

# The Carol Service - O come, all ye faithful

## Once in Royal David's City

1 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.

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.

3 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.

4 And our eyes at last, shall see Him  
through His own redeeming love,  
for that child, so dear and gentle  
is our Lord in heav'n above;  
and He leads His children along  
To the place where He is gone.

## Words of Introduction

Let us this Christmas eve delight to hear again the message of the angels,  
and in heart and mind to go to Bethlehem  
and see these things which have come to pass, the babe lying in a manger.  
Let us read and mark in the most holy scripture  
the story of the loving purposes of God.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world:  
for peace on earth and goodwill among all his people;  
for unity within the Church, he came to build,  
and especially in this most holy place.

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 old and the young;  
and all those who do not know or love the Lord Jesus.

Lastly, let us remember before God  
all those who rejoice with us, upon another shore,  
and the multitude which no one 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 we humbly offer up to the throne of heaven,  
in the words Jesus himself taught us:  
Our Father . . .

### **First Reading**

The prophet Isaiah foretells the birth of a Messiah, from the royal line of David, the Christ who will rule in peace without end.

The people who were in darkness have seen a great light.  
You have filled them with great joy.  
For a child is born to us; a son is given to us.  
He is called,  
'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, the Prince of Peace'  
His kingdom will be great.  
He will rule with justice and peace, now and forever.  
The love of our God will make this happen!

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

### **O Little Town of Bethlehem**

1 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 wondering love.

3 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.

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!

### **Second Reading**

St Luke tells how the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she is to give birth to a Son through the power of the Holy Spirit. And the child will be called holy, the Son of God.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the

angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### **The Angel Gabriel**

1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came  
His wings as drifted snow his eyes as  
flame "All hail" said he "thou lowly  
maiden Mary, Most highly favoured lady,"  
Gloria!

2 "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!

3 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!

4 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!

### **Third Reading**

St Luke tells how Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem to register their names on a census of the whole world. And, while they are there, Jesus is born and laid in a manger.

Now at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census, the first, took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So, Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**“Peace on Earth - Little Drummer Boy”**

## **Fourth Reading**

St Luke tells how the angel of the Lord appears to shepherds tending their flocks in the fields. And the shepherds go to Bethlehem and find the baby lying in the manger.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour.' Now when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us'. So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child, they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Silent Night**

1 Silent night! Holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright,  
Round yon virgin and her child,  
Holy infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night! Holy night!  
Shepherds quail at the sight;  
Glories stream from heavens afar,  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ the Saviour is born,  
Christ the Saviour is born.

3 Silent night! Holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light;  
Radiant beams Thy holy face  
With the dawn of saving grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

## **Concluding Prayer**

Father, shepherds and kings witnessed the birth of Jesus  
at Bethlehem and departed with good news for all people of good will.  
With each passing year, as we rejoice anew at the coming of Christ,  
may we deepen our understanding of the gift of your Son  
who is your compassion and mercy,  
your grace and salvation,  
your repeated offer of hope  
for the whole world.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,**

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 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*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n!  
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*

