Carol Service 2023
Welcome to Canterbury Cathedral for this Carol Service

Livestreaming
This service will be livestreamed and you may be seen on camera, although we will not deliberately take any close-ups of the congregation. By attending you agree to be seen in this way.

If you have any concerns please speak to a member of the clergy.

Voluntaries before the service played by William Campbell, Organ Scholar

Denis Bédard (b. 1950), Variations sur In Dulci Jubilo
Max Reger (1873-1916), Weihnachten
Richard Purvis (1913-94), Prelude on Greensleeves 'What Child is This?'
J.S. Bach (1685-1750), Prelude and Fugue in D Major BWV 532
Cecilia McDowall (b. 1951), O Antiphon Sequence
John Ireland (1879-1962), The Holy Boy

Cover Image: Detail from The Nativity (Christopher Whall), South West Transept

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An induction loop system for the hard of hearing is installed in the Cathedral. Hearing aid users should adjust their aid to T.

Large print orders of service are available from the stewards and virgers. Please ask.

The Collection from this Service, including any tax recovered through Gift Aid, will be shared between the Cathedral and Porchlight, our charity this Christmas. If you are a UK taxpayer we would encourage you to use the Cathedral’s Gift Aid envelope for your donation. Please ensure that you complete all sections of the envelope including the box confirming that you are a UK taxpayer. The Cathedral will reclaim an extra 25p for every £1 placed in the envelope which will be passed on to the charities. Gift Aid envelopes can be obtained from the stewards. Cheques should be made payable to Canterbury Cathedral.

Canterbury Cathedral Carol Services, 23/24 December 2023

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ORDER OF SERVICE

Stand as the lights are dimmed – silence is kept

During the following hymn the processions move through the Cathedral

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.

Choir only

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: Mrs C F Alexander (1818-95)

Tune: IRBY
A Christmas Homily  The Dean

The Prayers  The Vice Dean

As we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, we bring before him the needs of the whole world, praying for peace and goodwill over all the earth, for unity and fellowship within the Church, for those who suffer through the inhumanity of their neighbours, for the sick, the bereaved and the lonely, the poor, the hungry and the oppressed.

We pray also for those who have loved and served God here and are now at rest, that he may grant them, with Thomas and all the saints of Canterbury, refreshment, light and peace.

These prayers we offer in the words which Christ himself has taught us:

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.
Choir  

In dulci jubilo

_In dulci jubilo_ let us our homage show;
Our heart's joy reclineth _In praesepio_
And like a bright star shineth _Matris in gremio_
_Alpes es et O_

_O Jesu parvule_ I yearn for thee alway!
Hear me, I beseech thee _O puer optime!_
My praying let it reach thee _O princeps gloriae_
_Trahe me post te_

_O patris caritas, O nati lenitas!_
Deeply were we stained _Per nostra crimina_
But thou has for us gained _Coelorum gaudia_
_O that we were there!_

_Ubi sunt gaudia_ If that they be not there?
There are angels singing _Nova cantica_
There the bells are ringing _In Regis curia_
_O that we were there!_

Words: Edited and adapted: Reginald Jacques (1894-1969)
Music: Robert Lucas de Pearsall (1795-1856)

Stand to sing

God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day,
To save us all from Satan’s power
When we were gone astray:

_O tidings of comfort and joy,_
_Compact and joy!_
_O tidings of comfort and joy!_

2 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:

3 And when they came to Bethlehem
Where our dear Saviour lay,
They found him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling down,
Unto the Lord did pray:

Words: Traditional
Tune: GOD REST YOU MERRY
The First Lesson

Isaiah 9.2, 6-7

Read by a Chorister from the Quire Lectern

Christ’s birth and kingdom are foretold

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 for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, 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 onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Thanks be to God.

Choir

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day

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 my dance;

Sing, oh! my love, oh! my love, 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 my 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 my dance.

Then afterwards baptized I was;
The Holy Ghost on me did glance,
My Father’s voice heard from above,
To call my true love to my dance.

Words: Traditional

Music: John Gardner (1917-2011)
When we rose up the land was bare, when pure beginnings filled the air,
We stood upright and walked the same when this great planet had no name.
We saw the land, we saw the seas, and endless possibilities,
to speak of what existence is we then developed languages.

With paintings, poems, verse and song we made our spirits wise and strong.
With science, and reason, we were enlightened; our senses were truly heightened.
When we built ships and learned to sail it’s true to say we did prevail.
Our will and our imaginations constructed jobs, cities, and nations.

We sought progress and nothing less, just wealth, and stuff, and happiness.
Endless pleasures, endless fun, until the day thy kingdom come, we chased that rainbow’s light to find
Utopia and peace of mind.
Our greatness and our unity, could have created harmony.

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Stand to sing

Stand to sing

See, amid the winter's snow,
Born for us on earth below,
See, the Lamb of God 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!

Words: Edward Caswall (1814-78)
Tune: HUMILITY (OXFORD)

Sit

The Second Lesson Micah 5.2-5
Read by a Virger from the Nave Pulpit

The glory of Bethlehem is foretold

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

Thanks be to God.
Choir  The Lamb

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!
He is callèd 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 callèd by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee!

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

Stand to sing

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

Mary, hail! Though afraid,
She believed, she obeyed.
In her womb God is laid;
Till the time expected
Nurtured and protected.

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

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.

Words: F. Pratt Green, (1903-2000)  Tune: PERSONENT HODIE

Sit
The Third Lesson  Luke 1.26-35, 38
Read by a representative of the King’s School from the Quire Lectern

The Archangel Gabriel visits the Blessed Virgin Mary

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.’ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ The angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ Then the angel departed from her.

Thanks be to God.

Choir  The Angels’ Carol

Have you heard the sound of the angel voices, ringing out so sweetly, ringing out so clear? Have you seen the star shining out so brightly, as a sign from God that Christ the Lord is here? Have you heard the news that they bring from heaven to the humble shepherds who have waited long? Gloria in excelsis Deo! Hear the angels sing their joyful song.

He is come in peace in the winter’s stillness, like a gentle snowfall in the gentle night. He is come in joy, like the sun at morning, filling all the world with radiance and with light. He is come in love as the child of Mary. In a simple stable we have seen his birth. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Hear the angels singing: ‘Peace on earth’.

He will bring new light to a world in darkness, like a bright star shining in the skies above. He will bring new hope to the waiting nations, When he comes to reign in purity and love. Let the earth rejoice at the Saviour’s coming. Let the heavens answer with the joyful morn: Gloria in excelsis Deo! Hear the angels singing Christ is born.

Words and Music: John Rutter (b 1945)
Stand to sing. During this carol the clergy move to the Quire

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.

2 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.

3 How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is giv’n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav’n.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him,
still
The dear Christ enters in.

4 Where children pure and happy
Pray to the blessèd Child,
Where misery cries out to thee,
Son of the mother mild;
Where charity stands watching
And faith holds wide the door,
The dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
And Christmas comes once more.

5 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.
The Fourth Lesson

Read by a Lay Member of Chapter from the Nave Pulpit

St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Thanks be to God.

Choir

In the stillness
In the stillness of a church
Where candles glow,
In the softness of a fall
Of fresh white snow,
In the brightness of the stars
That shine this night,
In the calmness of a pool
Of healing light,
In the clearness of a choir
That softly sings,

In the oneness of a hush
Of angels’ wings,
In the mildness of a night
By stable bare,
In the quietness of a lull
Near cradle fair,
There’s a patience as we wait
For a new morn,
And the presence of a child
Soon to be born.

Words: Katrina Shepherd
Music: Sally Beamish (b. 1956)

Stand to sing

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.
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: Edmund Sears (1810-76)  Tune: NOEL

The Fifth Lesson  Luke 2.8-16
Read by a member of the Cathedral congregation from the Nave Pulpit

The shepherds go to the manger

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Thanks be to God.
Choir

I wonder as I wander

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus, the Saviour, did come for to die.
For poor, ornery people like you and like I
I wonder as I wander
Out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cows' stall,
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,
And the promise of ages
It did then recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing:
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing;
Or all of God's angels in heaven to sing,
He surely could have had it,
'Cause He was the King!

Words: Anonymous
Music: Carl Rütti (b 1949)

Stand to sing

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.

2 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 Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.
3 Hail the heav’n-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 (1707-88) and others    Tune: MENDELSSOHN

Sit

The Sixth Lesson    Matthew 2.1-11
Read by a representative of the City Council from the Nave Pulpit

The wise men are led by a star to Jesus

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, 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 scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; 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 its 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.

Thanks be to God.
Stand to sing

Of the Father's heart begotten,
Ere the world from chaos rose,
He is Alpha: from that Fountain
All that is and hath been flows;
He is Omega, of all things
Yet to come the mystic Close,
Evermore and evermore.

By his word was all created;
He commanded and 'twas done;
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,
Universe of three in one,
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,
All that breathes beneath the sun,
Evermore and evermore.

This is he, whom seer and sibyl
Sang in ages long gone by;
This is he of old revealèd
In the page of prophecy;
Lo! he comes, the promised Saviour;
Let the world his praises cry!
Evermore and evermore.

Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;
Angels and Archangels, sing!
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
Let your joyous anthems ring,
Every tongue his name confessing,
Countless voices answering,
Evermore and evermore.

Words: Latin, Prudentius (348-413)
Tr R.F. Davis (1866-1937)

Tune: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM
Melody from Piae Cantiones

Sit

Choir

O magnum mysterium

O great mystery,

Et admirabile sacramentum

and wonderful sacrament,

Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum

that animals should see the newborn

Iacentem in praesepio!

Lord, lying in a manger!

Beata Virgo, cuius viscera

Blessed is the virgin whose womb

Meruerunt portare

was worthy to bear

Dominum Christum. Alleluia!

the Lord Christ. Alleluia!

Words: Latin Responsory for Christmas

Music: Morten Lauridsen (b 1943)
The Seventh Lesson

St John unfolds the mystery of the Incarnation

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

Thanks be to God.

On Christmas Night (Sussex Carol)

On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring;
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King’s birth.

Then why should we on earth be sad,
Since our Redeemer made us glad?
When from our sin He set us free,
All for to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before His grace,
Then life and health come in its place;
Angels and men with joy may sing,
All for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light,
Which made the angels sing this night:
“Glory to God and peace to men
Now and forevermore. Amen.”
The Blessing

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one all things in heaven and on earth, fill you with his joy and peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Remain standing to sing

During the following hymn the processions move through the Quire and the Nave to the Great West Door

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, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Child, for us sinners Poor and in the manger, Fain we embrace thee, with awe and love; Who would not love thee, Loving us so dearly?

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation, Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above: ‘Glory to God In the highest’:

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Words: Latin 18th century
Tune: ADESTÉ FIDELES
Organ Voluntary

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937), Final from Symphony no.6

*Members of the congregation are asked to remain in their places until directed to leave by the stewards*

*A retiring collection, which will be shared between the Cathedral and Porchlight, our charity for Christmas this year, will be taken by the stewards at the doors as you leave.*

If you would prefer to give by text-message, or use the QR code

- To give £5 – text SERVICE to 70560
- To give £10 – text SERVICE to 70580

*In addition to any text donation, you will incur your standard network message charge.*

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Christmas Day Services at the Cathedral

*(Cathedral open for services only)*

- 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) – High Altar
- 9.15am Matins – Quire
- 11.00am Sung Eucharist – Nave
  *Preacher:* The Archbishop
- 3.00pm Evening Prayer with Carols – Quire