St Catharine’s College, Cambridge

Christmas Carol Service

Thursday 2nd December 2021
Welcome to this service of music and readings for Christmas, based on the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols. Directions are provided for standing and sitting, and you are welcome to join in with the words in bold type and in the congregational carols; you are equally welcome simply to sit and enjoy the music and words. Please keep your mask on throughout the service, including during the congregational carols.

Music before the service
J S Bach Chorale Prelude ‘In dulci jubilo’ BWV 729

Stand

Congregational Carol

Verse 1 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.

Verse 2 sung by the 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.

All sing verses 3, 4 and 5
And though all his wondrous childhood
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,
Where like stars his children crowned,
All in white shall wait around.

Words: Mrs C F Alexander (1818-1895)
Music: H J Gauntlett (1805-1867) revised by A H Mann (1850-1929)
& editors of the New English Hymnal
Bidding Prayer

Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmastide our care and delight 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 read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious redemption brought us by this Holy Child.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all his people; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in this College and in this City and University of Cambridge.

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and 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 God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are for ever 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 on 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.
They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ He said, ‘I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.’ He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’ The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.’ Then the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent tricked me, and I ate.’ The Lord God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.’ And to the man he said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, “You shall not eat of it”, cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.’ Thanks be to God.

Choral Carol

*Herefordshire folk song, arranged by Ralph 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 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 they did eat, which was a sin,
And thus their ruin did begin;
Ruined themselves, both you and me,
And all of their posterity.

Then after this 'twas God's own choice,
To place them both in paradise,
There to remain from evil free,
Except they ate of such a tree.

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.
And at this season of the year
Our blest Redeemer did appear,
And 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.

Congregational Carol

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.

O how blest that wondrous birthday,
When the Maid the curse retrieved,
Brought to birth mankind’s salvation,
By the Holy Ghost conceived;
And the Babe, the world’s Redeemer,
In her loving arms received,
Evermore and evermore.

Sing, he 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: Prudentius (348-413)
translated by R F Davis (1866-1937)
Melody from Piae Cantiones Theoderici Petri Nylandensis 1582

Reading

Isaiah 9.2, 6–7

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 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 onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Thanks be to God.
Reading
Anonymous Old English, Christ I

Éalā earendel, englā beorhtast,
ofer middangeard monnum sended,  
ond sōðfæsta sunnan lēoma,  
torht ofer tunglas, þū tīda gehwane  
of sylfum þē symle inlīhtes.
Swā þū, God of Gode gearo ācenned,  
Sunu sōban Fæder, swegles in wuldre  
būtan anginne Æfre wære,  
swā þec nū for þearfum þīn āgen geweorc  
bīdeð þurh byldo, þæt þū þā beorhtan ús  
sunnan onsende, ond þē sylf cyme  
þæt ðū inlēohte þā þe longe Ær,  
þrosme beþeahte ond in þēostrum hēr,  
sæton sinneahtes; synnum bifealdne  
deorc déapaes sceadu drēogan sceoldan.

Hail, heavenly beam, brightest of angels thou,  
sent unto men upon this middle-earth!  
Thou, Christ, art the true refulgence of the sun,  
radiant above the stars, and from Thyself  
illuminest for ever all the tides of time.  
And as Thou, God indeed begotten of God,  
Thou, Son of the true Father, wast from aye,  
without beginning, in the heaven’s glory;  
so now Thy handiwork in its sore need  
prayeth Thee boldly that Thou send to us  
the radiant sun, and that Thou comest Thyself  
to enlighten those who for so long a time  
were wrapt around with darkness, and here in gloom  
have sat the livelong night, shrouded in sin.

From the poem now called ‘Christ I’,  
copied into the Exeter Book of Old English Poetry, late tenth century.
The angel of the Lord
Unto Miriam declared
And the saying brought accord
On an answer unimpaired
To the air, to the earth,
To the water and the fire
And the elemental worth
Stood attuned to desire
Like a lyre new-strung
And the singing of the rills
Was a lyrical a tongue
As the springs in the hills.

Little Galilean boats
Of the fishers in the night
Went a-dipping in the gloats
Of the wavelets light
And the Lily gay replied
To the great announcement
‘Be it done’ and the bride
Is to every generation
Named the Blest, and the glee
Of the vale and the plain
Runs West to the sea
And to Galilee again.

While the stars looked down
And the earth looked up
Shone below a chosen town,
Shone above a loving-cup
And the Trinity sat drinking
In the deeps of a still
Linked up with the thinking
Of the Father as, a thrill,
The Word leapt fast
To the womb and the mould
And the Grail and the cast
And the House of Gold.

Words: John Bradburne

Reading
Luke 1.26–35, 38

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.

Choral Canticle
Giles Swayne, Magnificat

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.
Et exultavit spiritus meus: in Deo salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:
Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: et sanctum nomen eius.
Et misericordia eius in progenies et progenies timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.
Deposuit potentes de sede: et exaltavit humiles.
Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum: recordatus misericordiae suae.
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros: Abraham, et semini eius in saecula.
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto, sicut erat in principio,

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaid.
For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm:
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat:
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:
As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Stand
Congregational Carol

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.

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: Edmund Sears (1810-76)
Music: English Traditional melody
adapted by Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900)

Reading

Lu 2.1–7

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.
“She gave birth to her first-born son
And wrapped him in swaddling clothes,
And laid him in a manger.”

For us who have only known approximate fathers
And mothers manqué, this child is a surprise:
A sudden coming true of all we hoped
 Might happen. Hoarded hopes fed by prophecies,

Old sermons and song fragments now cry
Coo and gurgle in the cradle, a babbling
Proto-language which as soon as it gets
A tongue (and we, of course, grow open ears)

Will say the big nouns: joy, glory, peace;
And live the best verbs: love, forgive, save.
Along with the swaddling clothes the words are washed
Of every soiling sentiment, scrubbed clean
Of all failed promises, then hung in the world’s
Backyard dazzling white, billowing gospel.

from *Holy Luck* (2013, Eerdmans)

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**Choral Anthem**

*Judith Weir, My Guardian Angel*

The Angel that presided o'er my birth
 Said, "Little creature, form'd of Joy & Mirth,
Go love without the help of anything and earth".

Words: William Blake
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.

Stand

Congregational Carol

In the bleak midwinter
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 midwinter
Long, long ago.

Our God, heav’n cannot hold him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heav’n and earth shall flee away
When he comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Enough for him who Cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
And a manger full of hay.
Enough for him whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

What can I give him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would give a lamb;
If I were a wise man
I would do my part;
But what I can I give him,
Give my heart.

Words: Christina Rosetti (1830-94)
Music: Gustav Holst (1874-1934)
Reading
Matthew 2.1–12

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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Thanks be to God.

Choral Anthem
John Rutter, Candlelight Carol

How do you capture the wind on the water?
How do you count all the stars in the sky?
How can you measure the love of a mother?
Or how can you write down a baby's first cry?

Shepherds and wise men will kneel and adore him
Seraphim round him their vigil will keep
Nations proclaim him their Lord and their Saviour
But Mary will hold him and sing him to sleep

Candlelight, angel light,
firelight and star-glow
Shine on his cradle
till breaking of dawn
Gloria! Gloria
in excelsis deo
Angels are singing;
the Christ child is born.
This was the moment when Before
Turned into After, and the future's
Uninvented timekeepers presented arms.

This was the moment when nothing
Happened. Only dull peace
Sprawled boringly over the earth.

This was the moment when even energetic Romans
Could find nothing better to do
Than counting heads in remote provinces.

And this was the moment
When a few farm workers and three
Members of an obscure Persian sect
Walked haphazard by starlight straight
Into the kingdom of heaven.

**Plainsong Responsory**

*During which the final candle on the Advent wreath is lit*

Verbum Caro Factum Est
Et habitavit in nobis
et vidimus gloriam ejus
gloriam quasi unigeniti a Patre
plenum gratiae et veritatis.
V: Omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil.

*And the Word was made flesh,*
*and dwelt among us,*
*and we beheld his glory,*
*the glory as of the only begotten*
*of the Father,*
*full of grace and truth.*
V: *All things were made by him;*
*and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

*Words: Responsory for Matins on Christmas Day*

*Stand*
Gospel Reading
*John 1.1–14*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Congregational Carol

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.*

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

May the Father,
who has loved the eternal Son
from before the foundation of the world,
shed that love upon you his children.

Amen.

May Christ,
who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace.

Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer,
give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty,
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
Be with you and remain with you now and always.

Amen.

Organ Voluntary
Alex Wallace, *Redeemer*

Please remain standing until the procession has left the Chapel.