, joy for Christ is born,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!

Words: W.C. Dix (1837-1898); Music: trad. English melody, arr. John Stainer (1840-1901)

READING: Matthew 2: 1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and

have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

" 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'"

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

RECIT & TRIO The Wise Men (from the oratorio *Christus*)

When Jesus, our Lord, was born in Bethlehem, in the land of Judaea; behold, from the east to the city of Jerusalem there came wise men, and said: Say, where is He born, the King of Judaea? for we have seen His star, and are come to adore Him.

(Words: Matthew 2: 1-2. Music: F. Mendelssohn 1809-47)

HYMN:

Unto us is born a Son,
King of quires supernal
See on earth his life begun,
Of Lords the Lord eternal,
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,
Becradled in the manger.

This did Herod soreaffray,
And grievously bewilder,
So he gave the word to slay,
And slew the little childer,
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,
Might lead us up to glory.

O and A, and A and O,
Cum cantibus in choro,
Let our merry organ go,
Benedicamus Domino,
Benedicamus Domino.

(Words & melody from Piaie Cantiones, 1582)

READING: To Mary, my mother. *(by Donald Hilton)*

CAROL: Joys Seven

The first good joy that Mary had, it was the joy of one;
To see the blessed Jesus Christ, when he was first her son:
*When he was first her son, good man: and blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to all eternity.*

The next good joy that Mary had, it was the joy of two;
To see her own son, Jesus Christ, to make the lame to go.

The next good joy that Mary had, it was the joy of three;
To see her own son Jesus Christ, to make the blind to see.

The next good joy that Mary had, it was the joy of four;
To see her own son Jesus Christ, to read the bible o'er.
The next good joy that Mary had, it was the joy of five;
To see her own son, Jesus Christ, to bring the dead alive.

The next good joy that Mary had, it was the joy of six;
To see her own son Jesus Christ, upon the crucifix.

The next good joy that Mary had, It was the joy of seven;
To see her own son Jesus Christ, to wear the crown of heaven.
(*English trad. Arr. S. Cleobury, b. 1948*)

READING: Philippians 2: 5-11

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God
something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature
of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

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

CAROL: A boy was born
A Boy was born in Bethlehem;
Rejoice for that, Jerusalem!
Alleluia.

He let himself a servant be,
that all mankind he might set free:
Alleluia.

Then praise the Word of God who came
to dwell within a human frame:

Alleluia.

(Words: 16th century German, trans. P. Dearmer. Music: Benjamin Britten 1913-76)

PRAYERS

Almighty God, you sent your Son as a servant to redeem the world, and will send him again to be our judge. May we so imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming, that, when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord our God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; so that, on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

HYMN:

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:

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God
In the highest:
Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be glory given;
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing:

(Words & melody by J.F. Wade 1711-86)

COLLECT & BENEDICTION

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 for our redeemer, we may with confidence behold him when he shall come to be our judge;

Who is alive and reigns with you and the holy spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit be with us always.

Amen.

HYMN:

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 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 men 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 by C. Wesley 1707-88; Music by Mendelssohn 1809-47)

After the recessional hymn will be played on the organ Toccata and Fugue in D minor by J.S. Bach 1685-1750. The service ends at the conclusion of the organ music.

Notes:

1. Copyright material has been deleted from this web version.
2. The Toccata & Fugue played at the end was part of BBC Radio 3's national event, in which several hundred organists around the UK played this piece on December 18th 2005