



Benefice of
WOODSTOCK & BLADON

The Parish Church of
St Mary Magdalene
Woodstock



CAROLS AND READINGS BY
CANDLELIGHT
Sunday 20th December at 6.00pm



CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

- 20TH DECEMBER 2020 -

WELCOME TO ST MARY MAGDALENE'S CHURCH

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS TIME OF MUSIC AND REFLECTION.

CURRENTLY, DUE TO CORONAVIRUS REGULATIONS,
CONGREGATIONS ARE SADLY NOT PERMITTED TO SING.
PLEASE, THEREFORE, SIMPLY ALLOW THE CHOIR TO SING ON
YOUR BEHALF TONIGHT.

DIRECTIONS FOR STANDING/SITTING ARE GIVEN,
BUT PLEASE FEEL FREE TO DO WHAT IS MOST COMFORTABLE
FOR YOU.

IF YOU USE A HEARING AID,
SWITCH IT TO THE 'T' POSITION FOR DIRECT ACCESS TO THE
SOUND SYSTEM.

YOU ARE KINDLY ASKED TO SWITCH OFF OR SILENCE YOUR
MOBILE PHONE
BEFORE THE SERVICE BEGINS.

DUE TO CURRENT REGULATIONS, WE REGRET THAT WE ARE
UNABLE TO OFFER OUR CUSTOMARY HOSPITALITY OF MULLED
WINE AND MINCE PIES AFTER THE SERVICE.

PLEASE TAKE WITH YOU OUR WARMEST WISHES FOR A VERY
HAPPY CHRISTMAS

AND, IF YOU ARE ABLE, PLEASE JOIN US FOR ANY OF THE
OTHER CHRISTMAS SERVICES.

PLEASE SEE OUR WEBSITE:
www.woodstockandbladon.com for details.



FESTIVAL OF READINGS AND CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

CAROL

STAND

text: Cecil Frances Alexander (alt'd);

music: H J Gauntlett/A H Mann; descant: David Willcocks

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: 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 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.



PRAYER

REMAIN STANDING

Let us pray

Holy One,
we wait for you to come to us again,
baby-small and vulnerable,
to grace our poverty, our humanity
with a heart beat, a breath and a cry.

Holy One,
you wait for us to notice you again,
baby-small and vulnerable,
here in these people and in this place,
present in a heart beat, a breath and a cry.

Come, Christmas God,
Christ Child of Bethlehem,
Spirit of wonder,
be born in us and your world once more.
Amen.

PROLOGUE

SIT

'Telling the story' – Jan Sutch Pickard



CAROL

STAND

text: Franz Xaver Gruber

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,
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,
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!
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!

FIRST READING

'Creation' – Alan Litherland and Ruth Norton
(adapted)

It came from nothing... but love.
Out of nothing God called all things to be,
things beyond our imagining:
the grandeur and mystery of the universe,
its stretching back in time
and its reaching out in space,
the miracle of life on earth,
the mysterious creation of living beings,
the eternal cycle of life and death,
the countless emergence of new out of old,
the infinity of different creatures
each unique in its own way
each fitting into its own niche
and all dependent on one another.

God's Spirit dwells in it all,
each second, minute, hour of every day,
Creation's elements of sight and sound,
Transparency, through which God's light is seen.

It came from nothing... but love.

CHOIR CAROL

'The truth from above'

text: English traditional carol;

music: English trad arranged R Vaughan Williams

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.

The first thing that I will relate
is that God did man create;
the next thing which to you I'll tell -
woman was made with man to dwell.

Then after this was God's own choice
to place them both in paradise,
there to remain from evil free
except they ate of such a tree.

But they did eat, which was a sin,
and thus their ruin did begin -
ruined themselves, both you and me,
and all of our posterity.

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.

At 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.



SECOND READING

SIT

Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

REFLECTION

'Christmas' – Anthea Dove



CHOIR CAROL 'Lo, how a Rose...'

text: 16th century German translated by Theodore Baker;

music: 14th century German melody harmonised by M Praetorius (1571-1621)

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming,
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming,
as men of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind,
with Mary we behold it,
the Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to men a Saviour,
when half spent was the night.

O flower, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispel in glorious splendour
the darkness everywhere;
true man, yet very God,
from sin and death now save us,
and share our every load.

THIRD READING

SIT

Luke 1: 26-35 & 38

The angel Gabriel greets the Blessed Virgin Mary.



CHOIR CAROL

'Gabriel's message'

text: S Baring-Gould (1834-1924)

music: trad Basque carol harmonised by Edgar Pettman (1865-1943)

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

'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!

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!

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!

FOURTH READING

Luke 2: 1-7

The Christ-child is born in a stable in Bethlehem.

REFLECTION

'A Christmas Baby' – Derek Webster



SOLO CAROL 'Cantique de Noël' sung by Adina Henson

text: adapted from the French poem "Minuit, chrétiens"

by poet Placide Cappeau (1808–1877).

music: Adolphe Adam, 1847

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
it is the night of our dear Saviour's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;
O night divine, O night, O night Divine.

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
with glowing hearts by his cradle we stand.
So led by light of star so sweetly gleaming,
here come the wise men from the Orient land.
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger;
in all our trials born to be our friend.

He knows our need, to our weaknesses no stranger,
behold your King! Before him lowly bend!
Behold your King! Before him lowly bend!



FIFTH READING

SIT

Luke 2: 8-16

The shepherds go to the stable.



CAROL

text: Moravian Carol; music: John Rutter

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 minds;
‘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;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
begin and never cease.

EIGHTH READING

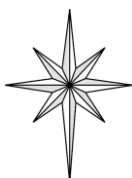
Matthew 2: 1-11

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.



REFLECTION

‘Star of Bethlehem’ – John Johansen-Berg



CHOIR CAROL *'In the bleak mid-winter*

text: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

music: Harold Darke (1888-1976)

In the bleak mid-winter
frosty wind made moan;
earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow,
snow on snow,
in the bleak mid-winter
long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him
nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away
when he comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
a stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty —
Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom cherubim
worship night and day,
a breastful of milk
and a mangerful of hay;
enough for him, whom angels
fall down before,
the ox and ass and camel
which adore.

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What can I give him,
poor as I am? —
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb,
if I were a Wise Man
I would do my part, —
yet what I can I give him, —
give my heart.



We stand for the
NINTH READING

John 1: 1-5, 14

St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

Before the reading:

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Hear the Gospel of
our Lord Jesus Christ,
according to John.

Glory to you O Lord.

at the end of the reading:

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.



CAROL

text: Prudentius (c348-413)

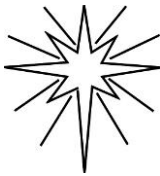
music: Melody from Piaie Cantiones (1582) arr David Willcocks

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 revealed
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.



PRAYER

SIT/KNEEL

text: Pat Bennet (adapted)

Incarnate Christ,
be born in us this Christmas!
May our wills be as Mary's,
saying 'yes' to your ways;
our minds as Joseph's,
open to your unfolding revelation.
May our voices be as the angels',
joyfully proclaiming Good News;
our knees as the animals',
quietly bent in adoration.
May our feet be as the shepherds',
running eagerly to find you;
our hands as the wise men's,
offering up all that we have.

May our hearts be as the manger,
poor yet containing
heaven's greatest treasure;
our lives as the stable,
hallowed and expanded by your presence.
Incarnate Christ,
be born again in us this Christmas!
Amen.

BLESSING

Follow where the Spirit of Hope leads you.
Listen as the Child of Peace cries to you.
Rejoice as the Love of God embraces you.
And go now with Hope, Peace and Love in your hearts
and the blessing of God:
Creator, Son and Holy Spirit,
be forever with you.

CAROL

STAND

text: Charles Wesley, George Whitfield, Martin Madan

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 with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
*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 we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
*Hark, the herald-angels sing
glory to the new-born King.*

*We would like to thank
Guy Reeves for playing the organ
for this service and would like
also to thank the choir for singing
today.*

*The Ministry Team of the Benefice
of Woodstock and Bladon would
like to take this opportunity to
wish you all a holy, blessed and
happy Christmas and a healthy
and happy New Year
when it comes!*



THE MINISTRY TEAM:

*The Very Revd Jeremy Auld, Rector and Area Dean
The Revd Annette Wade, Curate
The Revd Dr Stephen Pix, Associate Priest
The Revd Dr Shaun Henson, Associate Priest
Dr Ben Knighton, Licensed Lay Minister*

*The Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene
Benefice of Woodstock and Bladon
Diocese of Oxford
Church of England*