



ALL SAINTS
HIGH WYCOMBE



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CALM and BRIGHT

**Service of
Nine Lessons and Carols
2024**

Welcome

Welcome to All Saints, especially if you are here for the first time.

As the Scriptures unfold, we hear once again the wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity; how this was foretold by the prophets and announced to Mary, to shepherds in the fields, and to the world in the great Prologue to the Gospel of John.

In 1880, E. W. Benson, then Bishop of Truro, drew up a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, based on ancient sources, for use on Christmas Eve in the wooden shed which served as his cathedral. In 1918, this was adapted for use in the chapel of King's College, Cambridge, by its Dean, Eric Milner-White, who also wrote the Bidding Prayer.

The celebration of Christ's incarnation at Christmas is one of the two poles of the Christian year. (the other is Easter). The wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, as Emmanuel, foretold by the prophets and born of Mary, provides the material of the feast:

Hark, hark, the wise eternal word,
like a weak infant cries!
In form of servant is the Lord,
and God in cradle lies. *Thomas Pestel*

Christmas is much more than simply the celebration of Jesus' birth: we are recalled, amid all the joyful customs and celebrations of Christmas, to this central truth of the Word made flesh for our salvation.

Choir 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.

All **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;
when like stars his children crowned
all in white shall wait around.**

Words: C. F. Alexander (1818-95). Music: H. J. Gauntlett (1805-76)

Introduction

Sit

Beloved in Christ, at this Christmas-tide be it our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us hear again from Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our sin unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child: and let us make this church glad with our carols of praise.

But first, because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us pray to him for the needs of the whole world, and all his people; for peace upon earth He came to save; for love and unity within the one Church He did build; for brotherhood and goodwill amongst all men, and especially within the dominions of our sovereign lord King Charles, within this town of High Wycombe, and Diocese of Oxford.

And particularly at this time let us remember before him the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed; the sick and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before him them who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no-one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the Throne of Heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

**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 Almighty God bless us with his grace: Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all. **Amen.**

The choir sings this carol,

Adam lay ybounden, bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter thought he not too long.

And all was for an apple, an apple that he took,
As clerkes finden written in their book.

Ne had the apple taken been, the apple taken been,
Ne had Our Lady a-been heavené Queen.

Blessed be the time that apple taken was.
Therefore we moun singen Deo gracias!

Words: Anon, 15th Century. Music: Boris Ord (1897-1961)

First Lesson: Genesis 3.8-19

*God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise
and that his descendant will bruise the serpent's head.*

**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 wond'ring love.**

*Choir
only*

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.**

Words: +Phillip Brookes (1835-93).

Music: trad. arr. R. Vaughan William (1872-1958); Last Verse: Thomas Armstrong (1898-1994)

Second Lesson: Genesis 22.15-18

Sit

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his descendant shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

The choir sings this carol,

*O magnum mysterium
Et admirabile sacramentum
Ut animalia viderent
Dominum natum
Jacentem in praesepe!
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera
Meruerunt portare
Dominum Christum. Alleluia.*

O great mystery,
and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the
newborn Lord,
lying in a manger!
Blessed is the virgin whose womb
was worthy to bear
the Lord, Jesus Christ. Alleluia.

Words: Traditional Music: Morten Lauridsen (b.1943)

Third Lesson: Isaiah 9.2,6,7

The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour

**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.**

Stand

**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 blessed angels sing.**

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!

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: E.H. Sears (1810-76).

Music: Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900), last verse arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Fourth Lesson: Isaiah 11.1-9

Sit

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

God rest you merry, gentlemen,
let nothing you dismay,
for Jesus Christ our Saviour
was born upon this 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!

Stand

From God our heavenly Father
a blessèd angel came,
and unto certain shepherds
brought tidings of the same;
how that in Bethlehem was born
the Son of God by name.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!
O tidings of comfort and joy!

The shepherds at those tidings
rejoicèd much in mind,
and left their flocks a-feeding
in tempest, storm and wind,
and went to Bethlehem straightway
this blessèd Babe to find.
O tidings of comfort and joy...

But when to Bethlehem they came
whereat this infant lay,
they found him in a manger
where oxen feed on hay;
his mother Mary kneeling
unto the Lord did pray.
O tidings of comfort and joy...

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 others doth efface.
O tidings of comfort and joy...

Words: English traditional carol. Music: Arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Fifth Lesson: Luke 1.26-38

Sit

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary

The choir sings this carol,

*Make we joy now in this fest
In quo Christus natus est. Eya, eya.*

*A Patre unigenitus
Is through a maiden come to us:
Sing we of him and say welcome,
Veni, Redemptor gencium. Refrain*

*Agnoscat omne seculum,
A bright star made three kings come,
Him for to seek with their presents,
Verbum supernum prodiens. Refrain*

*A solis ortus cardine
So mighty a Lord is none as he;
And to our kind he hath him knit,
Adam parens quod polluit. Refrain*

*Maria ventre concepit,
The Holy Ghost was ay her with,
Of her in Bethlem born he is,
Cونسors paterni luminis. Refrain
O lux beata Trinitas,
He lay between an ox and ass,
Beside his mother maiden free,
Gloria tibi, Domine. Refrain*

In which Christ is born

Only Son of the Father

Come, Redeemer of Nations

Let all the world acknowledge

The Word descending from above

From the rising of the Sun

Which father Adam did pollute

Conceived in Mary's womb

Co-equal in the Father's light

O Trinity of blessed light

Glory to you, Lord

*Words: Traditional 15th century
Music: William Walton (1902-83)*

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

Stand

Choir

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 side
until morning is nigh.

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

Words: Anon.

Music: W. J. Kirkpatrick (1838-1921) arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Sixth Lesson: Luke 2.1-7

Sit

St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus

The choir sings this carol,

The first Nowell the angels did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay 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: *Refrain*

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: *Refrain*

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

Then entered in those Wise Men three,
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence,
their gold and myrrh and frankincense: *Refrain*

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 humankind hath bought: *Refrain.*

Words: Traditional Music: Bob Chilcott (b.1955)

Seventh Lesson: Luke 2.8-16

The shepherds go to the manger

The choir sings this carol,

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight
Softest clothing woolly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice
Making all the vales rejoice!
Little Lamb who made thee.
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!
He is called by thy name
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek and he is mild
He became a little child:
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee,
Little Lamb, God bless thee.

Words: William Blake (1757-1827) Music: John Tavener (1944-2013)

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.

'Fear not', said he (for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind);
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind.

'To you in David's town this day
is born of David's line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:

'The heavenly babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
and in a manger laid.'

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus
addressed their joyful song:

'All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace;
good will henceforth from heaven to men
begin and never cease.'

Words: Nahum Tate (1652-1715)

Music: Este's Psalter (1592). Last verse arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Eighth Lesson: Matthew 2.1-11

Sit

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus

The choir sings this carol,

Have you heard the story that they're telling 'bout Bethlehem?
Have you heard the story of the Jesus child?
How he came from heaven and was born in a manger bed?
Mary was his virgin mother, pure and mild.

*Sing alleluia, brothers, sing alleluia, sisters,
worship the Jesus child and praise his mother mild.
'Glory to God on high', the angel hosts above are singing:
listen to the story of the Jesus child.*

Have you heard the story of the poor humble shepherd men
sitting on the hillside with their flocks by night?
Suddenly the angel tells them 'Hurry to Bethlehem!
Go and find the Jesus child, the world's new light!'

*Jesus child, lying at Bethlehem, Sleeping safe at Mary's knee:
save my soul and bring me to paradise,
let me join the angels singing 'Glory to thee'*

Have you heard the story of the kings from the Orient
following the star that's shining over his head?
Offering their precious gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense,
kneeling with the ox and ass before his bed?

Words and Music: John Rutter (b.1945)

Ninth Lesson: John 1.1-14

Stand

St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

We sing this hymn, during which a collection is taken.

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:
O come, let us adore him...

See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear:
We too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps:
O come, let us adore him...

Lo! Star-led chieftains,
Magi Christ adoring,
offer him incense, gold and myrrh;
we to the Christ Child,
bring our heart's oblations:
O come, let us adore him...

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
'Glory to God in the highest':
O come, let us adore him...

*Words: Adeste Fideles by Cistercian monks,
tr: Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880), William Thomas Brooke (1848-1917) et al.
Music: attrib. John Francis Wade (c. 1711-1786), arr David Willcocks (1919-2015)*

A period of silence is kept.

Kneel or sit.

Minister The Lord be with you;
All **and with thy spirit.**

Minister Let us pray.

O God, who makest us glad
with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of thy only Son, Jesus Christ:
Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer,
so we may with sure confidence behold him,
when he shall come to be our judge;
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit,
one God, world without end. **Amen.**

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

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 th' angelic host proclaim,
'Christ is born in Bethlehem':
Hark! the herald angels sing
'Glory to the new-born king'.

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, th' 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 man 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: Charles Wesley (1707-1788) et al.

Music: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

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Have a happy and joy-filled Christmas!

Do take this Order of Service home.

Sunday Services

8.00 am Holy Communion (said)

10.00 am Eucharist

5.00 pm Evening service

Christmas 2024-25

December 24th	4.00pm	Christingle round the Crib
	11.30pm	Midnight Mass
December 25th	8.00am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00am	Christmas Eucharist with carols
December 29th	8.00am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00am	Parish Eucharist
January 5th	8.00am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00am	Parish Eucharist
	5.00pm	Epiphany Choral Service