



THE CATHEDRAL AND METROPOLITICAL CHURCH OF CHRIST, CANTERBURY



Canterbury Cathedral Carol Service

Welcome to Canterbury Cathedral for this Carol Service

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

Canterbury Cathedral Carol Service December 2020

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ORDER OF SERVICE

Welcome from the Dean

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.

3 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.

2 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.

4 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.

Words: Mrs C F Alexander (1818-95)

Tune: IRBY

A Christmas Homily

The Dean

The Prayers

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.**

May Almighty God bless us with his grace
and grant us the joys of eternal life,
and unto the fellowship of the citizens of heaven
may the King of Angels bring us all.
Amen.

Carol **Gaudete**

*Gaudete, gaudete! Christus est natus
Ex Maria virgine, gaudete!*

Tempus adest gratiae
Hoc quod optabamus;
Carmina laetitiae
Devote reddamus.

Deus homo factus est
Natura mirante,
Mundus renovatus est
A Christo regnante.

Ezechielis porta
Clausa pertransitur,
Unde lux est orta
Salus invenitur.

Ergo nostra concio
Psallat iam in lustro;
Benedicat Domino:
Salus Regi nostro.

Words: 14th century carol

*Rejoice, rejoice! Christ has been born
Of the Virgin Mary – rejoice!*

*The time of grace has come—
What we have wished for,
Songs of joy
Let us give back faithfully.*

*God has become man,
With nature marvelling,
The world has been renewed
By Christ who is reigning.*

*The closed gate of Ezekiel
Is passed through,
Whence the light is raised,
Salvation is found.*

*Therefore, let our preaching
Now sing in brightness
Let it give praise to the Lord:
Greeting to our King.*

Music: traditional, arr. David Hill

The First Lesson

Isaiah 11.1-9

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Thanks be to God.

Carol **The Truth from Above**

This is the truth sent from above,
The truth of God, the God of love,
Therefore don't turn me from your door,
But hearken all both rich and poor.

Thus we were heirs to endless woes,
Till God the Lord did interpose;
And so a promise soon did run
That he would redeem us by his Son.

The first thing which I do relate
Is that God did man create;
The next thing which to you I'll tell
Woman was made with man to dwell.

And at that season of the year
Our blest Redeemer did appear;
He here did live, and here did preach,
And many thousands he did teach.

Thus he in love to us behaved,
To show us how we must be saved;
And if you want to know the way,
Be pleased to hear what he did say.

Words: English Traditional Carol

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

The Second Lesson

Luke 1.29-35, 38

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.

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.

Words: Phillips Brooks (1835-93)

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 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.

Tune: FOREST GREEN

The Third Lesson

Luke 2.1-7

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.

Carol **Hodie Christus natus est**

Hodie Christus natus est:

Hodie Salvator apparuit:

Hodie in terra canunt Angeli,
laetantur Archangeli

Hodie exsultant justi, dicentes:

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Alleluia.

Words: Christmas Antiphon

Today Christ is born:

Today the Savior appeared:

*Today on Earth the Angels sing,
Archangels rejoice:*

Today the righteous rejoice, saying:

Glory to God in the highest.

Alleluia.

Music: Louis-Nicholas Clérembault (1676-1749)

The Fourth Lesson

Luke 2.8-16

Read by a member of the Cathedral congregation

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.

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

The Fifth Lesson

John 1.1-14

Read by The Archbishop of Canterbury

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.

Choir **Ach mein herzliebes Jesulein**

Ach mein herzliebes Jesulein,
mach dir ein rein sanft Bettelein,
zu ruhn in meines Herzens Schrein,
dass ich nimmer vergesse dein!

*Ah! dearest Jesus, Holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart and there recline,
And keep that chamber ever thine.*

Chorale from Christmas Oratorio BWV 248 by J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

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.*

2 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.*

3 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,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.*

4 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.*

5 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born that happy morning,
Jesu, to thee
be glory given;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing:
*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 Tr F Oakeley (1802-80) and others

Tune: ADESTE FIDELES

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.

Organ Voluntary

In dulci jubilo – *J. S. Bach* (1685-1750)