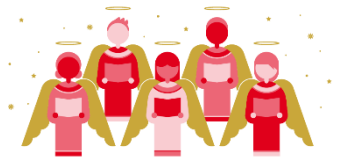




CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

17th December 2023

6.30pm



A very warm welcome to our service of Lessons and Carols by Candlelight.

Everything you need for the service can be found in this booklet.

Please would you stand for the congregational carols and remain seated for the readings and during pieces sung by the choir alone.

The congregation is welcomed informally before the service begins.

The Collection

There will be a **Cash Collection** during the final carol this evening to support the work of St Leonard's Church throughout the year and for the upkeep of our beautiful building. Please use the yellow gift aid envelopes in the back of your seat if you are a UK taxpayer. You can also give using our contactless card reader available in the entrance lobby. Please use a white gift aid form when donating.

A prayer you may wish to make your own this Christmas time:

Come to us, Christmas God
Christ Child of Bethlehem
Spirit of wonder
be born in us and your world once more,
that joy may be shared
peace proclaimed
and love abound.
now and forever,
Amen.

Processional Carol

please stand

First verse sung as a solo by a chorister

*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.**

**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.**

**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.**

Bidding Prayer

please sit

We have come together as the family of God, in our Father's presence, to celebrate the great festival of Christmas. In this service we hear and receive the good news of the birth of Christ and we offer to God our thanksgiving in the joyful singing of carols.

As we gather together in the name of Christ, we pray for the world he came to save: for the Church, that it may be enabled in our generation to surrender anew to God's holy wisdom, and bear the good news of God's love to a needy world; for the world, which is already Christ's, that all its peoples may recognise their responsibility for its future, and may be inspired by the message of Christmas to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace everywhere; for all in special need, the sick, the anxious, the lonely, the fearful and the bereaved, that the peace and light of the Christ-child may bring hope and healing to all who sit in darkness.

We commend all whom we love, or who have asked for our prayers, to the unfailing mercy of our heavenly Father, and say together, as Christ himself 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.

First Lesson

'The Fall'

Genesis 3.8-15

Anthem

O magnum mysterium – Victoria

Second Lesson

'The Promise to Abraham'

Genesis 22.15-18

Carol

please stand

Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew,
come to make all things new,
bear his people's burden,
freely love and pardon.

Refrain:

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

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:
Refrain

Mary hail! Though afraid,
she believed, she obeyed.
In her womb, God is laid:
till the time expected,
nurtured and protected,
Refrain

**Journey ends! Where afar
Beth'lem shines, like a star,
stable door stands ajar.
Unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!**

*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes!
When he comes!
We will make him welcome!*

Third Lesson

'The prophecy of Isaiah'

Isaiah 9.2, 6-7

Anthem

I Saw Three Ships – Snyder

Fourth Lesson

'The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem'

Micah 5.2-4

Carol

please stand

**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 wondering love.**

**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.**

Fifth Lesson Luke 1.26-38

'The Annunciation'

Anthem

Silent Night – Gruber/Mandyzewski

Sixth Lesson Luke 1.26-38

'The Birth of Emmanuel'

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 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.**

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.

Seventh Lesson **Luke 2. 8-16**

'The Shepherds and the Angels'

Anthem

Ding dong, merrily on high – Wood

Eighth Lesson **Matthew 2.1-11**

'The Magi are led by the star to Jesus'

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:

Refrain:

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:

Refrain

See how the shepherds,
Summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps;

Refrain

**Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
'Glory to God
in the highest':
*Refrain***

Ninth Lesson

John 1.1-14

please stand

'The Incarnation of the Word of God'

Anthem

Whence is that goodly fragrance flowing – arr. Willcocks

A Final Thought

Revd Canon Anna Norman-Walker

Anthem

The Star Carol – Rutter

Carol

please stand

During which the collection will be taken.

**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 as man with man 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 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.**

The Blessing

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

The choir, crucifer, acolytes and clergy process during the voluntary.

Organ Voluntary