

Carol Service 2020 Zoom

Welcome

The text of this service is available on the church website.

Please mute when we sing or speak together

Sing as loudly as you like

Say the bits in bold.

For the readings we will see the reader. Each reading from the bible will conclude with:

Reader: This is the word of the Lord

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Opening Responses

Leader: Light looked down and saw darkness

All: **'I will go there' said Light.**

Leader: Peace looked down and saw war

All: **'I will go there,' said Peace.**

Leader: Love looked down and saw hatred.

All: **'I will go there,' said Love.**

Leader: So he, the Lord of Light,
the Prince of Peace,
the King of Love,
came down and crept in beside us.

We sing: Long ago Prophets knew, A&M 75

1 Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew,
come to make all things new;
bear his people's burden,
freely love and pardon.

Refrain:

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes,
when he comes,
who will make him welcome?

2 God in time, God in man,
this is God's timeless plan:
he will come, as a man,
born himself of woman,
God divinely human. [Refrain]

3 Mary, hail! Though afraid,
she believed, she obeyed.
In her womb God is laid;
till the time expected
nurtured and protected. [Refrain]

4 Journey ends! Where afar
Bethlem shines, like a star,
stable door stands ajar.
Unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!

Refrain:

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
Jesus comes!
Jesus comes!
We will make him welcome!

Reading: Isaiah 9v2,6-7

Isaiah 9 verses 2 and 6-7

NRSV

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
Those who lived in a land of deep darkness

– on them light has shined.

For a child has been born to us, a son given to us;
Authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it with justice,
and with righteousness
from this time forward and for evermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Carol, The Angel Gabriel

A&M 85

1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

2 "For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honour thee,
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold;
most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name."
Most highly favoured lady. Gloria!

4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,

and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say

"Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

Bible reading Luke 1v26-38

The Message

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her:

*"Good morning, you're beautiful with God's beauty
Beautiful inside and out! God be with you."*

She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus.

He will be great, be called 'Son of the Highest.'

The Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David

He will rule Jacob's house forever – no end, ever, to his kingdom"

Mary said to the angel, “But how? I’ve never slept with a man”

The angel answered,

*“The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
the power of the Highest hover over you;
Therefore, the child you bring to birth
will be called Holy, Son of God.*

And did you know that your cousin Elizabeth conceived a son, old as she is? Everyone called her barren, and here she is six months pregnant! Nothing, you see, is impossible with God.”

And Mary said,

Yes I see it all now: I’m the Lord’s maid, ready to serve.

Let it be with me just as you say.

Then the angel left her.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Poem Mary's Journey *from Cloth for the cradle*

Mary's Journey

There will be no donkey,
and especially not a 'little' donkey.

I'm eight and a half months pregnant,
I couldn't swing my leg over its back,

If I sat side saddle, I'd probably fall off
and if I stayed on, it might trigger my contractions.

Now if Joseph could afford a camel...
but Joseph can't afford a camel,
so I'm going to walk...

...eighty miles...
eighty pregnant miles
to register to pay the poll tax...
I don't know what it will be like
and, since Joseph left the town
when he was a toddler,
he can't remember either.

I ask you...
would any of you who are women

want to walk eighty miles,
when your time has nearly come,
to give birth,
in who knows where,
to a child who is a source of consternation
to your parents before he is born
and who will be a source of controversy
to the world ever after?

When I was a girl,
I used to love practical jokes.
All our neighbours would roar and laugh
and say to my mother,
“Where does she get her sense of humour from?”

Sometimes when I think of the mess
that Joseph and I are in,
I smile to myself
and realise I got my sense of humour
from my maker.

Cloth for the Cradle *Wild Goose Publishing* p66

Carol See him lying on a bed of straw

A&M 82

See Him lying on a bed of straw,
A draughty stable with an open door;
Mary cradling the babe she bore-
The Prince of glory is his name

*Oh now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
The Prince of glory when he came!*

Star of silver sweep across the skies,
show where Jesus in the manger lies;
shepherds, swiftly from your stupor rise
to see the Saviour of the world!

*Oh now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
The Prince of glory when he came!*

Angels, sing again the song you sang,
sing the glory of God's gracious plan;

sing that Bethl'em's little baby can
be salvation to the soul.

*Oh now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
The Prince of glory when he came!*

Luke 2 verses 1-7

Good News Bible

At that time the Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own town.

Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judaea, the birthplace of King David. He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger – there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Poem: Sometimes I cry *Kathy Galloway*

Sometimes I cry

Sometimes I cry when I think of the child,
born in a stable, no room anywhere,
growing to live in a world cold with grief and shame,
dying in agony, nailed there by fear.

Sometimes I pray when I think of the child,
born to be human in weakness and care,
growing to stand with the poor and the prisoner,
dying to raise them in freedom to share.

Sometimes I laugh when I think of the child,
born without name on the edge of the town,
growing in powerlessness, changer of images,
dying derided and mocked as a clown.

Sometimes I tremble when I think of the child,
born out of mystery, starlight and sign,
maker of miracles out of reality,
raising them up till the end of all time.

But sometimes I sing when I think of the child,
born out of joy and obedience and pain,

growing to touch human living with ecstasy,
dying to show us that love lives again.

Kathy Galloway in Hay and Stardust Wild goose Publishing

Carol: Silent Night A&M 84

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round the virgin and her child
holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace;
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quail at the sight,
glory streams from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing 'Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night, holy night
Son of God, love's pure light:
radiant beams your holy face

with the dawn of saving grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

Choir anthem Away in a manger.

Bible reading: Luke 2v8-20

Good News Bible

There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David’s town your Saviour was born – Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, a great army of heaven’s angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God:
“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!”

When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see his thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. When the shepherds saw him they told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Joseph

Here I stand,
holding the tiny, warm weight
of God in my hands.
Such a tiny weight
to lift the huge weight
of the world.
Here I stand,
the proud father?-not me.
I have been utterly humbled
by your arrival.
You're not my offspring,
not part of me,
and yet, at the same time,
already inextricably part of my life.

I was your hasty midwife,
who delivered you with
unskilled trembling hands.
Who pulled you from your haven
into this.
The place which is more accustomed
to witnessing
the first uncertain breaths of
calves and lambs
than the first uncertain
breaths of a Messiah.
Here I stand with
your weight both
small and immense
resting on me.
So maybe I am proud,
proud of the privilege,
proud of being your father
just for the present.
And I pray, little Lord,
that just as I delivered you,
you will in return one day
deliver me.

Lisa Debney

Hay and Stardust *Wild goose Publishing*

Carol

What Child is this

A&M 88

1. 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 worship and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him praise
the babe, the son of Mary.

2. Why lies he in such mean estate,
where ox and ass are feeding?
Come, have no fear, God's Son is here,
his love all loves exceeding:
nails, spear shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you.
hail, hail the Saviour comes,
the babe, the son of Mary.

3. So bring him incense, gold and myrrh,
all tongues and peoples own him,
The King of kings salvation brings,

Let every heart enthrone Him:
raise, raise your song on high,
while Mary sings a lullaby,
joy, joy for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary.

Reading Luke 2v8-20

Good News Bible

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said. Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Reading The Shepherd

Until tonight

I could not fit the size of God
into my head.

I thought he was a God
for prophets and kings,
men of words and wisdom.

But tonight I am looking at God made small,
small enough for me,
small enough to pick up
and hold like a lamb.

I could not talk to a God in the clouds;
but tonight when I look and smile
and talk nonsense to this
tiny thing, I know that I am
talking to God.

And it is God who smiles
back at me and waves his

perfect hands in delight.
And tonight in your smallness, God,
you seem bigger and more powerful
to me than you ever did before.
I can hold you now,
hold you in my head
and hold you in my arms
and know that you are holding me in yours.

Lisa Debney *Hay and Stardust Wild Goose Publishing*

Carol We three Kings A&M 105

We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star:

*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

Born a king on Bethlehem plain
gold I bring to crown him again,
king forever, ceasing never
over us all to reign:

*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

Frankincense to offer have I,
incense owns a deity nigh;
prayer and praising, all men raising,
worship him, God most high:

*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

Myrrh is mine, it's bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb:

*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,*

*westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

Glorious now behold him arise,
king and God and sacrifice.

Heaven sings 'Alleluia';
'Alleluia' the earth replies:

*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

Reading

Mt.2 1-12

NRSV

In the time of King Herod after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened and all Jerusalem with him; And calling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judaea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at his rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage.

Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Prayers

Wonderful Counsellor, we pray for your wisdom to grow within us. May leaders within our community, our country and the world grow in the wisdom that reflects your kingdom.

God in your compassion;

Hear our prayer.

Mighty God, in Jesus we see the power of love and the vulnerability that love brings. May your love grow within us, that different strength too often ignored. Bless all those who work in the caring professions and give the needs of others a high priority.

God in your compassion;
Hear our prayer.

Everlasting Father, hear our cry for those in trouble. For all those who are ill, the many who are grieving; for refugees, those who are hungry. Bless those who care for them, and those seeking solutions to the social problems that afflict them.

God in your compassion;
Hear our prayer.

Prince of Peace, teach us your way to live with neighbours, both individually and as countries in the world. Show us your way to care for the environment, and nurture your creation. Bless the peacemakers, as they seek to bring people together.

God in your compassion;
Hear our prayer.

As our Saviour taught us so we pray:

(feel free to use the version of the Lord's prayer you are most familiar with)

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name;
your kingdom come,
your will be done**

**on earth as it is 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.**

Joy to the world

Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns;
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove,
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, and wonders of his love.

Closing responses

God Shines in your hearts:
Praise to Christ our light!

Christ is the light of the world!
Praise to Christ our light!

We leave in the power of the Spirit,
to bring light to others.
Praise to Christ our light!

Blessing

May the humility of the shepherds,
the faith of the wise men,
the joy of the angels,
and the peace of the Christ Child
be God's gift to us;

the blessing of the Living God
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you all now and always.

Amen