

St Mark's Carol Service



**St Mark's Church
Thursday 24 December 2015
6.30pm**

Order of Service

Welcome

The Reverend Canon Charles Royden

Carol 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.*

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 Emmanuel:

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:

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Please be seated

Opening Prayer

The Reverend Dr Sam Cappleman

**Lord Jesus Christ,
Child of Bethlehem and Son of God:
help us this night to join our songs of glory
to those of the heavenly host,
that the joy of the church on earth
may be heard in the praise of heaven, Amen.**

All readings will proceed unannounced and without congregational responses

First Lesson

Genesis 3:8-15, 17,19

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."
"Thanks be to God"

Carol 2

See, amid the winter's snow,
born for us on earth below,
see, the tender Lamb appears,
promised from eternal years!

*Hail, thou ever blessèd morn!
Hail, redemption's happy dawn!
Sing through all Jerusalem:
Christ is born in Bethlehem!*

Lo, within a manger lies
he who built the starry skies,
he who, throned in height sublime,
sits amid the cherubim.

Say, ye holy shepherds, say,
what your joyful news to-day;
wherefore have ye left your sheep
on the lonely mountain steep?

'As we watched at dead of night,
lo, we saw a wondrous light;
angels, singing "peace on earth",
told us of the Saviour's birth.'

Sacred Infant, all divine,
what a tender love was thine,
thus to come from highest bliss
down to such a world as this!

Edward Caswall (1814-1878)

Second Lesson

Genesis 22: 15-18

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

"Thanks be to God"

Carol 3

Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright,
round yon virgin mother and child;
holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night.
Shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing 'alleluia:
Christ, the Saviour is born'.

Silent night, holy night.
Son of God, love's pure light,
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace:
Jesus, Lord at thy birth.

Stille nacht! Heilige Nacht! Joseph Mohr (1792-1848), translated Stopford Augustus Brooke (1832-1916)

Third Lesson

Isaiah 9, 2, 6-7

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 for ever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. "Thanks be to God"

Carol 4

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
and stay by my bedside till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.

Sometimes attributed to John Thomas Macfarland (1851-1913), Gabriel's Vineyard Songs (1892 Louisville), Little Children's Book: For Schools and Families (1885 Philadelphia)

Fourth Lesson

Micah 5, 2-4

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labour gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.
"Thanks be to God"

Carol 5

Please remain seated for first verse

*Soloist: 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;
where like stars his children crowned
all in white shall wait around.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)

Fifth Lesson

Matthew 1, 18-23

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" -- which means, "God with us."
"Thanks be to God"

Carol 6

Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:

*Come and worship,
worship Christ the King.
Come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born King.*

Shepherds in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing,
yonder shines the infant Light:

Sages, leave your contemplations;
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations;
ye have seen his natal star:

Saints before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear,
suddenly the Lord, descending,
In his temple shall appear:

Though an infant now we view him,
he shall fill his Father's throne,
gather all the nations to him;
every knee shall then bow down:

James Montgomery (1771-1854)

Sixth Lesson

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.

"Thanks be to God"

Carol 7

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 street 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 Emmanuel.

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)

Seventh Lesson

Luke 2:8-20

And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, 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.
"Thanks be to God"

Carol 8

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds
in fields as they lay:
In fields where they lay
a-keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep:

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.*

They looked up and saw a star,
shining in the east, beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night:

And by the light of that same star,
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went:

This star drew nigh to the north-west,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay.

Then entered in those wise men three,
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense:

Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood mankind hath bought:
Anonymous

Eighth Lesson

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.
"Thanks be to God"

Address

Ninth Lesson

John 1, 1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God -- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
"Thanks be to God"

Prayers

Followed by 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**

Offering

If you are a tax payer please use Gift Aid envelopes to enable us to reclaim tax, at no cost to you. They can be found on the backs of chairs around the church, or obtained from the welcome table at the door

All stand as the Offering is brought forward. We say together:

God our Father, we give thanks for your gift of Jesus. Accept the gifts we offer and also our lives. In Jesus name. Amen.

Carol 9

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:

See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps:

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

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
'Glory to God
in the highest':

John Francis Wade (1711-1786), Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880)

The Blessing

May he who by his Incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, grant you the fullness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

**Our thanks to Bedford Town Band, our organist Mr Clive Simmonds,
and all who have helped with this special service.**



